

**South African Jazz and Exile in the 1960s:  
Theories, Discourses and Lived Experiences**

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## Declaration of Authorship

I, Stephanie Vos, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: 

Date: 28 August 2016

## **Abstract**

This thesis presents an inquiry into the discursive construction of South African exile in jazz practices during the 1960s. Focusing on the decade in which exile coalesced for the first generation of musicians who escaped the strictures of South Africa's apartheid regime, I argue that a lingering sense of connection (as opposed to rift) produces the contrapuntal awareness that Edward Said ascribes to exile. This thesis therefore advances a relational approach to the study of exile: drawing on archival research, music analysis, ethnography, critical theory and historiography, I suggest how musicians' sense of exile continuously emerged through a range of discourses that contributed to its meanings and connotations at different points in time.

The first two chapters situate South African exile within broader contexts of displacement. I consider how exile built on earlier forms of migration in South Africa through the analyses of three 'train songs', and developed in dialogue with the African diaspora through a close reading of Edward Said's theorization of exile and Avtar Brah's theorization of diaspora. A case study of the Transcription Centre in London, which hosted the South African exiles Dorothy Masuku, Abdullah Ibrahim, and the Blue Notes in 1965, revisits the connection between exile and politics, broadening it beyond the usual national paradigm of apartheid politics to the international arena of Cold War politics. The final chapters present an extended case study of the South African jazz pianist Abdullah Ibrahim's early years of exile – a period that has received little attention in music scholarship. I trace the notions of 'home' and 'exile' in the biography, musical thought and music practices of this iconic figure of South African exile. Finally, I argue that exile is a state that is always in flux, and theorize ambivalence as a key trope of exile.

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## **A Note on Names**

The quest to reclaim and reframe identities in the wake of decolonization is evident in the number of artists and authors I mention in the thesis who changed their name. As a general rule, I use the names that the artists and authors go by today. The exception is the case study of Abdullah Ibrahim (formerly known as Dollar Brand) in the last four chapters: in this case I use the name that was in current use at the time. The reason for this is two-fold. First, Ibrahim's adoption of his new name, Abdullah Ibrahim in 1968, occurs in the timeframe with which my writing is concerned (roughly between 1965 and 1969), and indeed Chapter Four discusses the significance of this shift. The discrepancy in the names occurring in the text betokens this transition. Second, this approach ensures consistency between the written text and the sources to which it refers.



## Introduction

The central concern in this thesis is to show how exile, as a discourse configured in and through South African jazz, developed in relation to several discourses and the lived experiences of exiled musicians. If exile is understood as a term that continuously emerges in relation to a range of discourses that contribute the particular meanings and connotations it adopts for individual musicians at different points in time, this thesis asks what histories or contemporary experiences inform exile, and how does exile become musically manifest?

The decade of the 1960s brings these questions into particularly vivid focus. This decade saw the first wave of South African musicians, including well-known figures like Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela, and Abdullah Ibrahim, leave South African shores for absences that hardened into exile. Even though the political pinch of apartheid in South Africa was a reality that played a determining role in the decision (or need) to seek opportunities abroad, neither the prospect that their departure would result in a three-decades-long absence nor the concept of exile were clear to the musicians who left. One of the early texts that mention exile in relation to South African musicians abroad, is Lewis Nkosi's essay 'Jazz in Exile' of 1966. Here, Lewis Nkosi wrote that 'it would appear that for creative South Africans, both black and white, exile is now an inescapable condition',<sup>1</sup> indicating that exile was not necessarily what musicians anticipated at the time that they left South Africa in the early '60s or the term that they immediately used to describe their absence. In this study I trace the musical processes and discourses that converge in this term during this telling period where exile as a discursive construct developed.

This thesis brings together a uniquely wide-ranging set of approaches to thinking about jazz in exile, drawing on archival research, music analysis and critical theory, and incorporating perspectives from jazz studies, historiography, and ethnography. While it is, moreover, a historical study that is concerned with the evidence and interpretation of source materials, it does not lay claim to present 'the' or even 'a' history of exile. Rather, from this historical vantage point of particular moments

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis Nkosi, 'Jazz in Exile', *Transition*, 24 (1966), 34.

through the 1960s it draws on perspectives that enable critical reflections on the nature of exile – in which lies its key contribution to the existing literature.

In its geographical focus on exile in the United States and the United Kingdom, this thesis considers exile in some of its major locations in which early South African musicians found themselves, and around which these early discourses were forged. These locations are furthermore significant in presenting the new dynamic that animated the old colonial triangulation between Africa, Europe and America in the post-colonial moment, in which pan-African concerns and discourses were now circulating. Through the case studies that serve as focal points in each chapter, this thesis explores exile at the level of the institution (through the discussion of the Transcription Centre based on its archives in Chapter Three), the individual musician (through the extended case study of Abdullah Ibrahim in the last three chapters, also in Chapter Two), and at the level of the music itself (through music analyses presented in Chapters One and Seven). I use music, anecdotes, vignettes, case studies or the archive to pose theoretical questions about the nature, conceptual reach and nuance of South African exile. This approach foregrounds how lived experience and practice suggest, engage or problematize theory in new ways.

One of the key ideas I advance is exile conceived as a relationality or connection, rather than as disconnection. Exile is often framed by the idea of disconnect and rupture (Hilda Bernstein's edited collection of writing on South African exile, for instance, is tellingly titled 'The Rift').<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Peter Fritsche argues that after the French Revolution exile became a literary and philosophical metaphor for the sense of historical discontinuity perceived to characterise the 'modern age'.<sup>3</sup> However, the ambiguity and ambivalence that form major tropes in the poetics of exile, are, I suggest, produced by the lack of complete severance. Thinking about exile in terms of relations rather than rift shifts the focus from what falls too frequently into dichotomies of home/exile, past/present, belonging/alienation, to considering the multiple and sometimes contradictory ways that connections are forged with different places and communities over the course of time. It is here where we may

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<sup>2</sup> Hilda Bernstein, *The Rift: The Exile Experience of South Africans* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Peter Fritsche, 'Specters of History: On Nostalgia, Exile, and Modernity', *The American Historical Review*, 106:5 (2001), 1588.

read exilic agency: how relationships with the home country and the adopted country, with different sets of people, with the past and with the present, are continuously formed and performed in the creative livelihoods of musicians. This approach allows for a more nuanced discussion of exile: in asking *how* exile is constructed drawing from a range of experiences and discourses developing over time, the question of exile becomes a question of tracing the tactics of living in the absence of a singular or stable notion of home.

My argument does not dispute the fact that musicians could literally not return or that in some cases exile led to the severance of ties with 'home' altogether, nor does it intend to gloss over the trauma of exile and paint it rosier hues. Rather, exile as a structure of feeling, I will show, has everything to do with the tenuous connection and a sense of betweenness, with this middle term between here and there (where one is never fully present).

At its fundament, exile arises from a tension between two (or more) terms. It is in the first instance a tension between two places, but place connotes several other fields such as time, people, or social practices. The relationship between these two terms is often described as ambiguous or ambivalent, yet this study puts pressure on this common observation: what are the particular sites of ambiguity, and more importantly for the study of exile, what does this ambiguity bring into effect? In answering these questions, I draw on several theoretical frameworks concerned with the relationship between two or more terms. De Certeau's writing on the figure of metaphor (discussed in Chapter One) helps to unpack the way meaning is transferred from a familiar term to a distal one, and brings the border as a space of ambiguity into purview. Edward Said's notion of exile as counterpoint and Avtar Brah's theorisation of diaspora as complex relationality (discussed in Chapter Two) provide further theoretical models that conceptualise the dynamics produced by the multiple senses of place inherent in exile.

From an analytical perspective, it is more productive to ask what connections inform and produce the coordinates of exile rather than focussing on rupture or disconnections. Exile viewed as rupture is prone to produce binaries, in which home

is necessarily associated with loss, longing, absence, and the past, and exile is framed as its opposite. Asking what relationalities and connections undergird exile, leads to a richer and more nuanced exploration of this middle ground between two (or multiple) terms. But why revisit these questions of how and what informs exile?

### **Placing exile in the South African musical context**

The ‘struggle’, as South African resistance against apartheid came to be known, seems difficult to imagine without the support of its cultural apparatuses. While it may be an overestimation to suggest that music had the power to topple the Apartheid government’s draconian policies of segregation that shaped the country from 1948 to 1994, it is undeniable that South African music featured prominently in many resistance efforts. In exile, beyond the reach of apartheid’s legislation that severely limited freedom of expression, music was wielded as a means to create and sustain international awareness of the political situation of South Africa, and conceivably aided efforts to ensure the continued exertion of political pressure on South Africa from the international domain.

In jazz and its related genres, *mbaqanga*, *kwela*, jive and other forms and fusions, the legacy of exile remains in iconic songs, landmark albums and revered artist figures who have since come to be considered as emblematic of South African jazz. The effect of exile is implied in the sense of interruption that could be read in the biographies of musicians, histories of the genre’s development, in absences of voices that have been silenced, while the evidence of lives lived in two or more countries persists in exiled musicians’ links with international networks and those who remained in the countries which they have made their new home. Indeed, iconic figures like the pianist Abdullah Ibrahim (formerly known as Dollar Brand), the renowned singer Miriam Makeba, and trumpeter Hugh Masekela’s biographies are often read (or presented) as parallels of the national narrative of struggle and overcoming.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Salim Washington, ‘Exiles/Inxiles: Differing Axes of South African Jazz during Late Apartheid’, *SAMUS*, 32 (2012), 91; Lindelwa Dalamba, *Writing Against Exile: A Chronotopic Reading of the*

Yet exile is a contested term in the post-1994 South Africa. The achievements of activism in exile, as opposed to a perceived ‘passive’ resistance in South Africa in bringing about political change, have been the subject of much debate.<sup>5</sup> Far from being a question to be fought in the pages of history, it has had very real consequences in politics post-1994. Factions arising from old internal or exiled resistance formations vie for positions in cabinet even whilst the same party, the African National Congress (ANC) remains in power.<sup>6</sup> Against this background, exile emerges as a term invested with connotations of past suffering, political commitment and present benefit. This demonstrates the ways that exile is produced by the discourses placed in orbit around it.

These political debates have been mirrored in debates in South African music. Commenting on musicians’ exile from the perspective of present-day South Africa, Johnny Meko voices the ambivalence with which celebratory narratives are met by those musicians who remained in the country:

The majority of them [musicians in exile] revealed to the world the atrocities of the apartheid regime, which was a good thing. But some of them went there on a gravy train. Not all of them were really involved in the struggle, some of them just felt: ‘Hey, it is nicer here, why must I go back home?’ ... But what is sad today is that only the exiles are getting the recognition... and in the meantime they forget that we contributed immensely inside the country.<sup>7</sup>

The quote reveals much about what exile has come to mean in the post-apartheid moment. It hinges on perceptions of personal sacrifice, or political commitment that translate into recognition today. Showing further how much investment there is in what the term ‘exile’ conveys, and how much is at stake for musicians through

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Autobiographies of Miriam Makeba, Joe Mogotsi, and Hugh Masekela (unpublished masters thesis, University of KwaZulu Natal, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> See Gavin Steingo, ‘Exiles, Inziles and the Politics of Song in South Africa’, in *Exils et Migration Postcoloniales: De l’Urgence du Depart à la Nécessité du Retour*, ed. Pierre Fandio and Hervé Tchumkam (Yaoundé, Cameroun: Editions Ifrikiya, 2011), 209-223.

<sup>6</sup> As Gavin Steingo points out, while the ‘new’ South Africa’s the first president, Nelson Mandela, took care to incorporate both factions, the Mbeki dispensation that followed favoured exiles – reflecting his station during apartheid – and more recently Jacob Zuma’s cabinet were peopled by fellow-‘inziles’ (to use Steingo’s neologism). Steingo, ‘Exiles, Inziles and the Politics of Song’, 212.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Johnny Meko in Chats Devroop and Chris Walton, *Unsung: South African Jazz Musicians under Apartheid* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2007), 22-23.

recognition of past commitment and suffering, are recent arguments to extend the relevance to exile to those who remained within South African borders. This is not entirely without foundation, for displacement was indeed a widespread consequence of the implementation of segregation. ‘Through the invention of the “homelands,”’ Rob Nixon writes, ‘millions of Africans were reconceived as foreigners and told they came from places that, prior to their forced removal there, they had never been’.<sup>8</sup> The same argument could apply to the forced removal of entire communities of city-dwellers to townships at urban peripheries (Sophiatown and District Six have become emblematic examples).<sup>9</sup> Being forced to leave home and move to an unknown place is, after all, one definition of exile. As Chats Devroop argues in more explicit terms, ‘[f]or those who remained behind [in South Africa], theirs became a case of inner exile.’<sup>10</sup> He supports this statement by reasoning that the circumstances for those who remained in South Africa were no less dire and alienating than those usually associated with exile: ‘Economic survival became the overriding agenda of these alienated individuals who found themselves strangers and exiles in the land in which they lived. Their survival operated on both a cultural and physical level. South African musicians grabbed at anything and anywhere to play, even busking in street corners. Several were on the verge of starvation.’<sup>11</sup>

What this debate demonstrates is that exile is a term that is invested with several meanings and connotations that emerge from narratives or constructions of history. My interest in musicians’ exile is therefore an interest in the histories, experiences and discourses that forge this term. While exile is rooted in lived experiences that are undeniably and cruelly real, it becomes clear in these debates that exile is also a

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<sup>8</sup> Rob Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African Culture and the World Beyond* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 4. Typically rural, supporting mostly agrarian lifestyles, ‘homelands’ (also known as ‘Bantustans’) were ostensibly areas from which ethnic groups hailed, although it was not uncommon that communities were uprooted and relocated to places with which they had no prior connection. By the people occupying them, homelands were viewed as ghettos, rather than the self-governed states the apartheid ideologues purported them to be.

<sup>9</sup> Sophiatown and District Six were multi-racial suburbs in Johannesburg and Cape Town (respectively) renowned for the vibrant cultural life they fostered in the 1950s. After the Group Areas Act was passed in 1950, these communities were relocated to areas designated for particular racial groups, often at the outskirts of the city. Michael Titlestad writes about Sophiatown, for instance, as a ‘metonym’ triggering networks of connotations and memory of black urban experience in the 1950s. Michael Titlestad, *Making the Changes: Jazz in South African Literature and Reportage* (Pretoria and Leiden: University of South Africa Press), 33-37.

<sup>10</sup> Chats Devroop, ‘Music and Exile The Making of Culture and Identity’, *Focus: The Journal of the Helen Suzman Foundation*, 61 (2011), 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

discursive construct that continues to evolve and have currency for musicians in the present day. An inquiry into the meanings of exile – and how it sublimates into discourse – is therefore timely.

## **Interruption**

One strategy to unravel what meanings exile comes to bear in music, is to return to moments where the senses of displacement register and become articulated in musicians' discourses and musical practice. This thesis takes as its starting point the moment of interruption. By tracing the ways that the realisation of exile manifests and the ways that exile gradually makes itself felt in musicians' lives, thus registering the moments when the difficulty of going home or being in a foreign country sets in, we may read some of the trajectories that inform exile as a discursive construct. In the broader history of music in South Africa, this takes us back to a particular period – the 1960s – and to a particular form of musical expression in which musicians felt the brunt of apartheid particularly acutely: that which, in South Africa, falls under the rubric 'jazz' (I discuss the difficulties surrounding the use of this term below).

One of the reference points in South African music history where this watershed is particularly evident, is in the South African 'jazz opera' *King Kong*. This production is emblematic of the burgeoning South African jazz scene in 1950s, featuring original compositions performed by a cast and band composed of the most prominent musicians on the scene; and also as its interruption, as many of the musicians that toured with the production to London stayed on in what was to become exile. *King Kong*, based on the life of the South African boxer Jacob 'King Kong' Dlamini, was hailed as South Africa's first 'all-African jazz opera' and reflected the South African jazz scene in many respects. Although it was a multi-racial production, its directors and producers (like those controlling the recording scene) were white, compositions and musical direction was by Stanley Glasser and Todd Matshikiza, and the cast and musicians were black. It nevertheless featured the cream of South Africa's jazz performers, including Miriam Makeba and Joe Mogotsi in the lead roles of Petal and

‘King Kong’, and the likes of Kippie Moeketsi, Gwigwi Mrwebi, Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwangwa in the band. The music – like South African jazz practices at the time – drew on American jazz that was melded with local sounds of *kwela* and *marabi* – a sonic mixture born in the crucible of dancehall and vaudeville bands of the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>12</sup>

After *King Kong* played in South Africa to great acclaim in 1959, it toured the United Kingdom in 1961. Many musicians saw the *King Kong* production as an exit ticket to seek better fortunes outside South Africa’s borders in the wake of the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, spurring the first wave of musicians’ exile for a period that was to last three decades.<sup>13</sup> Sharpeville, the metonym by which the Massacre came to be known, signifies the onset of grand apartheid and the tightening of segregation legislation that proved deleterious to the multi-racial jazz scene – as I will explain below.

It is worth pausing first to historicise the concept of apartheid, as South African exile hinges on the political circumstances that precipitated it. ‘Apartheid’ is the system of segregation that the Afrikaner National Party instated during its rule between 1948 and 1994, but it is also used as a moniker that refers to this era. Putting the term into a longer contextual history alerts us to the development of notions of displacement and the circumscription of place in the longer history that preceded apartheid, and by extension, exile. John Comaroff’s analysis of the phases of colonialism in South Africa melds formal apartheid into a longer fourth phase of colonialism spanning 1910 (the establishment of the Union of South Africa, still a British protectorate) to 1994 (the first democratic elections in South Africa). This follows three earlier phases, namely Dutch mercantile rule (1652-1806), early British rule (1806-c. 1870), and the extension of British power in Southern Africa following the discovery of gold and minerals in the late nineteenth century (c. 1870-1910).<sup>14</sup> Comaroff’s periodization brings into focus the longer trajectories that shaped the crystallisation

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<sup>12</sup> Lindelwa Dalamba, “‘Om ’n Gifsak te Versteek”: “King Kong”, the Apartheid State and the Politics of Movement, 1959-1961’, *SAMUS*, 33 (2013), 59-80.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> John L. Comaroff, ‘Reflections on the Colonial State, in South Africa and Elsewhere: Factions, Fragments, Facts and Fictions’, *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, 4:3 (1998), 324.



of apartheid, notably the displacement of the indigenous population as a consequence of colonial settlement, and the successive segregation laws that prefigured apartheid since the early twentieth century. The Natives Land Act (1913), restricting black Africans' land purchase to certain areas and quantities, and its extension, the Native Trust and Land Act (1936); as well as the Natives (Urban Areas) Act (1923), segregating urban dwelling and restricting black African urbanisation, predate formal apartheid by several decades but are significant precursors of the apartheid legislation to follow. The Group Areas Act of 1950 – one of the cornerstones of formal apartheid – is thus not unprecedented, even as it more rigorously set into motion the relocation (colloquially known as 'forcible removals') of entire communities to so-called 'homelands' or townships.<sup>15</sup>

The 1960s music industry provides but one example of the widespread impact of the tightening of apartheid legislation. Venues had to provide separate entrances and amenities for those designated 'black' and 'white'; white musicians could not perform with musicians 'of colour' (or vice versa), leading to an anecdote of the (white) pianist Chris McGregor who bathed in tea to darken his skin in order to be less conspicuous in the (black) township where he and the other (black) band members of the Blue Notes<sup>16</sup> performed in the evening. At every rehearsal and performance, multi-racial bands risked arrest for performing or travelling together.<sup>17</sup> Separate concerts had to be arranged for audiences designated 'white' or 'black', which besides posing ethical objections and the logistical problems of finding suitable venues, also lowered the profit margins of concerts. All these factors led to fewer work opportunities, and even within the small music industry that South Africa could sustain, ambitious musicians soon reached the proverbial glass ceiling.

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<sup>15</sup> William Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, rev. edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 153; William Beinart and Saul Dubow, 'Introduction: The Historiography of Segregation and Apartheid', in *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth-Century South Africa*, ed. William Beinart and Saul Dubow (London: Routledge, 1995), 3-4.

<sup>16</sup> The Blue Notes, consisting of Chris McGregor (piano), Nik Moyake (saxophone), Dudu Pukwana (saxophone), Mongezi Feza (trumpet), Johnny Dyani (bass) and Louis Moholo-Moholo (drums) was one of South Africa's leading jazz bands in the 1960s. They are particularly well-remembered pioneers of free jazz in Britain in the 1960s to '80s during their time in exile.

<sup>17</sup> Gwen Ansell, *Soweto Blues: Jazz, Popular Music and Politics in South Africa* (New York and London: Continuum, 2004), 74-5. Various musicians interviewed in the volume *Unsung* commented on police harassment. See Devroop and Walton, *Unsung*, 50-1, 61 and 63, 77.

The pianist Chris McGregor's account of the reasons the Blue Notes left South Africa captures the experience of many musicians:

We were never officially banned [...] or told that this group could no longer operate. But the situation with regard to working was becoming very, very difficult indeed to handle. Places [jazz venues] were closing fast. Even halls that you might hire are being regulated in line with the government's [apartheid] policy.<sup>18</sup>

While most musicians anticipated an uncertain fate when they left South Africa, having only a vague sense of what awaited them on distant shores, few realised that their absence would become exile and that they would only be able to return to a South Africa under a different dispensation in thirty years' time. 'Exile', Hilda Bernstein reminds us, was something that was recognised in retrospect, for initially, '[w]hether they had left under pressure or not, exiles believed they were only temporary sojourners wherever they stayed.'<sup>19</sup> This view gradually gave way to the realisation, as Esme Matshikiza put it, that 'what had begun to be set in motion [by apartheid legislation] was threatening to change the country for ever',<sup>20</sup> indicating a more permanent absence from South Africa and uncertainty about the possibility of return. This reminds us that labels, frameworks and discourses often only transpire (are adopted or imposed) in hindsight, revealing much about the connotations and valence of a term like exile. It is with this understanding of exile as a state of becoming and of continuous performance that this thesis proceeds with its interrogation of the dimensions of a South African exile discourse in jazz.

This thesis picks up on the notion of exile in these early years as exile gradually coalesces: a time when passports were revoked, when visits became more difficult, dangerous or impossible, when tours were cancelled. It traces the moments when South Africa registers in memory (as opposed to being present), when memory becomes contrapuntal with experiences of life abroad, and when 'home' becomes elaborated in the musical imagination. When musicians did go back, it was with the knowledge that this would be a return to being lesser (non-) citizens and to an ailing

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<sup>18</sup> Chris McGregor quoted in Anonymous, 'South African Musicians Make their Mark', *Crescendo* (1965), 30.

<sup>19</sup> Bernstein, *The Rift*, 266.

<sup>20</sup> Matshikiza in Bernstein, *The Rift*, 328.

music scene where mere economic survival was perennially in question. The *King Kong* saxophonist Kippie Moeketsi and the Blue Notes' saxophonist Nik Moyake returned after falling seriously ill. The South African pianist, Abdullah Ibrahim, returned to South Africa in 1968 and 1972, though not without delays and disruptions, until finally this possibility was also closed off.

Stories of musicians' exile are individual (as opposed to collective) stories depending on individual circumstances and opportunities, yet they are responses to the same tightening circumstances in the music scene and life under apartheid in South Africa. How do we then think of exile in decidedly less clear-cut terms than the political understanding thereof as (en)forced banishment? What is at stake in the claim 'exile' and what did it come to mean for musicians and music as a practice?

## **Framework**

I adopt two definitions of exile in response to these questions and as a starting point for this study. The first concerns an approach to the concept of exile, the second brings into purview the fields or context(s) in which exile plays out. First, taking my cue from Rogers Brubaker's approach to the study of diaspora, I think of exile as an 'idiom, stance or claim' rather than a fact, a fixed entity or a stable referent (in Brubaker's words, 'a bounded entity' or 'a non-territorial form of essentialised belonging').<sup>21</sup> In musicians' biographies, as the quote by Chris McGregor demonstrates, distinctions between the necessity for (or imposition of) exile as opposed to choice were often not as clear-cut as formal definitions may suggest. If exile is regarded as a claim, the term 'exile' becomes a descriptor that arises from and is subjected to various discourses through which it is continually defined and refined. (This indeed recalls the South African exiled poet Breyten Breytenbach's definition of exile as a 'creative act'.)<sup>22</sup> Ultimately, using rigid definitions of exile as an analytical tool reveals little beyond the anticipated conclusion that people

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<sup>21</sup> Rogers Brubaker, 'The "Diaspora" Diaspora', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28:1 (2005), 12-3. Tina K. Rannarine also adopts this approach in her study of the Caribbean diaspora, see *Beautiful Cosmos: Performance and Belonging in the Caribbean Diaspora* (London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2007), 18.

<sup>22</sup> Breytenbach quoted in Titlestad, *Making the Changes*, 134.

assumed (or eschewed) the designation ‘exile’ under various circumstances and for various reasons. Exile understood as a claim, on the other hand, opens more interesting and revealing questions: it asks who identified under the rubric of exile, what connotations the term held for musicians, and how identifications under this moniker change the way musicians practiced or understood their art. It considers the discursive work the term does at different points in time, how it filters to everyday experiences and how the term is adopted, perceived, and nuanced in everyday usage. As an analytical starting point, exile as a claim offers a more yielding approach to read exile as it is calibrated in stories, narratives, and musical practice.

This is not to deny that exile was experienced in very real and material terms, for instance when passports were revoked, names were placed on a ‘banned persons’ list, or people were subject to threats of imprisonment (or worse). Stuart Hall puts the possibilities and limitations of the discourse in perspective:

...while not wanting to expand the territorial claims of the discursive infinitely, how things are represented and the ‘machineries’, and regimes of representation in a culture do play a *constitutive*, and not merely a reflexive, after-the-event, role. This gives questions of culture and ideology, and the scenarios of representation – subjectivity, identity, and politics – a formative, not merely an expressive, place in the constitution of social and political life.’<sup>23</sup>

Music is an excellent example of how culture constitutes ways that exile is discursively framed. Chapter One suggests how musicians drew on earlier histories of migration that are performed in exile, thus bringing past experiences of migration into the exile moment and historicizing exile within a longer history of displacement. Or, as I will argue in Chapter Two, when long-standing musical exchanges with African American music (albeit not entirely symmetrical) informed by senses of political solidarity, became the basis of musical collaborations and the assistance American musicians lent South African musicians in exile.

Another example of how music constitutes discursive constructions of exile is, for instance, when Christine Lucia writes how Abdullah Ibrahim’s music activated an

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<sup>23</sup> Stuart Hall, ‘New Ethnicities’, in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 443.

‘imaginary’ of a ‘new nation’ among audiences in the 1970s, an aspect that came to play a ‘defining role in national culture’ later on.<sup>24</sup> In the case study of Dollar Brand/Abdullah Ibrahim in Chapters Four, Five and Six I will consider how the ‘imaginary’ of home, of South Africa, enters his thought on music and his music practices, and how music becomes a mode through which alternative histories and senses of identity are explored. Viewing exile as a claim enables us to consider not only the way that exile affected musicians like Abdullah Ibrahim, but also how exile seeps into music as a practice. In asking how the arts come to play a constitutive role, Hall also compels us to ask *how* music comes to bear or express experiences of exile, which brings me to consider not only Abdullah Ibrahim’s biography, but also his thought on music and how this translates into his practice through close readings of the music.

The second definition that frames this inquiry is the Kenyan writer and former exile, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s concept of exile as a paradigmatic manifestation of the struggle between the arts and the state over performance space. Exile, in this case, is the artist’s removal from her native country as performance space. This view arises from Ngũgĩ’s understanding of the relationship between the arts and the state as fundamentally antagonistic: the arts, per definition, create and therefore change the status quo; the state is concerned with maintaining stability, it preserves the status quo. ‘The war between art and the state is really a struggle between the power of performance in the arts and the performance of power by the state – in short, enactments of power. [...] [T]he struggle may take the form of the state’s intervention in the content of the artist’s work, which goes by the name of censorship, but the main arena of struggle is the performance space – its definition, delimitation, and regulation.’<sup>25</sup> If the nation state uses its entire territory as its performance space, performing its being through the ‘daily exercise of power over the exits and entrances, by means of passports and visas and flags’,<sup>26</sup> exile is the exclusion of artists from this performance space. But the state banishes the artist at its own peril: where the artist finds herself in the global ‘exclusion’ from the state, the artist is in a position to vie with the state from which she is banished for the

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<sup>24</sup> Christine Lucia, ‘Abdullah Ibrahim and the Uses of Memory’, *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 11:2 (2002), 128 and 130.

<sup>25</sup> Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Penpoints, Gunpoints, and Dreams* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 38-39.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-4.

attention of the global audience. This becomes particularly clear through musician-activists such as Makeba, whom I have already briefly mentioned, but the chapters to follow will further consider how this dynamic plays out through various theoretical frames and case studies.

Ngũgĩ's framework complements the notion of exile as a claim in several ways. First, in his definition of the arts as something that creates and is therefore always in flux (or becoming), Ngũgĩ underscores the dynamic understanding of exile that is not a status quo, but something that is continuously performed by various actors including the state and institutions, and that impacts in various ways on artists through their everyday life and music practices, eliciting various responses. Second, Ngũgĩ's definition of exile as a manifestation of the contestation over performance space introduces the critical territorial dimension of exile: that of place and displacement, inclusion and exclusion. Although this underpins the discussion of exile throughout the thesis, I will elaborate on this point in particular in the case study of the Transcription Centre in Chapter Three, which provides a window into South African musicians' exile in relation to state and institutional support structures.

I am drawn to these definitions because they bring into focus the performative aspect of exile: the way it is never a static concept nor a (wholly) unidirectional performance of power. Although power relations were asymmetrically tipped towards the state, it nevertheless assigns agency to individuals such as musicians. These particular theoretical perspectives have not been discussed in the literature on South African music in exile. It is surprising that the theorisation of exile by an African thinker of Ngũgĩ's stature has not yet entered into discussions of South African music and exile, and I consider this one of this thesis's contributions. In terms of adopting Brubaker's definition of diaspora (or in my usage, exile) as a claim, my inclusion of diaspora discourses into the theoretical framework becomes clearer in Chapter Two, in which I make the case for reading South African exile discourses alongside diaspora, given the extent to which South African jazz culture drew on American culture, in no small part inspired by the senses of solidarity with pan-African political projects such as Civil Rights.

## **Situating South African exile: Methodology, literature and genre**

This thesis is mainly an archive and literature-based inquiry into exile as a discourse. There exists no national archive for South African jazz, and as such, no comprehensive holdings of albums, papers and other materials. A significant part of the project of South African jazz historiography therefore still lies in finding sources and documenting histories. Resources on South African musicians who were in exile pose a further challenge: traces of lives lived in exile remain scattered across several continents, rather than being located in the country of origin. One of this thesis's contributions to the literature is to bring new material pertaining to South African musicians that is outside South Africa's borders to the proverbial table. I have visited two archives that have proven significant in this regard: the Transcription Centre's archive at the Harry Ransom Center in Texas, containing documents on South African musicians who were in London in the late 1960s (this informs Chapters Three and Four), and the holdings on Abdullah Ibrahim at the Jazz-Institut in Darmstadt, Germany (which informs Chapters Four, Five and Six).<sup>27</sup> As a researcher based in London, I have furthermore benefited from the British Library's holdings of audio-visual materials such as music recordings, radio broadcasts and documentaries, that enrich and enliven written accounts of South African music in archives and the literature.

My decision to base this study on historical documents as opposed to interviews rests on a number of considerations. First, for a study concerned with discursive constructions of exile, the archive's holdings of historical materials, reflections and responses hold interest precisely because they are the products of the moments in which they were captured. They are thus reflective of the time and context in which discourse is produced. By comparison, in cases where I have conducted interviews, memories of the 1960s had often faded in the intervening years and accounts of exile often had the polished air of stories many times retold. Second, the difficulty of securing interviews with the musicians mentioned in this study who were active performers in the 1960s is testament to success of their careers. Those who are still

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<sup>27</sup> The Transcription Centre Archive, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, United States; Rasmussen papers, Jazz-Institut, Darmstadt, Germany.

active in their performing careers have scaled down their concerts and public engagements, and their time is often (understandably) tightly ring-fenced by artist managers. Third, as one musician who declined to be interviewed said, in countless interviews he had told what was urgent, necessary, relevant, or even what he could remember of exile. What more can he add to these statements in yet another interview? This question rightly alerts us to the existing sources that are relevant to our inquiries.

A substantial literature on South African musicians' exile has indeed developed over the past two decades. Even as the literature does not reflect all musicians' exile experiences, a sufficient body of work has been amassed in order to start asking questions about the way exile emerges as a theme, how it is defined and constructed in musicians' and scholars' accounts thereof. A useful orientation in the chronology and geographical scope of South African musicians' exile, and remarkably incisive considering its length, is Gwen Ansell's chapter 'Home Is Where the Music Is' in the book *Soweto Blues*.<sup>28</sup> Ansell's chronicle presents a standard narrative of exile, starting with the first major departure of South African musicians into exile with the *King Kong* production, reflecting its status as many musicians' point of departure in exile. It follows the musicians' subsequent travels (and sojourns) to America, largely facilitated by Miriam Makeba's established network of contacts thanks to her collaborations with Harry Belafonte. Subsequent returns to Africa (Makeba to Guinea, Jonas Gwangwa and Hugh Masekela to Botswana) and the establishment of the ANC's cultural activities in the border countries to South Africa are also discussed, as well as a brief consideration of the London scene in the 1960s and 1970s, which becomes relevant for the discussion of the relationship between the Transcription Centre, based in London, and South African musicians in Chapter Four.<sup>29</sup>

Studies concerning the figures of the early years of exile the 1960s are particularly well-represented in the literature. One of the impulses that stimulated this scholarship is the publication of (auto)biographies of musicians like Hugh Masekela (*Still Grazing*), Miriam Makeba (*My Story* and the more recent *Makeba: The Miriam*

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<sup>28</sup> Ansell, *Soweto Blues*, 221-260.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 237-245.



*Makeba Story*), Joe Mogotsi's *Matindane: He who Survives* and Chris McGregor (in the form of a memoir by his wife, Maxine McGregor).<sup>30</sup> Written for general readership, these texts provide not only illuminating accounts of musicians' life stories and experiences of exile, but give insight into the music scenes in which musicians were active and into the networks of musicians. These accounts serve as foundations for subsequent scholarly studies that put their narratives into orbit around theoretical concerns. Among these texts are Lindelwa Dalamba's master's dissertation *Writing Against Exile: A Chronotopic Reading of the Autobiographies of Miriam Makeba, Joe Mogotsi, and Hugh Masekela*, or Sam Radithlalo's article 'The Self-Invention of Hugh Masekela'.<sup>31</sup>

Some would argue that the figures of Masekela and Makeba have dominated the discourse, overshadowing lesser-known musicians and exile in later decades. The attention these figures have received in popular and scholarly literature, however, serves this thesis's aims as it enables the study of the discursive practices generated through high public visibility that crystallized around these figures, which in turn informed the major (and most widely circulated) tropes that surround the term 'exile' in music studies. This does not lessen the continuing need for studies that capture the voices of other musicians who have been under-represented in the literature, although this would require a different approach, method and scope than the present study's focus permits.

My focus on Dollar Brand's early years of exile in the latter half of the thesis, brings this thesis close to the work of Carol Muller on Sathima Bea Benjamin, to whom Muller devotes several articles and with whom she co-authored Benjamin's

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<sup>30</sup> Hugh Masekela and Michael D. Cheers, *Still Grazing: The Musical Journey of Hugh Masekela* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2004); Miriam Makeba and James Hall, *Makeba: My Story* (London: Bloomsbury, 1988); Miriam Makeba and Nomisa Mwamuka, *Makeba: The Miriam Makeba Story* (Johannesburg: STE Publishers, 2004); Joe Mogotsi, Pearl Connor, John Patterson et al., *Mantindane: "He Who Survives": My Life with the Manhattan Brothers* (Copenhagen: Booktrader, 2002); Maxine McGregor, *Chris McGregor and the Brotherhood of Breath: My Life with a South African Jazz Pioneer* (Fling: Bamberger, 1995).

<sup>31</sup> Lindelwa Dalamba, *Writing Against Exile: A Chronotopic Reading of the Autobiographies of Miriam Makeba, Joe Mogotsi, and Hugh Masekela* (unpublished masters thesis, University of KwaZulu Natal, 2006); Sam Radithlalo, 'The Self-Invention of Hugh Masekela', *Journal of Literary Studies*, 25:1 (2009), 34-52. Also see Sazi Dlamini, *The South African Blue Notes: Bebop, Mbaqanga, Apartheid and the Exiling of a Musical Imagination* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of KwaZulu Natal, 2009); Benjamin Odhoji, "'Restorying" the Maternal Myth of Origin in Zami and Makeba: My Story', *Safundi*, 9:2 (2008): 155-192.

biography. During the 1960s, the period with which this study is concerned, Dollar Brand and Sathima Bea Benjamin were partners and they married in 1965. Thus, in many respects their lives ran on parallel tracks. The convergences between my research and Muller's are especially notable in my consideration of the overlaps between exile and diaspora (Chapter Two) and the role of the Transcription Centre in South African musicians' exile (Chapter Three).

In several articles as well as the jointly-authored biography, Muller writes about the relationship between South African exile and the African diaspora through the figure of Benjamin.<sup>32</sup> In discussing the exile-diaspora overlap, she does not, however, explicitly engage with the significant body of theory on exile and diaspora in cultural studies to suggest what the theoretical ramifications would be. The second chapter of the present thesis similarly argues for the necessity to take the African diaspora into account in theorizing exile, but in considering how theories of exile and diaspora illuminate South African exile (discussed in Chapter Two), I come to different conclusions than Muller on how these conceptual domains meet. Whereas Muller describes exile as one tenet of the 'new diaspora' concept she coins in relation to Sathima Bea Benjamin's biography, I will argue that this overlooks significant differences between these two terms (exile and diaspora) and suggest an alternative understanding of the intersection of these conceptual fields in Chapter Two.

In the case of the Transcription Centre, Muller provides a helpful overview of its activities, but is primarily concerned with the ways the archive material sheds light on Sathima Bea Benjamin's life at the time. My focus on the institutional support the Transcription Centre lent to South African musicians, enables me to consider the archive material concerning Abdullah Ibrahim as well as the other exiles, notably Dorothy Masuku and the production of the album *Kwela by Gwigwi's Band* in greater detail, bringing me to a more nuanced reading of the ways that Cold War politics affected South African musicians.

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<sup>32</sup> Carol A. Muller and Sathima Bea Benjamin, *Musical Echoes: South African Women Thinking in Jazz* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011); Carol A. Muller, 'The New African Diaspora, the Built Environment and the Past in Jazz', *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 15:1 (2006), 63-86; Carol A. Muller, 'Sathima Bea Benjamin, Exile and the "Southern Touch" in Jazz Creation and Performance', *African Languages and Cultures*, 9:2 (1996), 127-143.

An author whose conception of exile comes closest to the one I put forward in this study is Michael Titlestad. In his book *Making the Changes: South African Jazz in Literature and Reportage*, which considers representations of South African jazz in literature, Titlestad views exile as ‘two unstable points between which protracted processes of meaning is suspended.’<sup>33</sup> Like Titlestad, I view exile as two terms connected through processes of performance. Titlestad’s book provides a rich resource for thinking about jazz in relation to several critical frameworks in cultural studies and philosophy. Chapters on exile (‘Lives Seen in Parenthesis’) and Abdullah Ibrahim (‘Water from an Ancient Well’) have proven particularly informative for the perspectives I develop in this thesis. As a literary theorist, however, Titlestad stops short of discussing the music itself, and this invites the musicologist to envisage ways in which his frameworks might be considered in the sonic domain. My vantage point as a music scholar enables me to contribute this perspective through transcriptions and close readings of Abdullah Ibrahim’s music, especially in Chapter Six. I furthermore consider Abdullah Ibrahim’s own published writing as a columnist and poet in Chapters Four and Five, complementing Titlestad’s reading of writers engaging with music with its reverse, musicians engaged with writing.

In thinking about how exiled musicians worked and settled in their new abodes, one should remember that they mostly made their way in exile individually rather than collectively. There are certain moments when musicians’ paths in exile converged through productions like *King Kong*, for instance, or the overlapping months that Abdullah Ibrahim, Sathima Bea Benjamin and the Blue Notes spent in Zurich and London (the latter discussed in Chapter Three). The paths of exile, however, were mostly individual, as musicians carved their own ways. Although music produced independently by South African musicians in London (and elsewhere) was often employed for anti-apartheid causes, this was on an *ad hoc* basis and not part of the ANC’s official support structures or projects until the 1980s. Shirli Gilbert’s article ‘Singing Against Apartheid’<sup>34</sup> stands out in chronicling the ANC’s explicit engagement with music and theatre in countries bordering South Africa (Botswana in particular), both because it records the ANC’s surprisingly late initiation of an

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<sup>33</sup> Michael Titlestad, *Making the Changes: Jazz in South African Literature and Reportage* (Pretoria and Leiden: University of South Africa Press, 2004), 154-5.

<sup>34</sup> Shirli Gilbert, ‘Singing Against Apartheid: ANC Cultural Groups and the International Anti-Apartheid Struggle’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 33:2 (2007), 421-441.

orchestrated project of its own to harness culture in its struggle against apartheid, and because these projects (primarily MEDU and *Amandla!*) are some of the few instances where music in exile was produced in larger collectivities instead of on an individual or small-group basis.

David Coplan's *In Township Tonight!* and Christopher Ballantine's *Marabi Nights* remain key reference points for understanding the social, political and musical foundations from which South African jazz and popular urban music grew before the musicians' exile.<sup>35</sup> Both texts document the early history of jazz (Coplan's account spanning a longer time period and also considering other performance practices, such as theatre) from which the music practices that exiles took abroad developed. These texts provide context and background for practices at home (in South Africa), while exile pluralises the music's production and reception histories with those of the contexts in which it was produced abroad.

Exile further problematizes the notion of a 'South African jazz' in two significant ways. In the 1950s it was still possible to speak, even very broadly, of similar impulses in approaches to jazz performance: dance bands like the Jazz Dazzlers or the Harlem Swingsters, which served as training ground for many musicians and which collaborated with singers like the Skylarks or the Manhattan Brothers, formed networks of musicians within which musical ideas, repertoires and trends were in constant circulation. As musicians scattered and followed their own opportunities in exile, however, their approaches to music diversified considerably. Makeba, for instance, became internationally known under the 'folk' rubric as she increasingly turned to a South African repertoire,<sup>36</sup> while Masekela increasingly veered towards jazz fusion (his album with the Ghanaian highlife band Hedzoleh Soundz has been labelled an 'afro-funk', for example). At the same time, Ibrahim drew on notions of cultural heritage to create a unique South African idiom in his compositions, and in the Brotherhood of Breath formation, Chris McGregor and the other members of the

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<sup>35</sup> Christopher Ballantine, *Marabi Nights: Jazz, 'Race' and Society in Early Apartheid South Africa*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu Natal Press, 2012); David Coplan, *In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

<sup>36</sup> In practice, such genre distinctions are notoriously slippery. For instance, Makeba was one of the headline performers at the Cape Town International Jazz Festival in 2006.

Blue Notes developed increasingly free approaches to jazz and experimented with the big band formation's expressive possibilities. It is furthermore problematic to conceive these developments in terms of a national, 'South African' jazz when it developed at a remove in exile, and in dialogue with musicians, creative impulses and the possibilities of the particular performance spaces abroad.

The limitations of the usual sub-disciplinary boundaries in American-centred jazz studies are evident in the collective noun for the music I write about. Jazz captures the historical influences and borrowings from American assimilations and emulations, and remains an important influence and referent for South African musicians. In many cases the conventions of American jazz practice served as a shared reference point that enabled musicians to play with musicians of other nationalities when they arrived in exile, or sought work at clubs dedicated to the broad category 'jazz'. Considering the aspects that give South African music its own inflection or even syntax, however, takes us into the terrain usually associated with ethnomusicology, as the work of Kubik on South African jazz, for instance, shows.<sup>37</sup>

Here, Guthrie Ramsey's notion of 'race music' or Samuel Floyd's 'black music' are appealing in capturing musical lineages or links that transcend notions of genres and are, instead, are transmitted within communities as they migrate, come into contact with other forms of music, and as the music evolves.<sup>38</sup> Yet defining South African music in similar terms is highly problematic in a country where 'jazz' as a particular form of 'black music' has, more than any other genre, transcended apartheid's racial designations. While the number of white musicians performing in the genre recognised as South African 'jazz' may have been in the minority, audiences were often mixed. 'Jazz' in the South African context often operated as site of resistance against apartheid's categorisations, and hence limiting a defiantly hybrid musical

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<sup>37</sup> Gerhard Kubik's discussion of *kwela* and *mbaqanga* under the rubric of the cyclical organisation of African music is one example that shows how ethnomusicology and jazz studies converge. See Gerhard Kubik, *Theory of African Music*, Vol. 2 (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 41-47.

<sup>38</sup> Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr., 'Daddy's Second Line: Toward a Cultural Poetics of Race Music', in *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2003), 3; Samuel Floyd, *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting its History from Africa to the United States* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 5.

practice within racial boundaries would not accurately reflect the role that this musical practice played in South African society.

A solution, albeit a flawed one, is to adopt the term ‘jazz’ as a signifier of a music complex. Janet Topp Fargion draws on John Kraemmer’s concept of the ‘music complex’ to encapsulate a music practice (or music practices) that share repertoire, musicians, instrumentation and audiences even though they have their own origins, praxis and trajectories.<sup>39</sup> Thinking about the music I discuss in this thesis under ‘jazz’ as a music complex, in the broadest sense, offers a way to think of shared music histories and social contexts in which these styles grew, whilst bearing in mind that in exile these ‘complexes’ disperse even further in exile.

## **Chapter outline**

The first two chapters place South African exile in relation to two other displacement discourses that have been influential in shaping musicians’ experiences and expressions of exile. Chapter One traces the relation between exile and earlier histories of migration in twentieth-century South Africa through the train as a musical metaphor. I consider Miriam Makeba’s ‘Mbombela’, Hugh Masekela’s ‘Stimela’, and, showing the enduring concern with migration beyond 1994, Zim Ngqawana’s ‘Migrant Worker Suite’ to show how this connection is suggested through the figure of the train in music. Proceeding from an understanding of exile as a term that fundamentally implies the connection between different places and times, I turn to De Certeau’s notion of the metaphor as a theoretical construct that elucidates how the connection between the two terms works.

The second chapter places exile in relation to diaspora, which I argue informs exile through dialogue with the African-American diaspora. While the relationship between South African and American music has a historical precedent through a history of exchange, it assumes a new dimension with South African exiled musicians’ in-person encounters with the African-American diaspora during their

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<sup>39</sup> Janet Topp Fargion, *Taarab Music in Zanzibar in the Twentieth Century: A Story of ‘Old is Gold’ and Flying Spirits* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 4 and 201-5.

exile in United States. How can exile be theoretically seen in relation to diaspora, and what are the subtle shifts in nuance and definition that inform these two terms and their interactions?

To bring these resonances (as well as differences) into view, I read Edward Said's well-known essay 'Reflections on Exile' alongside Avtar Brah's notion of the multiple axes of exile,<sup>40</sup> which nuances how we read Said's notion of exile as a fundamentally contrapuntal experience by outlining some of the axes along which we may read this counterpoint. It is a truism that one of the core characteristics of exile (and forms of displacement) is ambiguity, located in a contrapuntal awareness, as Edward Said puts it. But I want to put pressure on the rather vague notion of ambivalence, because the sites of ambivalence are the sites where exile becomes manifest in the experiences and musical articulations of musicians in exile. This is a question that I pursue particularly in the chapters considering Abdullah Ibrahim, and with references back to the working of metaphor, which is critically enabled by a measure of ambivalence and overlap that provides grounds for similitude but retains difference.

Reading South African exile alongside diaspora enriches an understanding of South African exile beyond a simplistic opposition against a particular regime of segregation and discrimination at the time; it takes into account a web of discourse around liberation, black identity and modernity in its manifestations in multiple locations and cultures. The United States (New York in particular) and London as nodes where cultures engaged with these discourses meet, become exceptional locations for reading the cross-fertilizations of these discourses in the space created by jazz, and the distillation of a more particular set of South African discourses informed by this contact.

Through the discussions in the first two chapters, an assemblage of theoretical frameworks emerge which inform, nuance and define the manifestations of South

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<sup>40</sup> Edward Said, 'Reflections on Exile', in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 173-186; Avtar Brah, 'Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities', in *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 178-210.

African exile in music. This framework is applied and elaborated through the case studies that make up the remaining chapters of the thesis.

In the third chapter's consideration of South African musicians who were hosted by the Transcription Centre in London, we shift gear to a case study that contextualises South African exile as dependent on and critically enabled by institutions that lent musicians support. The Transcription Centre's archive provides material that lends particular support for this. The documents that point to the quotidian experiences of South African musicians' lives in exile – work, gaining work permits, searching for work – ground the understanding of exile in this thesis as situated in everyday experiences. Through the Transcription Centre's archive, we learn about the daily lives and struggles of some of the well-known and lesser known protagonists in the story of South African exile, including Chris McGregor, Gwigwi Mrwebi, Dorothy Masuku and Dollar Brand (as he was known at the time) – the latter whom becomes the main focus of Chapters Four, Five and Six. Simultaneously, the Transcription Centre's function, recording radio programmes for broadcast in Africa, and its implication in American cultural propaganda amidst Cold War tensions, positions these everyday experiences within much larger frameworks of international politics and cosmopolitan connections. The Transcription Centre as a case study is valuable as a reminder of the broader, global backdrop against which exile unfolded and the daily struggles that musicians faced.

Chapter Four proceeds from the introduction to Dollar Brand in Chapter Three, and continues considering the way his connection with the Transcription Centre was valuable in establishing himself in New York – the city that was to become Brand's home for the next three decades. This is a time that Brand's career was in ascendance, though not yet as firmly established as it would become in the 1970s and '80s. In this period, Dollar Brand and his wife, Sathima Bea Benjamin, returned to South Africa for their first visit, though this was not without complications or incident. Through the arduous path that led to their visit and their subsequent return to New York, documented in Brand's correspondence with the Transcription Centre's director Dennis Duerden and the columns he wrote for the Cape Town newspaper, *The Cape Herald*, Brand's ambivalent relationship with South Africa



comes into view. Through Brand's letters and articles for the *Cape Herald*, this chapter explores Brand's identity in transition and exile as a state of becoming.

Chapters Five and Six pursue Dollar Brand's music within this same time-frame – exploring his thought on music and how this correlates with his music practices at the time. Here, I consider Brand's relationship with his adopted home through his musical engagements with Fats Waller and Thelonious Monk, as well as the constructions of 'Africa' and 'African music' – those that connote 'home' – that are evident in Brand's writing on music. This recalls the discussions of 'home' in migration and exile that came into view through the consideration of the train as a musical metaphor.

Overall, this thesis introduces exile as a contested term in South African jazz. The intention of the thesis, stemming from the tensions in these terms, is not to reduce these discourses to a single definition, but rather to explore the rich discursive space and multiple meanings that exile acquires in the South African context, and in the music of Dollar Brand/Abdullah Ibrahim in particular, in the last three chapters.

# Chapter 1

## Exile and Migration: Performing Connections through the Metaphor of the Train

It was not novelty but familiarity that disturbed,  
like the shock of *déjà vu*. A hemisphere from home,  
nevertheless, at home, because home is the place  
of understood meanings

James A. Harrison, 'Homecoming'<sup>41</sup>

Throughout the twentieth century, the train has been a recurring trope in South African black music practices. David Coplan discusses the train in the songs of Basotho migrants working in South Africa, as does Veit Erlmann in his ethnography of Zulu migrants' *isicathamiya* repertoires and practices.<sup>42</sup> In popular music, the train similarly occupies a central place: early examples such as Griffiths Motsieloa's 'Stimela No. 1' already inscribed the train into *marabi*, one of the forerunners of South African jazz, while the well-known and widely performed 'Shosholoz', a song originally sung by migrant mineworkers from Zimbabwe that has since become a staple in South African repertoires, continues to be performed in various, sometimes dissonant contexts, as especially the work of Steffen Jensen shows.<sup>43</sup>

The conspicuous presence of the trope of the train in songs performed in exile, like Miriam Makeba and Harry Belafonte's rendition of 'Mbombela' and Hugh Masekela's 'Stimela', brings the trope beyond the literal tracks of the South African

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<sup>41</sup> In *The Heart in Exile: South African Poetry in English, 1990-1995*, ed. Leon de Kock and Ian Tromp (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 158-9.

<sup>42</sup> David Coplan, 'Fictions that Save: Migrants' Performance and Basotho National Culture', *Cultural Anthropology*, 6:2 (1991), 172-174; Veit Erlmann, *Nightsong: Performance, Power, and Practice in South Africa* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 127-128; also see Anonymous, 'Mine Worker's Songs', in *The South Africa Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Clifton Crais and Thomas V. McClendon (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), 219-222.

<sup>43</sup> Motsieloa's 'Stimela No. 1' features on the companion CD of Christopher Ballantine's seminal book charting the development of *marabi*; in the same book he also offers a general discussion of the impact of migrancy on popular music in the 1940s and '50s, see Ballantine, 'Gender and Migrancy: Jazz Culture in the Later 1940s and the 1950s', in *Marabi Nights*, 146-192. Steffen Jensen, 'Shosholoz: Political Culture in South Africa between the Secular and the Occult', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 38:1 (2012), 91-106.

migratory landscape, to journeys of exile that crossed the Atlantic to the United States. This musical extension of the metaphor of the train prompts me to ask how exile fits into a longer history of migration in twentieth-century South Africa. How does the train operate as a sonic signifier that connects narratives of migration with those of exile? It is through this extended journey of the train, beyond contexts of migration within South Africa as it seeps into music practices in exile, that I consider the role music plays in constructing the relationship between exile in the latter half of the twentieth century and earlier experiences of migration.

This chapter focuses on the discursive construction of exile in relation to earlier music practices. This is the first study to trace the connection between migration and exile from a musical perspective. Drawing on a range of approaches – music analysis, critical theory, historiography and ethnography – I consider the twin concepts of trope and metaphor as theorised by Samuel Floyd and Michel de Certeau respectively as models for understanding the links between different fields (in this case, migration and exile). I do so through the analysis of three music recordings in which the figure of the train (and the migration it connotes) is central: the first example I consider is Miriam Makeba and Harry Belafonte’s rendition of ‘Mbombela (Train Song)’, recorded on the 1965 Grammy Award-winning album *An Evening with Makeba/Belafonte*;<sup>44</sup> the second example is Hugh Masekela’s well-known track, ‘Stimela’, first recorded on the 1973 album *I Am Not Afraid* and subsequently a regular fixture on Masekela’s setlists;<sup>45</sup> and the third example is Zim Ngqawana’s ‘Migrant Worker Suite’ (2008), a multi-movement work offering a perspective on South Africa’s history of migration from beyond the formal end of apartheid in 1994.<sup>46</sup>

Following Floyd’s notion of trope as a figure connecting different periods and genres in music, I suggest that otherwise disparate circumstances and music practices are

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<sup>44</sup> Harry Belafonte and Miriam Makeba, *An Evening with Belafonte/Makeba*, (RCA, RC 720, 1965). Available on Youtube: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmWDnxrIbKQ>>, accessed 14 September 2015.

<sup>45</sup> Hugh Masekela, ‘Stimela’, *Liberation* (Jive, HOP 222, 1988). Available: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPxmmMpfG88>>, accessed 14 September 2015.

<sup>46</sup> Zim Ngqawana, ‘Migrant Worker Suite’, on *Zimology in Concert* (Sheer Sound, SSCD 136, 2008). A Youtube link for the full suite is not available (it is, however available on Spotify). The recording of one movement, ‘Amagoduka’, is available: <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_K4vtS5dT0Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_K4vtS5dT0Y)>, accessed 14 September 2014.

connected through the train as a common trope. If the trope of the train is a figure of connection, rather than disconnection, it reveals the shock of exile to lie not so much in its unfamiliarity, but in its familiarity, as the epigraph encapsulates.

This chapter situates exile within the longer history of South Africa, and introduces a key theme that is developed throughout the thesis: that of exile understood as a relationality between places, times, and senses of belonging. This chapter's discussion of metaphor, stemming from the metaphor of the train, presents a first foray into theorizing relationality. I bring this closer to South African discourses when I consider one of the master tropes of migration and exile, that of 'home', which brings the way exile uses migration as a referent into sharper focus.

In order to appreciate the complex of issues for which the train becomes shorthand in musical discourses and the history of migration that becomes a referent in exile, I first provide a brief overview of the history of labour migration and its attendant complex of issues.

### **The train, the migrant and the politics of place in South Africa**

As a global symbol, the train is connected with the processes of modernity, industrial expansion and increasing mobility. It is emblematic of what cultural geographer David Harvey encapsulates in his term 'time-space compression': the shrinking of the world through the reduction of spatial barriers, coupled with the focus on speed and the maximisation of time in order to increase production.<sup>47</sup> Accurate measurements of time and space, we may be reminded, were critical to colonial expansion and administration, and lay the foundations on which capitalist production is predicated. 'Far from [being] socially neutral,' Harvey writes, '[p]recisely because of such political and economic implications, the sense of time and space remains contested and more problematic than we are wont to admit.'<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> David Harvey, 'Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 80:3 (1990), 426.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 424.

In South Africa, the train as the symbol in which questions of space, time and capitalist production converge is further imbued with connotations particular to the social and historical context in which the railway developed. In a country where divisions of labour were established alongside the formalisation of a system of racial segregation over the course of the twentieth century, ‘production’ was mostly by the hands of ‘black’ labourers, and the ‘reduction of spatial barriers’ that trains made possible paradoxically enabled the spatial separation entrenched in apartheid.

The development of the migrant labour system at the newly discovered diamond and gold deposits of South Africa in the latter half of the nineteenth century coincided with white settlers’ last conquests to subject black polities. The dual force of the loss of land (and thus a means of livelihood) due to white expansion and the need for funds to acquire arms to make a last stand to retain political autonomy, led to the formation of a ready workforce.<sup>49</sup> The labour practices established in the early mining industry, that of single migrant labourers travelling to places of work while their families remained elsewhere, established the division between place of dwelling and impermanent place of labour that first segregation and then apartheid formalised. Labour practices and conditions were a contentious issue since their inception. Already in 1900, the ‘degrading and illegal compound system’ at the mines in Kimberley was a concern tabled at the very first Pan-African Conference in London, where a petition to Queen Victoria to intervene in the inhumane conditions was drafted.<sup>50</sup>

Apartheid as a system of boundary maintenance, William Beinart argues, was born out of the problematic of a European population that could only ‘partially displace’ the conquered indigenous population.<sup>51</sup> Even as the black population was economically indispensable as labourers, the black majority had to be politically excluded to maintain white power. Beinart suggests that the racial ideology of segregation in the first half of the twentieth century, and later apartheid in its second

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<sup>49</sup> Jean and John Comaroff give a fascinating account of missionaries’ role in facilitating arms acquisitions and agrarian development. Comaroff and Comaroff, ‘Madman and the Migrant: Work and Labor in the Historical Consciousness of a South African People’, *American Ethnologist*, 14:2 (1987), 195-6.

<sup>50</sup> Tsitsi Ella Jaji, *Africa in Stereo: Modernism, Music, and Pan-African Solidarity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 6.

<sup>51</sup> Beinart and Dubow, ‘Introduction’, 2.

half, developed as a 'solution' to this impasse rather than being the *raison d'être* for the division of space and labour in the first place.<sup>52</sup> What this meant in practice was that mining compounds and other places of work provided only temporary abodes for migrant labourers, whose proper places (family homes) were relegated to townships at the peripheries of towns and cities, or to so-called homelands. These spaces of dwelling were designated for different 'ethnic' groups, as defined in typically essentialised terms by the government. With this physical remove between workers, places of work and family homes, migration across South Africa's racial and spatial divides commenced.

The train was critical in enabling the establishment and maintenance of these divides. As a major (although not exclusive) mode of transport to sites of labour, it provides an indication of the scale of migration. Between 1920 and 1930 an annual average of 708 000 'Africans' were transported by rail ('in batches' or 'by goods trains'), of which most would have been mine workers.<sup>53</sup> By the 1950s, nearly a third of the black population of South Africa lived in urban areas.<sup>54</sup> If these statistics convey the extent of labour migration, Christopher Ballantine's analysis of predominant themes in music recorded by the popular vocal group, the Manhattan Brothers, registers its impact on collective black consciousness. In Ballantine's estimation, nearly half of the recorded output the Manhattan Brothers between the 1930s and '50s relates to the fact or effect of labour migration.<sup>55</sup> This provides some indication of the affective impact of labour migrations: songs expressed the loss of loved ones, community and traditional ways of life, but also served as medium for fashioning and articulating new subjectivities in urban living environments.

Rita Barnard elaborates what the train came to connote in the South African context:

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<sup>52</sup> Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 3. There is considerable debate over the weight of economic imperatives above all others in propelling racial ideology. Harold Wolpe, for instance, makes a compelling case for economics as *the* driving force behind the institution of Bantustans (also known as 'Homeland' system) in 'Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid', in *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth-Century South Africa*, ed. William Beinart and Saul Dubow (London: Routledge, 1995), 60-90.

<sup>53</sup> Gordon Pirie, 'Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines: Constraints and Significance', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19:4 (1993), 728.

<sup>54</sup> Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, 161.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

From the point of view of black South Africans, the train was clearly a tool of oppression, indispensable to the maintenance of residential segregation and to the exploitation of labor. It brought day labourers from distant townships, as well as migrants from even more distant rural areas, to work in the white cities. It is no accident that the train has been the subject of many songs ... and many stories and poems... Indeed, it is a measure of the train's cultural significance that the most important literary magazine to emerge from the Black Consciousness era should have been called *Staffrider*: ... a person who leaps onto a moving train and hangs at a precarious angle from the handrail at the door. ... [T]he powerful trade union COSATU was essentially built on commuter trains: they became 'mobile meeting places' where people from different companies could talk about their aspirations and experiences at work, and where organisers could reach an audience without contravening the government's restrictions on public meetings.<sup>56</sup>

As Barnard's description makes clear, the train was the mechanism that enabled the displacement effected by segregation and apartheid in South Africa: it served as a tool that regulated how the African population was drawn into as well as excluded from an industrialised, capitalist society. As such, it became a concrete manifestation and enabling tool of apartheid as a system of 'symbolic boundary maintenance'.<sup>57</sup> But through the figure of the staffrider as the outsider to the system, or the use to which the train as in-between space is put – for the organisation and mobilisation of people and ideas – we are alerted to the power and agency of the in-between figure and the in-between space. The staffrider puts the means of oppression – the train – to use on his own terms. He leaps on and off at will, precariously and provocatively. The power of the in-between space – the train as a node in a network, where people and ideas briefly congregate and then disperse – is similarly evident in the opportunistic use of the train to advance ideas and mobilise agendas that have no space elsewhere.

Deborah James writes that migrant labour was not only subject to the '...the whims of *apartheid* policy', as has been highlighted so far, but also to the 'pre-colonial or pre-industrial cleavages within local societies, and differing degrees of internally

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<sup>56</sup> Rita Barnard, 'Introduction', in *Apartheid and Beyond: South African Writers and the Politics of Place* (Oxford, New York and Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2007), 7.

<sup>57</sup> Sorcha Gunne, 'Train Journeys and Border Lines', in *Space, Place, and Gendered Violence in South African Writing* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 142.

generated resistance to proletarianisation...'.<sup>58</sup> She alerts us to the fact that migrancy was also the site of considerable debate concerning the preservation of indigenous traditional values and ways of life.<sup>59</sup> The central paradox of South African labour migration, as Jean and John Comaroff point out, lay in the dilemma that for the rural, traditional ways of life to survive in the wake of white expansion that curtailed agricultural space, money and Western means were needed. While migrant workers were necessary to maintain rural families and homesteads, it simultaneously implied the disruption, and even potential corruption (as some feared) of traditional ways of life. The rural therefore implies complicity with the non-rural in order to sustain it.<sup>60</sup>

From both this perspective and especially that of white ideologues, black urbanisation and a multicultural urban space existed as a space of transgression. The migrant, subject to the tugs of both traditional and industrialised demands and hierarchies, drawn into the economic imperatives of the rural homestead and wage labour, is also through this very ambiguity afforded the opportunity of drawing on the rural and the urban in fashioning him/herself, and thus holds the potential of subversion of these systems in transcending its boundaries. Paul Gilroy, following W.E.B. Du Bois, powerfully captured the black condition of occupying two cultures at once in the notion of double consciousness. The figure of the migrant indelibly connects rural and urban, the traditional and the industrialised, the West and its other, and is the living enactment of the relation, not the dichotomy, of the two places.

This concept of the migrant worker as occupant of two or more spaces, and even the embodiment of the relation between the two, has surprising resonance with the origin of the isiXhosa word for migrant workers, *amagoduka*. Literally meaning 'those who go home', *amagoduka* assumed a different meaning when apartheid South Africa's pass laws regulated the black population's migration to urban areas. Police officers inspecting urban dwellers' expired passes would instruct them to 'go back home' ('*goduka wena!*'), inadvertently coining the colloquial word for the migrant worker that has since been subsumed into common parlance. More recently still, *amagoduka*

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<sup>58</sup> Deborah James, *Songs of the Women Migrants: Performance and Identity in South Africa* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 15.

<sup>59</sup> Beinart and Dubow, 'Introduction', 9-10; also Beinart *Twentieth-Century South Africa*, 122.

<sup>60</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff, 'The Madman and the Migrant', 200-1.



was adopted by those rural and urban dwellers alike who self-identify with rural ways of life.<sup>61</sup>

*Amagoduka* are thus caught in the paradox inscribed in the word's meaning: those who go home are those who are displaced from home. *Amagoduka* as a figure is the embodiment of those who confront the physical and ideological divide between rural and urban, and cross the boundary, occupying and operating in both spaces. Yet *amagoduka* always retain the homeward orientation by being tied, ontologically, to the backward glance to home. It produces, in Veit Erlmann's words, 'an all-pervasive state of off-centredness, of fractured identities, and of perpetual displacement', a 'way of life with its own sets of rules, symbols and meanings.'<sup>62</sup> The train is both in actuality and metaphorically one of the key symbols of this bifurcated (or multi-furcated) world.

### **The train as musical trope: Tracing connections between migration and exile**

This chapter's concern with the way musical tropes suggest, perform and signify links between different historical contexts has a notable predecessor across the Atlantic. In Samuel Floyd's chapter titled 'Troping the Blues' in his seminal book *The Power of Black Music*, Floyd argues for the inter-connectedness of African-American music practices by tracing musical and textual tropes that link practices 'over time and across genres'.<sup>63</sup> Floyd's notion of 'troping' (derived from Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s notion of Signifyin(g)) is understood as a process akin to improvisation that extends a musical or literary figure through repetition, revision

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<sup>61</sup> Mphuthumi Ntabeni, 'A Xhosa 101 lesson for Helen Zille', *Politicsweb* [website], 26 March 2012, available: <<http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71619?oid=288860&sn=Detail&pid=71619>>, accessed 2 June 2014.

<sup>62</sup> Erlmann, *Nightsong*, 107.

<sup>63</sup> In Floyd's chapter, the ring-shout is carried forth through 'repeaters and revisitors of the musical derivatives of the ring'. See Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., 'Troping the Blues, From Spirituals to the Concert Hall', in *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting its History from Africa to the United States* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 225, also see 213. Guthrie Ramsay similarly asserts the interconnectedness of African-American music practices. In the Preface to *Race Music* he states: 'Throughout my life as a listener and musician I experienced these musics [gospel, rhythm and blues, soul, and hip-hop] as closely linked to one another [...] Whenever I was listening to or performing one style of race music, it seemed that the others were never far away or totally out of earshot.' Ramsey, *Race Music*, xi.

and difference.<sup>64</sup> The core idea Floyd retains of Gates's notion of Signifyin'(g) is an emphasis on process and connection as opposed to a fixed meaning: the way '[s]ignifying turns on the play and the chain of signifiers, and not on some supposedly transcendent signified.'<sup>65</sup>

What constitutes a musical trope? Floyd identifies tropes in the musical sounds themselves, as for instance in harmonic, rhythmic or melodic motives that occur (and develop) in different songs, repertoires or genres; or in lyrics or song titles reiterating and extending certain themes. In revisiting and revising, tropes do not eclipse or surpass their predecessors, but rather extend and improvise on the original, creating an intertextual web marked by the interplay of both repetition and difference.<sup>66</sup> The effect of 'troping', when composers and performers metaphorically invoke 'the stuff of myth and legend' (as for instance the train) in 'their musical resources, techniques, and materials', is that the music comes to bear an 'emotional and visceral power'.<sup>67</sup> I understand this statement to mean that the trope enables a grounding in a longer history, and thus, the trope connects different times, places and contexts through its performance. Steeped in this history of repetition and signification, the trope accumulates meaning, almost palimpsestically, through the compounding effect of its previous iterations. This is not necessarily a uni-directional process; it may be subject to tugs in diverging directions, disjuncture and contradiction. Indeed, the act of troping itself performs a commentary, which may be consonant or dissonant with that which it connects.

In Floyd's example of the trope of the train, my study finds not only a methodological mirror, one that suggests musical connections across time and genre, but also a thematic mirror in its focus on the trope of the train. Floyd's model should, however, not be transposed unreservedly to a South African context. Here, the train does not share the connotations of liberation, independence of movement and possibility that Houston A. Baker notes in the blues and Floyd notes in African-

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<sup>64</sup> Floyd, 'Troping the Blues', 213-14.

<sup>65</sup> Henry Louis Gates, Jr., 'The "Blackness of Blackness": A Critique of the Sign and the Signifying Monkey', *Critical Inquiry*, 9:4 (1983), 688.

<sup>66</sup> Gates quoted in Floyd, 'Troping the Blues', 212-3.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

American music more generally.<sup>68</sup> By contrast, the train is critically a tool that enables the unequal power and race relations that unfold in South Africa in the long twentieth century, as I discussed above. As Hugh Masekela, the renowned South African flugelhorn player and former exile claims, '[t]here are no happy songs about trains in Africa',<sup>69</sup> explaining elsewhere that 'the train has always been a symbol of something that took away your mother, or your father, your parents or your loved one...'.<sup>70</sup> In the South African cultural imagination, thus, the train betokens not only general themes such as the onset of modernity, the journey, displacement and longing, but imbues these themes with a particular set of political connotations.

Furthermore, the Gatesian notion Signifyin(g) – from which Floyd derives his notion of the trope – is a process rooted in African-American praxis, 'arrived at from within the black cultural matrix',<sup>71</sup> and thus Signifyin(g) itself operates as a signifier of Blackness. This locates Signifyin(g) specifically within African-American cultural practice. While Floyd argues for continuities between African-American and African practices based on the cultural transmission brought about by the slave trade,<sup>72</sup> the area that is contemporary South Africa was not a node in the slave trade to the Americas and therefore not part of this cultural trajectory.

Although the train is a trope that has a significant musical and intellectual history in American genres like spirituals and especially the blues, this is by no means the only place where the figure of the train has developed a laden set of meanings. The above reservations notwithstanding, Floyd's essay suggests possibilities for studies with a similar concern with the connections between repertoires and the development of musical figures in different musical contexts. I discern three ways in which Floyd's tropology operate, of which two may be especially useful to scholars with a different geographical interest.

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<sup>68</sup> Houston A. Baker, Jr., *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 11; Floyd, 'Troping the Blues', 215.

<sup>69</sup> Masekela quoted in Andy Davis, 'The Curse of the Coal Train', *Mahala* [website], 8 February 2010, available: <<http://www.mahala.co.za/art/curse-of-the-coal-train/>>, accessed 15 February 2015.

<sup>70</sup> Hugh Masekela in the documentary *Amandla! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony*, dir. Lee Hirsh (Metrodome, 2004).

<sup>71</sup> Gates, 'The "Blackness of Blackness"', 685-6.

<sup>72</sup> Floyd, 'Troping the Blues', 225.

First, Floyd considers the trope of the train as an instance of a trope that is repeated across musical genres, which leads him to theorise how musical and thematic figures (tropes) connect musics from disparate genres and eras. In this use, the trope is developed as a conceptual (or methodological) tool through which the interconnection between genres and music-historical periods in other cultural contexts could be traced more clearly. The second way Floyd uses the trope of the train is to theorise a cultural constellation – the train, the chariot, spirituals, the blues – particular to African-American history and experience. This is more culturally specific and therefore problematic to transpose to different contexts. The third is as an analysis of the ways the train has been musically figured, for instance, how the sound of the train has been captured onomatopoeically through imitations of train whistles, or repetitious musical devices like a boogie-woogie accompaniment pattern to signify continuous motion of the train over the tracks, and so forth. Of course, these fields meet and productively illuminate each other in Floyd's essay.

In a nuanced form, the model of connections performed through repetition that Floyd proposes may yield compelling insights in different contexts. The trope (or metaphor) as a method through which the connection between genres could be understood is one of Floyd's contributions to the conceptual toolkit that could be applied to other areas as well. Similarly, the catalogue of the musical representation of the train in different repertoires could profitably be used and extended in comparative analyses. In this chapter, I pluralise the socio-cultural constellations associated with the train (the second way that Floyd uses the trope of the train) in placing my study within a particular South African social and historical perspective.

In the following three examples, I will similarly trace the musical manifestations of the train in South African experience and repertoires, and consider how this trope connects music practices 'over time and across genres'<sup>73</sup> within a South African constellation: in this case, how the trope of the train in music recurs and connects songs rooted in experiences of labour migration in twentieth-century South Africa with repertoires performed in South African exile (and beyond) in the latter half of the twentieth century.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 213.

Similar to Floyd's approach, I place performance practice central in this chapter's approach to theory through the perspectives music practices yield. Yet this chapter goes further than Floyd's analysis by not only looking only at the music (the sounds and their structure as well as the lyrics) and how it interacts intertextually with earlier repertoires and performances, but also taking into account the historical, social and political contexts that musical tropes connect. Here my project joins that of Guthrie Ramsey Jr.'s *Race Music*, in which he similarly attends to 'the specific historical moment and social setting in which a music gesture appears', extending the relationships Floyd's tropology trace beyond a strictly musical framework.<sup>74</sup> While Ramsey's argument pays attention to private settings like family life, home and church,<sup>75</sup> the cases that I consider in this chapter belong to more public spaces: mass-distributed recordings or performances in public spaces like festivals or concert halls. Whereas Ramsey is concerned with music's role in the social construction of black identities and ethnicities,<sup>76</sup> I am rather interested in the way recurring tropes express enduring experiences of modernity located within black ethnicities as a product of segregation and apartheid in South Africa. I argue that these social and political contexts of performance are critical in shaping musical signification.

Troping is not directed at arriving at one transcendent meaning, and yet the 'play on a chain of signifiers' is also not idle: it brings cultural memory into the present, suggesting some relationality. In the next sections, I consider the ways that 'train songs' performed in exile suggest the relationships between migration and exile, before turning to the concept of metaphor to further theorise how these relationships are constructed and how they operate.

### ***The provenance of the train: Makeba and Belafonte's 'Mbombela'***

'Mbombela (Train Song)' is the opening track on Miriam Makeba and Harry Belafonte's album *An Evening with Belafonte/Makeba*, lauded with a Grammy

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<sup>74</sup> Ramsey, *Race Music*, 21.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-7.

Award for best folk album of 1965. At the time of the album's release, both artists had established reputations as civil rights activists – Belafonte lending his voice and financial backing to the American Civil Rights Movement, and Makeba as an icon of the South African anti-apartheid campaign.<sup>77</sup> Miriam Makeba had been in exile since 1960, having left South Africa in 1959 to promote Lionel Rogosin's documentary, *Come Back Africa*, on the political situation in the country; she found herself unable to return when her South African passport was revoked whilst she was in the United States. In 1963, at the height of the Rivonia trial that would result in Nelson Mandela's sentence to life imprisonment, Makeba addressed the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonisation to testify on the plight of black South Africans under the apartheid regime.<sup>78</sup> As I will advance in Chapter Two, the shared political concerns of both artists played no small part in creating musical connections.

In the music industry, Makeba and Belafonte were firmly established under the 'folk music' rubric. Belafonte reached stardom with his album *Calypso* in 1956, the first album by a single artist to sell over one million copies. This aligned the American Belafonte indelibly with the Caribbean of his parentage in the popular imagination. Makeba rose to local stardom as a singer in the vibrant 1950s jazz scene in South Africa, and launched her career in the United States with the assistance of Harry Belafonte after a chance meeting in London. Makeba brought into exile her repertoire from home: traditional songs she learnt from her mother and grandmother, both traditional healers (and thus musicians, as is the case in many African healing practices),<sup>79</sup> as well as popular songs and songs of resistance from the burgeoning urban township scene.

The album *An Evening with Belafonte/Makeba* bears the hallmarks of Makeba's, rather than Belafonte's, musical roots. All but one of the album's tracks are songs from South Africa, sung in Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho (the exception being 'Malaika', a Swahili lullaby). The album is not a recording of a live performance, as the title might lead one to expect. It is a studio recording with Makeba and Belafonte each

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<sup>77</sup> See Harry Belafonte and Michael Schnayerson, *My Song: A Memoir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 202-3.

<sup>78</sup> Makeba and Mwamuka, *Makeba*, 86.

<sup>79</sup> See, for instance, Steven Friedson, *Dancing Prophets: Musical Experience in Tumbuka Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

contributing solo tracks except for two songs, 'Mbombela' and 'Malaika', on which both artists feature. The backing musicians are mostly American, although another South African exile, Jonas Gwangwa, made the choral and orchestral arrangements. To put it in rough terms, the production of the album is American, while the content is South African.

The opening track, titled 'Mbombela', the song that is our present focus, serves as a lens through which the history of South Africa's developing urban scene may be understood. The etymology of the track's title, 'Mbombela', already signals its embeddedness in the history of South African mining and labour migration. Referring to a special type of wagon designated to transport migrant labourers to the mines, a 'mbombela' was attached to general goods and passenger trains in the early days of the mining industry. Even though dedicated trains to carry labour migrants had replaced the 'mbombela' wagon attachment system by 1910, the word remained in use and commonly referred to trains transporting migrant labourers.<sup>80</sup> Widely credited as a 'traditional' song on record sleeves, including Makeba and Belafonte's 1965 recording, 'Mbombela' is in fact a composition by Welcome Duru, written when he was on a train journey from his native Port Elizabeth to Johannesburg.<sup>81</sup>

The song is a classic in the South African repertoire, and has been performed and recorded widely. To mention but a few instances, it was given a memorable performance with a jive inflection by the Manhattan Brothers,<sup>82</sup> who based their musical and dress styles on American models, and thus intimate another migration: that of American music to South Africa and the South African black imagination to America, bolstered by a perceived shared plight with African-Americans struggling

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<sup>80</sup> Pirie, 'Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines', 719.

<sup>81</sup> Vuyisile Msila, *A Place to Live: The Red Location and its History from 1903 to 2013*, (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2014), 164; Vuyisile Msila, *The Black Train Rising: The Life and Times of Welcome Duru* (Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria: Siyomba Projects, 2009), 117-21. As Duru's biography is furnished with very few dates it is unfortunately difficult to tell when the song was composed, or indeed to verify this claim. That said, it is not inconceivable that the record companies' attribution of the song is incorrect, given their generally poor reputation of paying royalties to black South African artists in the 1950s, which does not bolster confidence in their commitment to correct copyright attributions.

<sup>82</sup> The Manhattan Brothers, 'Mbombela', accessed at the British Library Sound Archive, United Kingdom, Shelfmark: 1LP0107921.

for civil rights.<sup>83</sup> More recently ‘Mbombela’ appeared as the opening track on the veteran, self-taught jazz pianist Tete Mbambisa’s album *Black Heroes*,<sup>84</sup> and is a regular feature in black choral repertoires.<sup>85</sup> These performances demonstrate not only the provenance of the song, but its longevity in South African repertoires and malleability to different performance inflections and genres. More importantly, however, each performance (re)tells and thereby (re)inscribes the experience of migration in which it originated. It is thus instrumental in remembering, forming and performing history.

The lyrics of ‘Mbombela’ (in Xhosa) describes the departure of the train referred to as ‘Mbombela’, and expresses the loss of those it leaves behind:

Wenyuk’umbombela  
*There goes mbombela*  
 Wenyuk’ekuseni  
*Goes in the morning*  
 Webab’uyandishiya  
*Father it’s leaving me*  
 Shuku shuku shuku  
*[onomatopoeic sound of the train]*  
 Shuk’uyandishiya  
*It’s leaving me*  
 Webab’uyandishiya  
*Father it’s leaving me*<sup>86</sup>

The lyrics are not specific about who had departed or who had been left on the platform. Indeed, the song expresses a farewell that could apply to any journey. While the song’s title situates the loss of departure within a particularly South African framework of labour migration (given the etymology of the word ‘Mbombela’), it could be argued that the open-endedness of the journey and the rather under-elaborated loss expressed through the lyrics precisely enables the song to find resonance in diverse performance contexts.

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<sup>83</sup> Christopher Ballantine gives a vivid account of the Manhattan Brothers’ relationship with Americana in his article ‘Looking to the United States: The Politics of Male Close-Harmony Song Style in the Later 1940s and the 1950s’, in *Marabi Nights*, 118-145.

<sup>84</sup> Tete Mbambisa, *Black Heroes* (JISA CD 01, 2010).

<sup>85</sup> Simthembile Xeketwana, who assisted me by translating the song’s lyrics, commented that the song is often performed by choirs.

<sup>86</sup> My thanks to Simthembile Xeketwana for the transcription and translation of the song texts of ‘Mbombela’ and ‘Stimela’ (in the next section).



If Miriam Makeba's performance of 'Mbombela' on this album connects earlier South African migration with her present exile, Harry Belafonte's joint performance of the song invokes another journey: a diasporic journey of Caribbean migrants to America through Belafonte as icon of calypso (rightly or wrongly) and signifier of the Caribbean diaspora. The non-specificity of the song's lyrics plays a critical role in the song's relevance and signification in two different contexts. Yet a strong connection between these journeys, the exilic and the diasporic, is politics, which binds the plight of black South Africans under apartheid with broader pan-African discourses of liberation (I discuss these resonances in greater detail in Chapter Two). 'Mbombela' therefore suggests some of the resonance between exile and diaspora through similar narratives of loss and displacement.

Taking into account 'Mbombela's place as the opening track on Belafonte and Makeba's album and the political nature of the songs that follow, this apparently innocuous song is more than a narrative about the train departing from a platform. In the context of the album on which it was released, *An Evening with Belafonte/Makeba*, the song is imbued with political charge. Several tracks on the album are political commentaries. Song titles like 'Mabayeke (Give us our Land)', or 'Ndodemnyama Verwoerd' (translated as 'Beware Verwoerd'), warning the then Prime Minister and architect of apartheid, Hendrik Verwoerd, of the people's brewing anger,<sup>87</sup> cannot but be read as expressions of resistance against the political status quo.

As the opening track on this album, and understood within the history of labour migration in South Africa, 'Mbombela' could be read as an originary tale of twentieth-century urban black South Africa, setting the context for the songs to follow. It encapsulates the effects of modernity and colonial expansion: the displacement of people from earlier, rural agrarian homes and livelihoods; it captures the rupture in communities effected by migrant labour; it captures the very personal losses of husbands, wives and loved ones bidding farewell with uncertainty of return.

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<sup>87</sup> Hendrik Verwoerd was indeed assassinated in the South African House of Assembly on 6 September 1966, a year after the release of this album. This lends the widely chanted song a retroactively prophetic tone, even though it is was not surprising considering the enmity that Verwoerd's vision for the apartheid state and its implementation provoked.

Taking into account Makeba and Belafonte’s status as political activists at the time (and indeed throughout their careers), ‘Mbombela’ enters the realm of politically engaged artistic practice that actively shapes rather than merely reflects the socio-cultural and political environments of its performance.

Moreover, ‘Mbombela’ shares some of the musical attributes that connote the train in Floyd’s analysis. A four-bar harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment pattern is repeated throughout the song (see Figure 1). The sense of rhythmic drive – imitating the consistent rhythm of a train’s wheels over the tracks – is conveyed through the guitar strumming that marks each beat (quavers on the first two beats), the quavers in the shakers and the bass accentuating the offbeats. The resultant rhythm is a consistent quaver pattern. In its harmonic and rhythmic consistency and repetition, ‘Mbombela’ is reminiscent of the one Floyd identifies as onomatopoeic of the train’s movement: the consistent ‘eighth-note quavers’ that reference the chugging diesel engine, repeating harmonic and rhythmic patterns that recall the repetitious pattern of a boogie woogie, another musical manifestation of the train that Floyd points out.<sup>88</sup> The harmonica solo between the statement and repetition of the song similarly recalls DeFord Bailey’s meticulous imitations of the train’s sounds that Floyd describes in his text.<sup>89</sup> While the harmonica is not necessarily or exclusively an instrument connoting the train, the portability of the instrument and its extensive use in the repertoire concerning trains renders it a powerful signifier when combined with other contextual markers – such as the title and the lyrics, in this case.



Figure 1: Transcription of ‘Mbombela’s accompaniment. The figure repeats throughout the song, albeit with some variation in the bass. Transcriptions by the author.

<sup>88</sup> See Floyd, ‘Troping the Blues’, 215-6, also 222.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

It seems self-evident that popular songs from South Africa like ‘Mbombela’ formed part of an exiled musician like Makeba’s established repertoires, which would spontaneously be drawn upon in exile as part and parcel of an artist’s ‘toolkit’, and simultaneously offered the marketable advantage in terms of its novelty value. However the significance of the song’s performance in exile goes beyond pure pragmatics. It offered ways to remember home, and to perform connections with a new place of abode. Beyond remembrance and performing connections with home, however, songs concerned with migration become surprisingly apposite expressions of dislocations experienced in exile and diaspora, and thereby acquire a new relevance in markedly different circumstances to that in which the song was originally conceived.

***Writing migration in(to) exile: Hugh Masekela’s ‘Stimela’***

If Makeba and Belafonte’s ‘Mbombela’ demonstrates how repertoire composed in contexts of migration travels into exile through musicians’ performances, and how songs of migration become mnemonics of home even as they gain new significance as expressions of displacement of a different kind, tenor and scale, Hugh Masekela’s ‘Stimela’ prompts us to think further about the ways memories of migration from South Africa sedimented in songs composed in exile. First appearing on the 1974 album *I Am Not Afraid*, ‘Stimela’ has become one of Masekela’s best-known songs, and a mainstay on the set lists of Masekela’s performances and best-of compilation albums.

Similar to ‘Mbombela’, the song title ‘Stimela’ (a Zulu word deriving from the English ‘steam train’) makes explicit reference to the train. The song is an account of mineworkers’ journey from different parts of Southern Africa to the mines of Johannesburg (here operating as metonym for the area of gold-bearing reefs called the Witwatersrand), the inhumane circumstances they encounter in the mining compounds and the gruelling conditions of their work. Memories of home – rural homesteads where families were left – offer no reprieve from these harrowing

experiences amidst fears that families will be ‘forcibly removed’ to areas known as ‘homelands’ under apartheid South Africa’s system of influx control articulated in the Group Areas Act:

There’s a coal train that comes from Angola and Mozambique,  
There’s a coal train that comes from Namibia, from Caprivi, from Zimbabwe,  
Zambia  
There’s a coal train that comes from Malawi, from Swaziland,  
From the whole hinterland of Southern Africa  
And it carries with it young men and old men,  
conscripted to come and work on contract  
In the gold, the gold and diamond mineral mines of Johannesburg  
Deep, deep, deep down in the belly of the earth  
When they are digging and drilling that shiny mighty  
evasive mighty stone,  
Or when they dish that mish mesh mush food out of a cold iron shovel  
into their iron plates  
Or when they sit miserably in their filthy,  
Flea-ridden barracks and hostels.  
And they think about their lands and their herds that were taken away from  
them  
They think about their loved ones, their mothers, their brothers, their sisters,  
their children and their friends who are daily forcibly removed  
Away from their lands  
Some of whom they may never see again  
And when they hear that Choo-Choo train  
They always curse the coal train,  
The coal train that brought them to Johannesburg.  
Stimela

[Chorus section]

Stimela sihamba ngalahle, sivel’ eTalagubhayi  
*the coal train is from Delagoa Bay*  
Shuku shuku shuku  
*Choo choo choo*  
Sangena la kwaguqa, webabe!  
*it came here in the Guqa land, oh people*  
Wathi sizo b’amalahle  
*who said we are stealing coal?*

Stimela sihamba ngamalahle, sivel’ eTalagubhayi  
*the coal train, it’s from Delagoa Bay*

Shuku shuku shuku  
*Choo choo choo*  
Saangilahla kwaguqa, webabe!  
*we entered Guqa land, oh people*  
Bathi sizomb' amalahle  
*and they said we are here to steal coal.*

[the following is more in the spirit of improvisation]

Iyhoooo, inkululeko  
*Ohhhhhhhhh, freedom*  
Yelele baba  
*Oh father*  
Sihleli nje ngezinja  
*we are treated like dogs*  
Silale le babe  
*listen to us father*  
Emigodini nje nje njee  
*in the mines like this*  
Sikhalel' izitihlobo zethu  
*we are crying for our families*

Masibuyel' eTalagubhayi  
*Let us go back to Delagoa Bay*  
Sikhalel' izihlobo zethu  
*we are crying for our families*  
Sikhalel' amatsheri ethu  
*we are crying for our girlfriends*  
Sikhalel' abafazi bethu  
*we are crying for our wives*  
Wathi yeleeeeeleeele  
*[humming vocalization sounds]*  
Sibuyel' eTalagubhayi  
*We are going back to Delagoa Bay*  
Stimela sihamba ngamalahle  
*Coal train*  
Sivel'eTalagubhayi  
*from Delagoa Bay*<sup>90</sup>

The first recording of the song on *I Am Not Afraid* featured only the Zulu chorus section, repeated thrice. To this was later added the English spoken introduction, which became one of the song's distinctive features along with its characteristic

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<sup>90</sup> Transcription and translation by Simthembele Xeketwana.

ostinato pattern in the accompaniment (see Figure 2). ‘Stimela’ is freer in structure than ‘Mbombela’, leaving considerable room for improvisation – this is especially noticeable when comparing different recordings of the song. This section’s analysis is based on a live recording on the album titled *Liberation*, which demonstrates the dynamics of improvisation in the performances better than shorter studio-recorded versions.<sup>91</sup> In the liner notes of the *Greatest Hits* album released by Columbia in 2000, Masekela recounts the composition of the song:

We were renting a winter home in Woodstock in 1972. It was during the festive season and in the middle of a wonderful party one evening when a snowstorm was raging outside. I left the revelry in great rush for the piano where I sat down and began to sing the song... I remembered my grandmother’s house in Witbank where migrant labourers who worked in coal mines came to drink. My sister Barbara and I were still toddlers and the miners would tell us their sad stories about how they came on the coal train from Mozambique to work in the mines. They spoke of the filthy conditions they were surrounded by in their all-male hostels, their longing for their families, the cruelty of their white employers and foremen, their measly pay and how much they longed to return home to Del[a]goa Bay where they could be away from living a stray dog’s life, where they would eat real food instead of the slop they were being fed and where they would be safe from the cave-ins which killed so many of their colleagues. This song is about the train.<sup>92</sup>

The composition of ‘Stimela’ demonstrates the work of memory. It brings the remembered past and the present time of the composition into a curious counterpoint. Some of the dissonances produced by this counterpoint are the snowstorm as opposed to Southern Africa’s sunny climate, the pleasures of a party and the rough working conditions of the mines, memory and the present moment of creation. Through these binaries, however, the past is brought forward to a considerably different present which is yet, curiously, a repetition: the inimical conditions of the mines are mirrored in the snowstorm (and we might add, the inimical conditions of exile); the longing of the migrant for his family as recounted in leisure hours at a *shebeen* (an unlicensed tavern or house) is reflected in Masekela’s memories of his childhood and family at a party. The threads that bind these otherwise disjunct fragments from different times and places are the themes of longing (the migrant for

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<sup>91</sup> Hugh Masekela, ‘Stimela’, *Liberation* (Jive, HOP 222, 1988).

<sup>92</sup> Hugh Masekela, liner notes, *Greatest Hits* (Columbia 498266 2, 2000).

his family, the exile for home), the journey (the migrant to Johannesburg, the exile to Woodstock), and memory (the migrant's memory of a perhaps displaced home, Masekela's memory of his childhood home in Witbank). The relationship between migration and exile that emerges from this analysis is parallel.

Although the composition of 'Stimela' was more or less synchronous with its performance exile, as opposed to 'Mbombela' that was drawn from earlier South African repertoires of migration, the invocation of the train in articulating migration under differently textured duress likewise invokes a different time, a different place and a different context. 'Stimela' is on the one hand very specific: its spoken text gives a detailed account of conditions of the mines even though the mineworkers are said to derive from 'all of the hinterlands of Southern Africa'. 'Stimela' demonstrates the work of memory: it evokes memories of labour migration, of a different time and a different place that may have been directly or indirectly experienced and recalled. But it also brings a different kind of memory, a cultural memory, into the present context of exile. In remembering the past, it (re-) contextualises the present of exile in a foreign country. Through memory, exile is given a historical precedent, which is migration. Exile, it may be argued, is thus framed as a recurring narrative about the loss of land, the loss of home, and the subjugation of a people. In this sense, the memory of home is already entangled with the displacement of migration, and thus the complex of South African migration becomes encapsulated in the signifier 'home'.

Through these rhetorical strategies, 'Stimela' functions like Makeba's 'Mbombela' as it harnesses the international performance platform to draw attention to the oppressive political situation in South Africa under apartheid. Yet it is more explicit in its narration of the dehumanisation of people subjected to a labour force, and is certainly more provocative in its rhetoric. This is not only achieved through its descriptive lyrics detailing the circumstances of mineworkers in English, a language more readily accessible to non-South African audiences, but also in the song's musical and poetic structure.

One of the hallmarks of ‘Stimela’ is its long, spoken verse over the distinctive, syncopated riff oscillating between an F minor seventh chord and a C minor ninth chord that serves as ostinato throughout the song (see Figure 2), with only the slight harmonic variations.<sup>93</sup> The repetition of the ostinato accompaniment figure in ‘Stimela’ and its syncopated rhythms are not onomatopoeically suggestive of the train, as could be said of ‘Mbombela’: while the pulse and rhythms are consistent, it is nevertheless too slow to evoke the motion of the wheels over the track. Yet, the accompaniment provides a taut ostinato over which the lyrics are spoken and later sung, and it is effective in creating tension between the flexible iteration of the spoken text as it contrasts with the unrelenting rhythm of the accompaniment. The accompaniment is suggestive of the inflexible, unrelenting motion of the train and the mining industry, along with all it connotes, over which the human voice contrasts in its more flexible, improvisatory enunciation, bending the timing of its syllables and straining to the utmost (yet ultimately remaining within) the bounds of the constant metre maintained by the rhythm section. It is this contrast that encapsulates the drama of the human in the industrial system.



Figure 2: Transcription of ‘Stimela’s accompaniment.  
 Transcription by the author, at the pitch that it is heard (that is, not using standard guitar notation).

‘Stimela’ draws on the legacy of migration in exile in a different way than ‘Mbombela’ does. It is a composition made in exile, drawing on memories of ‘home’, which is a referent in which migration is already embedded. And yet, through this reference to ‘home’, ‘Stimela’ suggests parallels between the labour migration and exile: both entail a journey, longing, loss and suffering. Exile emerges as another chapter of labour migration, albeit on a transnational scale.

<sup>93</sup> First, the F minor seventh chord is altered to have a B flat instead of an F in the bass (11:37-12:06), creating a step-wise movement when it is followed by the C minor seventh. This is repeated for two four-bar cycles. Then, directly following this variation is another. The F minor chord is followed by an E flat major seventh chord (12:06-12:38), again creating a step-wise movement in the bass between the F and the E flat.



*The never-ending journey: The fate of 'Amagoduka' in Zim Ngqawana's 'Migrant Worker Suite'*

Zim Ngqawana's 'Migrant Worker Suite' offers a perspective on migration after the advent of formal democracy in 1994. Ngqawana, who was born in Port Elizabeth in 1959 (the same year that Makeba went into exile) and passed away in 2011, represents a younger generation of jazz musicians than Makeba and Masekela.<sup>94</sup> Although he was not in exile himself, Ngqawana studied in the United States during the giddy times of South Africa's transition in the early 1990s after Nelson Mandela's release from prison and leading up to the first democratic elections in 1994, when impending democracy was still fraught with uncertainty. Under the tutelage of Archie Shepp and Yusef Lateef while he held a scholarship at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, liberation came to mean something different for Ngqawana than the political anti-apartheid struggle chants resounding through South Africa with increasing urgency throughout the '70s and '80s. Less concerned with the politics of South Africa per se, the notion of freedom seeped into his work as an artistic concern, grounded in a concern for humanity. Even as Ngqawana's music speaks to universal themes evident in song titles such as 'Man and Woman' or 'Beautiful Love (it's all about love)', or invokes the global in 'Gobbliesation' and the continental in 'www.kwantunent.com (aka African continent)', Ngqawana's music also registers local practices with references to indigenous forms of black music in song titles like 'Sangoma', 'Diviners Ceremonies', or an 'Ode of Princess Magogo'. As I have argued elsewhere, this should not be taken as a form of neo-traditionalism;<sup>95</sup> rather, a turn to traditional conceptions of spirituality in new ways, as Jean and John Comaroff argue, presents 'a mode of producing *new* forms of consciousness; of expressing discontent with modernity and dealing with its deformities.'<sup>96</sup> Given the far-reaching effects of modernity, Ngqawana's concern with broader notions of humanity and the human at

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<sup>94</sup> Indeed, as a budding musician in the early 1990s Ngqawana performed with Hugh Masekela and Abdullah Ibrahim, two icons of South African exile.

<sup>95</sup> Stephanie Vos, 'The Exhibition of Vandalizm: Improvising Healing, Politics and Film in South Africa', in *Sound Changes: Improvisation, Social Practice, and Cultural Difference*, ed. Eric Porter and Daniel Fischlin (Duke University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>96</sup> Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, 'Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from the South African Post-Colony', *American Ethnologist*, 26:2 (1999), 284.

the level of the global is not as incompatible with his reinvention of traditional forms of spirituality as it may seem at first.

How does music engage with a theme like migration beyond the formal political, economic and racial coordinates like apartheid and exile that crucially shaped this theme within South African black experience for the best part of the twentieth-century? What is the relevance of the theme of migration after the formal end of apartheid, after exile? In Ngqawana's 'Migrant Worker Suite' as well as his artistic concerns, we may discern the different meanings migration assumes in an increasingly globalised, transnational space, less determined by political necessity than migration due to exile. Ngqawana, in contrast with his older exiled colleagues, had the liberty to collaborate with European and American artists for the *San Song* and *Zimology in Concert* recordings (respectively) without compromising his right to return to South Africa. Dedicated to 'all migrant workers across the globe',<sup>97</sup> Ngqawana's 'Migrant Worker Suite' sets a decidedly wider agenda than that of South African migration. Yet the suite improvises upon an established trope of migration in South Africa, which is yoked to legacies of race relations in South Africa and situates the music within this specific, highly politicised history. How are these histories musically activated, foregrounded (or ignored) in Ngqawana's 'Migrant Worker Suite'?

The 'Migrant Worker Suite' appears in various guises in Ngqawana's discography. It was first recorded on the album *San Song* (1997) in collaboration with South African pianist Andile Yenana and Norwegian saxophonist Bjørn Ole Solberg, drummer Paal Nilssen-Love and bassist Ingebrigt Håker Flaten, a collaboration that resulted in two subsequent albums with Nilssen-Love and Flaten in the rhythm section.<sup>98</sup> Another recording of the suite appears on the live album, *Zimology in Concert* (released in 2008), featuring the faculty members of the University of Tennessee with whom Ngqawana performed during his residency at this institution in 2003.<sup>99</sup> In addition to these two recordings of the full suite, a section from the suite titled 'Migration to

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<sup>97</sup> Liner notes, Zim Ngqawana, *San Song* (NOR CD, NORCD 9720, 1996).

<sup>98</sup> The albums are *Zimology* (Sheer Sound, SSCD 038, 1997) and *Ingoma* (Sheer Sound, SSCD 053, 1999).

<sup>99</sup> The group included former Jazz Messenger Donald Brown on piano, Mark Boling on guitar, Keith Brown on drums, and Rusty Holloway on double bass.

Johannesburg’ was recorded with an all-South African group as a single track on the album *Vadzimu* (2003),<sup>100</sup> a recording that appears again on the *Best of Zim Ngqawana* album released the same year. The re-recording of a work on several albums is rare in Ngqawana’s discography – indeed, it is, as far as I could tell the only track that was re-recorded for different albums.<sup>101</sup> This seems to suggest migration as an enduring concern over more than a decade of Ngqawana’s recorded output. Although the train, that powerful trope of South African migration, is not explicitly referenced in the title ‘Migrant Worker Suite’ (as was the case in ‘Mbombela’ and ‘Stimela’), it shares with Masekela’s ‘Stimela’ and Belafonte and Makeba’s ‘Mbombela’ several features that I have argued, with reference to Floyd’s analysis, onomatopoeically represent the train (these will be discussed in the music analysis below).

This section will focus on the ‘Migrant Worker Suite’ on the *Zimology in Concert* album. This version is the most structured recording of the suite, with individual tracks furnished with track titles that programmatically index the movements of this otherwise continuous performance. It is also the most elaborate version of the suite, comprising five sections on separately titled tracks, totalling a running time of nearly twenty-seven minutes; whereas the earlier *San Song* version was recorded as a single track, featuring four main sections without separate section titles, amounting to one seventeen-minute track. The consideration does not, however, hinge on the quantitative. ‘Migrant Worker Suite’ on *Zimology in Concert* represents the fuller range of migration experiences that resonates with the project of this chapter. As the titles of the suite’s constituent sections indicate, the journey musically traced in ‘Migrant Worker Suite’ departs from ‘Homeland’, followed by ‘Migration to Johannesburg’, ‘Migration to America’, ‘Donald’s Offering’ and a ‘Reprise: Amagoduka (Migrant Workers)’. For the purposes of my reading, concerned with charting tropological reiterations and revisions, this rendition of ‘Migrant Worker Suite’ offers the opportunity to examine what follows ‘Migration to America’, introducing the notion of return.

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<sup>100</sup> Zim Ngqawana, *Vadzimu* (Sheer Sound, SSCD 096, 2003).

<sup>101</sup> As opposed to already-recorded tracks featuring on a ‘Best of’ compilation.

A quick comparison between the versions of the ‘Migrant Worker Suite’ on the *Zimology in Concert* recording with that on the earlier 1996 album, *San Song*, helps to distil its main structural features (see Appendix 1 for a schematic comparison between the two recordings). Both recordings start with a freely improvised, modal opening section with F as tonal centre (this section is titled ‘Homeland’ on the *Zimology in Concert* recording; no section titles are given on *San Song*). ‘Homeland’ is followed by a metered section based on a repeating short cycle called ‘Migration to Johannesburg’ in F major on the *Zimology in Concert* recording (again, no section title is given on *San Song*). Around these two core sections, which may be regarded as the DNA of the suite, further sections are added and improvised with greater variation between the two recordings. Of these main sections of the suite, ‘Migration to Johannesburg’ was re-recorded as a single track on the album *Vadzimu*, appearing under the track title ‘Amagoduka (Migrant Workers) Part 3’.

‘Migrant Worker to Johannesburg’, alternatively titled ‘Amagoduka’ (readers will recall the Xhosa word for migrant worker from the discussion above) functions as the centrepiece of this suite. Like ‘Stimela’ and ‘Mbombela’, all its permutations are based on repeating riff, in this case oscillating between chords I and V in F major, passing briefly through  $ii_{6/5}$  before arriving on either chord (the transcription of this riff in Figure 3 below illustrates the voice leading in the piano).<sup>102</sup> Over this repeating short cycle, a harmonica enters, further punctuating the rhythm and harmonies of this riff. In the tropological sense that Floyd proposes – the logic of the repetition of certain tropes to connote and elaborate recurring themes – I argue that ‘Amagoduka’/ ‘Migrant Worker to Johannesburg’ merits consideration under the rubric of the train, offering commentary on processes and experiences of migration not unlike his predecessors, Makeba and Belafonte, and Masekela.



Figure 3: Transcription of the piano riff of the main section of ‘Amagoduka’.  
Transcription by the author.

<sup>102</sup> The chord progression is based on the typical harmonic structure of *marabi*: I –  $ii_{6/5}$  – I  $6/4$  – V :|| This is more apparent on the *San Song* recording.

‘Homeland’ as a prelude to ‘Amagoduka’ functions as a point of departure to contextualise the migration, even though the process of migration itself is the main focal point of the suite. This view is supported by the fact that the riff underpinning the ‘Migrant Worker/Amagoduka’ permeates all the sections of the suite except for the sections titled ‘Homeland’ and ‘Donald’s Offering’, which are shorter than the other movements, and structurally less significant than the other movements where the riff is present. But what is the purpose of this homeland, this musical ‘other’ that assumes an ephemeral, almost mythical quality through its modal improvisations over a tonic or dominant pedal point, ungoverned by metre? If it is not the point that is returned to – the reprise is not of ‘Homeland’ but to the ‘Migrant Worker/Amagoduka’ – why is it structurally and programmatically necessary to include?

Opening with an improvisation is not structurally necessary, as the rendition of the second movement ‘Migration to Johannesburg’, appearing as a lone-standing track ‘Amagoduka (Migrant Workers) Part 3’ on *Vadzimu* demonstrates. Thus, it could be argued that the fundamental pathology of the migrant cannot be understood completely without this notion of home as a reference point. The train and process of migration in ‘Migrant Worker Suite’, therefore, has to be understood in terms of this mythical, timeless world that was departed from. Through the improvisation’s use of the pentatonic scale deriving from the Xhosa bow, which is often used as the tonal system found in traditional Xhosa music, ‘Homeland’ arguably suggests the pre-colonial world.<sup>103</sup> In contrast, we may musically read the quadruple meter, the repeated harmonic pattern and consistent rhythms of ‘Migration to Johannesburg’ as signifiers of the train that connotes the migrant labourer. The Suite does not return to the freely improvised structure of ‘Homeland’ except for fleeting moments in the fourth movement, ‘Donald’s Offering’. This movement is a modal improvisation over a C pedal point, again, like ‘Homeland’, with no metre. C is significantly the dominant of F, thus from a structural perspective ‘Donald’s Offering’ functions as a prolonged dominant pedal point preparing for the ‘Reprise’ – the moment of return. A return to where?

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<sup>103</sup> David Dargie, *Xhosa Music: Its Techniques and Instruments, with a Collection of Songs* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, 1988), 76.

The 'Reprise' is indeed not a return to 'Homeland', to the quiet, metre-less and modal 'pre-colonial' space suggested by this point of origin, which would lend the suite a satisfyingly symmetrical narrative arc. Rather, the return is to the familiar riff of 'Amagoduka' in F major. The fact that the 'homeland' is not the final movement of the suite seems to suggest the impossibility of return to 'Homeland' – something that is never fully possible to restore in a lasting way, although the brief recourse to its modal and 'timeless' landscape in the dominant pedal point that is 'Donald's Offering' serves as a fleeting reminder of this space. The return is instead to the repetition of the short-cycles suggesting continuous – even relentless – movement, the never-ending journey of the migrant.

This reading seems confirmed by the lyrics added to 'Amagoduka' as it was re-recorded on the album *Vadzimu* as the single track, 'Amagoduka (Migrant Workers) Part 3'. The following two lines are chanted over the basic riff that characterises the piece:

'Ngeke'ulale Dlamini  
*You won't sleep Dlamini*

Angek'ulale  
*You'll never sleep*

'Ngeke ulale we Dlamini  
*You won't sleep Dlamini*

Angek'ulale  
*You'll never sleep*

'Ngek'ulale namhlanje  
*You won't sleep today/tonight*

Angek'ulale  
*You'll never sleep*

'Ngek'ulale nomKapa  
*You won't sleep nomKapa*

Angeke'ulale  
*You'll never sleep*

Indirectly, the lyrics should be understood in the spirit of a bet, or a challenge. A more loosely translated equivalent would be: 'I bet you won't sleep', or, 'You

couldn't possibly sleep – never!’<sup>104</sup> In the context of the ‘Migrant Worker Suite’ and the question of its reprise, the text added to the ‘Amagoduka’ riff seems to suggest the permanent changes modernity wrought, the irreversibility of the colonial condition in the post-colonial moment, the permanent loss of home that is now only accessible in memory, relegated to a mythical place.

Although ‘Migrant Worker Suite’ does not address exile explicitly, it provides a perspective on its aftermath. It hints at the ways in which music and musicians still travel in an ever-increasing transnational space, where international collaboration between artists is a matter of choice rather than a necessity caused by exile. In this sense, it conveys a sense of the liberty and liberation after apartheid. Yet it invokes the memory of a homeland that was once departed from, it recalls the history of migration and the split consciousness inherent in migrancy, that is forked between the world it departed from and the one in which it is present. It embellishes the possibilities of international exchange, but ultimately it portends an impossible return to home: home has become forever the place of migration.

### **The train as metaphor**

Let us consider the device that constructs the links between past and present in the songs discussed above: the role of metaphor as apparent in the figure of the train. Metaphor confers a relationship between two things that are not directly, literally linked. As a ‘*displacement* and an *extension* of the meaning of words’ based on the principle of substitution,<sup>105</sup> metaphor is concerned with what happens if a term is lifted out of proper context and placed in a different context. It requires a widening of the semantic field and operates on a notion of veracity that lies beyond the literality of facts and the accuracy of details: metaphor’s imaginative elaboration on the matter at hand relies on an elision of particular details for the applicability of a broader principle to emerge. Fundamental to ‘metaphor’ is therefore the idea of difference: things that are *not* the same are brought in relation to each other *whilst*

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<sup>104</sup> I thank Akhona Ndzuta for her help with the translation and interpretation of the text.

<sup>105</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: The Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. Robert Czerny, with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello (London: Routledge, 1986), 1 (my emphases).

*retaining their separate identities*. This creates a tension between the two terms even as it produces meaning. Max Black characterises this field of relationality, produced between the two terms that metaphor operates, as dynamic and productive.<sup>106</sup>

It is here, in the space articulating, mediating and characterizing difference between two terms, that the connection the ‘train songs’ draw between migration and exile intersects with the idea of metaphor. The idea of relationality (and this includes a severance of relation altogether) is central to the notions of displacement and exile. Indeed, one way of thinking about scholarship concerning exile is as a field that theorises relationality stemming from differentials of place (home, away). This has been configured in different ways by various authors, as will become apparent as I develop the notion of exile throughout the thesis. For the moment, however, the image of the train prompts a consideration of how metaphor operates both as an image of migration drawn into the context of exile, and as a model through which we can start to explore notions of relationality. Like Michael Spitzer, who theorises metaphor in the realm of music, my use of the term ‘metaphor’ is broad, in recognition of the ways that the imagery that pervades music – itself requiring significant use of metaphor when it is discussed through language – is difficult to disentangle from terms like trope, symbol, myth, figure, simile, or metonym.<sup>107</sup>

The twin ideas of difference and relationality are inscribed in the Greek etymology of the word ‘metaphor’, meaning ‘to transfer’ or to ‘carry over’ (*meta* = over, *pherein* = carry).<sup>108</sup> Significantly, the difference implied has spatial coordinates already intimated by Ricoeur’s definition of metaphor as ‘displacement’ and ‘extension’: to carry over or transfer implies at least two sites or locations, and relationality is implied through a divide that is bridged.<sup>109</sup> Sarah Dillon employs the idea of distance when she explains that the figure of metaphor moves from the known to the unknown, the purpose of which is to ‘appropriate the *remote* subject, to

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<sup>106</sup> See Martin Scherzinger’s discussion of Max Black in ‘Max Black’s “Interaction View” of Metaphor’, *Conference*, 6 (1995), 90.

<sup>107</sup> Michael Spitzer, ‘The Metaphorical Present’, in *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 3.

<sup>108</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*.

<sup>109</sup> Significantly, both the terms ‘displacement’ and ‘extension’ in Ricoeur’s definition of metaphor have spatial connotations.



make it more familiar and more comprehensible' (my emphasis).<sup>110</sup> In Michael Spitzer's definition of metaphor in music, the interplay between the known and the unknown is constructed even more explicitly in spatial terms: 'musical metaphor [is] the relationship between the physical, proximate and familiar, and the abstract, distal, and unfamiliar.'<sup>111</sup>

It is exactly upon this spatial understanding of metaphor that Michel de Certeau plays in his essay, 'Spatial Stories', in which he expounds the ways that stories about place organise and spatially coordinate everyday life. De Certeau uses the modern Greek understanding of the word *metaphorai* – referring to vehicles like buses and trains – to metaphorically illuminate the way the narrative process denotes place even as it traverses these boundaries in the act of narration. 'Every day', he writes, '[stories about place] traverse and organise places; they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial trajectories.'<sup>112</sup> The working of metaphor is amply demonstrated in this quote: the familiar image of the train is applied in an unfamiliar context, that of stories, to elucidate their relationship to place. The productive or dynamic tension between the two terms lies in their obvious, almost incommensurate, differences: the materiality of the train versus the ephemeral quality of the story; the seeming fixity of the road or the track as opposed to the variability of narratives; the existence of transportation in the world of rationality and practicality in contrast to the existence of stories in the realm of ideas, ideology. It is here that the processual quality of the metaphor comes into operation: it transforms road and event respectively into itinerary and narrative strategy; it connects physical place to the act of remembrance, imagination or experience of place which De Certeau describes as space (defined as 'practiced place').<sup>113</sup> In short, the trajectory of the journey is projected onto the act of narration.

Stories have the capacity to make the journey because they 'organise places through the displacements that they describe.'<sup>114</sup> Indeed, what De Certeau describes as the

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<sup>110</sup> Sarah Dillon, 'On Poetry and Metaphor', in *The Palimpsest: Literature, Criticism, Theory* (London and New York: Continuum, 2007), 48 and 50.

<sup>111</sup> Spitzer, 'The Metaphorical Present', 4.

<sup>112</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Randall (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1988), 115.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

organisational capacity of stories resembles the analytical function Steven Feld ascribes to stories: ‘Stitching stories together is ... a sense-making activity, one that signals a clear analytical awareness of the fluidity and gaps in public and private discourses.’<sup>115</sup> Both of these views play upon the way that stories construct the relationship between the conjunctions, disjunctions or tenuous threads that link persons, events and places – thus underscoring the power of narrative and discursive construction. It is in this light that we could also understand the narratives that the ‘train songs’ perform in different places: by telling of ‘there’ and ‘then’, they construct the present.

De Certeau attributes to stories about place, and especially stories where place is disputed, in other words in question, a ‘distributive power and performative force’ that lend them the capacity to ‘*authorise* [in both the sense of ‘scripting’ and ‘endorsing’] the establishment, displacement and transcendence of limits’.<sup>116</sup> The act of authorizing borders simultaneously insinuates its opposition or negative: the transgression of the border.<sup>117</sup> In stories, ‘[t]he door that closes is precisely what may be opened; the river is what makes passage possible; the tree is what marks stages of advance; the picket fence is an ensemble of interstices through which one’s glances pass.’<sup>118</sup> This doubling of the frontier as the bridge follows what De Certeau calls the ‘logic of ambiguity’.

If stories perform a ‘logic of ambiguity’, in other words the transcendence of borders through their very description, I would argue that the logic of ambiguity extends beyond the places and times that the narrative describes and seeps into (or blurs) the boundaries between the story and the emerging present of the narrative act. Beyond the relationships with place that spatial stories themselves describe, the act of narration performs the relation between places and times. By telling about what happened there and then, narratives inevitably construct a relation with what happens here and now. Stories describe, but in the descriptive act they also *create* new relationalities that make sense of or play in on the present. The story itself is a

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<sup>115</sup> Steven Feld, *Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra: Five Musical Years in Ghana* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 8.

<sup>116</sup> De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 123.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

performance unfolding in time and space; the metaphors within the story extend to the circumstances of the present, connecting past iterations with the emerging present of the narrative act. This is evident in the performance of 'Mbombela' or 'Stimela' in exile: although the lyrics recount events of the past and at home, the act of performing these memories in the exiled present creates the relationship between migration and exile. Migration, in other words, metaphorically extends to the present in exile, and music becomes the means through which the connection is made. In narrating the divide between here and there, exile and home, present and past, music serves as a revolving door or the bridge that connects the two terms of the dichotomy.

Let me summarise the conceptual framework sketched thus far, which will inform the consideration of the literature about discourses on music, migration and exile in the rest of this chapter. I have posited that the key feature of displacement is difference and relationality, and I have explored metaphor as one model of understanding how the dynamic between difference and relationality plays out (others will be explored in subsequent chapters). I have explored metaphor on two levels: firstly, the relationality expressed in the figure of metaphor itself as the productive and dynamic tension between two terms; secondly, how this relationality is spatialized through stories about place when the metaphor is transposed to *metaphorai* (the train, *inter alia*, following De Certeau). In its simplest form, the metaphor is the figure of speech, a textual device through which the train signifies the journey or a process of migration in a song's title and lyrics. But the song itself may be understood as that which connects different places and times. Music serves as the bridge between memory and the present.

### **Connecting migration and exile: Home**

The relationship between migration and exile suggested through the discussion of the 'train songs' above, as narrative acts that connect migration and exile, comes into sharper focus when we consider one of the master tropes of displacement, that of home. As Svetlana Boym points out, home comes into purview when one is away

from home – it is only perceived from the outside.<sup>119</sup> But the ‘outside’ perspective that frames home already signals a proneness to dichotomies when talking about home. Let us consider the dichotomies that aggregate around the notion of ‘home’, turning first to ethnographies of South African migration before considering how the connotations that already inhere in migration pattern onto the notion of home in exile. While doing so, we may bear in mind De Certeau’s ‘logic of ambiguity’ which emphasises the border – the distinctions that seem to ring-fence notions of ‘home’ and ‘elsewhere’ – as that which is simultaneously transcended in its statement or narration. Here, the figures of the migrant and the train are key: they are embodiments of traversal of what is constructed as ostensibly separate worlds.

The first attribute of ‘home’ as it is narrated, is that it exists not only in a spatial dimension, but also in a temporal dimension, that of the past. As a case in point, Jean and John Comaroff observe that the way the rural home and the urban workplace is described in the poetics of the Tshidi-Borolong, is as ‘two radically different epochs that have come to coexist in time’.<sup>120</sup> The spatially and temporally ‘dissonant worlds’ that Tshidi-Borolong migrants occupy are linked by the railway, which serves as the connector between home and place of labour.<sup>121</sup> Indeed, ‘work’ and ‘labour’ become the spaces of symbolic elaboration in which contrast, as a poetic and rhetorical device, articulates ‘homeland’ in opposition to urban workplace.<sup>122</sup> Through the notions of ‘work’ (as a non-commodified, creative and reproductive activity, referring to predominantly agrarian activities) as opposed to ‘labour’ (commodified labour, ‘work for money’ in industries), the qualities attributed to home and city respectively could be gleaned. As Comaroff and Comaroff summarise, ‘work contrasts with [wage] labor as does self-construction with self-destruction; as time logged “out there” with the creative processes of production and reproduction “at home” (*mo gae*); as the enduring value of cattle with the capricious flow of money.’<sup>123</sup> Traditional (‘enduring’) values, agency, social integrity and sovereignty come to define home, definitions emerging all the more clearly in relief against its opposite, the city, a space of dehumanisation and non-permanence. Crucially, these

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<sup>119</sup> Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 251.

<sup>120</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff, ‘The Madman and the Migrant’, 193.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 200 and 205.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

domains are only kept separate in discursive and symbolic practice. The madman, as a signifier of the city and the rural, embodies a more accurate reflection of the reality of the community embroiled in both worlds.<sup>124</sup>

*Nightsong*, Veit Erlmann's ethnography of *isicathamiya* practices in South Africa, offers a substantial consideration of the (re)constitution of home in *isicathamiya* performance. Understood as a 'symbolic return to the source: the past, the home, the [isiZulu] nation', Erlmann shows how *isicathamiya* practice develops as Zulu migrant workers' response to the harrowing conditions of labour and the city.<sup>125</sup> Home is invoked through a rich web of symbolism, key among which are song texts that play upon the twin themes of home and the 'unhomely', the latter being the term coined by Homi Bhabha.<sup>126</sup> The 'unhomely' is characterised by tropes associated with the city and the eroded values of home: the crowd (emphasizing the dislocation of the individual), the machine (of which the train is a powerful symbol, also as a means of characterizing the dogged nature of wage labour) and the prostitute (connoting the weakening social order, but also reflecting on notions of wage labour in the commodification of the body). Countering this sense of dislocation and symbolically reinstating traditional social order and values, 'home' in *isicathamiya* practices is invoked through a 'bricolage of song lyrics, choir names, and uniforms of images and symbols representing an imagined Zulu collectivity rooted in an ancient past'.<sup>127</sup> It is also apparent in the social organisation of choirs, often comprising members hailing from the same town or region and internally organised following traditional patriarchal hierarchies.

'Home' in *isicathamiya* practices, Erlmann argues, is constructed as an inverted utopia, as a counter-image to the 'unhomely'. It is not so much dependent on the 'possession of a home' or home as a physical space as it is a symbol of non-ambiguity, 'a condition in which the blurred boundaries of "home in the world" and

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<sup>124</sup> The precariousness and permeability of the 'divide' between the rural and the urban domains is also emphasised in Steffen Jensen's discussion of the secular and the occult politics in South Africa. In Jensen's discussion, the singing of the song 'Shosholoza' (about the train bringing migrant workers to the city) in nearly incommensurate contexts symbolises the connection between the rural and the urban. See Steffen Jensen, 'Shosholoza', 91-106.

<sup>125</sup> Erlmann, *Nightsong*, 133 and 101.

<sup>126</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The World and the Home', *Social Text*, 31/32 (1992), 141-153.

<sup>127</sup> Erlmann, *Nightsong*, 175.

“world in the home” [referring to Homi Bhabha’s definition of the unhomely] are distinct’.<sup>128</sup> While this definition of home alerts us to the heightening of symbolic values and divisions (essentialisms, even) as the corollary of absence, it simultaneously points to the already-problematized, contested space that is home and ‘homeland’ in the context of twentieth-century South Africa, of which a pre-colonial, ‘uncontaminated’ version is already a fiction.

Home assumes a more sinister quality when it is a space assigned and circumscribed by a political regime, bounded by reified (and often fictional) notions of ‘ethnicity’ in which the maintenance of ‘authentic culture’ is co-opted as justification. The Capetonian jazz singer Sathima Bea Benjamin recalls the eviction of her family from their home of several generations in the suburb Rondebosch when it was declared a white area. Significantly, Benjamin names the record label she established in exile *Ekapa* (from the Cape). While this inscribes the artistic output released on this label, her own as well as that of her spouse at the time, Abdullah Ibrahim, as music ‘from home’, ‘home’ is already in the plural, a place already marked by a fractured history. This echoes the notion of home articulated in ‘Stimela’, where Hugh Masekela refers to the vulnerability of the migrant’s rural home to the dictates of the apartheid state, which could ‘forcibly remove’ loved ones in the migrant’s absence from home. It signals a doubled displacement of the migrant who is not only dislocated in the urban space of work, but also uprooted from the referent of home.

‘Home’ is furthermore often a space of poverty and insufficient sustenance, necessitating the supplementary income of migrant labour.<sup>129</sup> ‘Home’ as a social order does not remain pristine in the absence of migrant workers; it is itself disrupted by the absence of those who work in the cities and is shaped by the ties with urban wage earners and their income.<sup>130</sup> More insidiously, ‘homelands’ were one of the sites of apartheid’s division of ethnicities following its policy of ‘separate development’, strategically aimed at fragmenting black political solidarity. Radio, administrated by the South African Broadcasting Agency (SABC) and music

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>129</sup> Wolpe, ‘Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa’, 60-90. Song texts quoted in Erlmann’s ethnography of *isicathamiya* articulate this economic dependency in music, for instance *Nightsong*, 165.

<sup>130</sup> This is especially clear in Ballantine, ‘Gender and Migrancy’, 184-5.

produced for radio broadcast played a significant role in constructing and reinforcing ethnic essentialisms, as Courtney Pine's revealing documentary *Bands Apart* shows.<sup>131</sup>

The central point that these examples suggest, as we move towards considering what 'home' means in exile, is that 'home' and 'homeland' within South Africa from the exile's perspective is far from a singular, stable or uncontested space. It is already a complex, even compromised space when it enters into the exilic imagination. In contrast to the ideal of the pre-colonial, 'untouched' space of self-determination and tradition, 'home' is a composite of urban and the rural, and the dialectic between those two overlapping spheres of reference is already conditioned by the power relations and politics of colonialism and its offshoots, segregation and apartheid.

But we may also observe the role of poetics, symbolism and imagination in the articulation of 'home'. The dissolution of physical boundaries between home and elsewhere, Erlmann observes in the context of *isicathamiya*, paradoxically heightens the symbolic representation of this divide.<sup>132</sup> Music and poetics, as symbolic fields, become the spaces of home as it slips out of physical reach. In other words, 'home' migrates into the realm of symbolic practice, in which music serves as a key mode expression.

Hugh Masekela's 1972 album title, 'Home is where the music is', captures this shift succinctly. Where home is no longer available, conceivable, or mired in uncertain return, it transposes into a portable and symbolic practice. This draws on and underscores home, as practiced place.<sup>133</sup> As Tina K. Ramnarine argues, the very ambiguity of sonic referencing to place and senses of belonging renders music 'a medium equally appropriate for holding onto the past or for re-imagining places, histories and traditions.'<sup>134</sup> Unmoored from physical manifestation or geographical coordinates, 'Home' as practised place does not necessarily require co-performers from the same background, as Abdullah Ibrahim's band tellingly called Ekaya

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<sup>131</sup> *Bands Apart – A Black Britain Special* [television documentary], dir. Amir Amirani, featuring Courtney Pine (BBC2, 2000), available at the British Library Sound Archive, Shelfmark: C787/12.

<sup>132</sup> Erlmann, *Nightsong*, 160.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. 140.

<sup>134</sup> Ramnarine, *Beautiful Cosmos*, 20.

(meaning ‘at home’) demonstrates. Although its membership has varied since Ibrahim first established this group, the music manifests the notion of home regardless of the musicians. ‘Home’ transposes to the space within, or as the singer-songwriter Sathima Bea Benjamin (Ibrahim’s wife) put it in an interview: ‘It’s a spiritual embrace. So I’m always home. It’s like I took Africa *within*, and that’s the coming home.’<sup>135</sup>

To draw together these perspectives on ‘home’ in South African migration and later in exile, I suggest three ways in which the relationship between exile and migration might be conceived. Or, to phrase it slightly differently, how migration patterns onto exile, and how exile emerges from existing discourses of migration.

First, the relationship between migration and exile could be described as analogous. The defining tropes of migration, that of ‘home’ and ‘away’, typically in an urban space, are mirrored by exile even though the terms of home and new place of abode are at a greater geographical and, one could argue, cultural remove from each other. If migration orbits discursively around the dialectic between a rural, ‘traditional’ home and the urban, ‘westernised’ workspace, this dialectic of ‘home’ and ‘away from home’ is mirrored in exile and country of origin at the level of the national home (South Africa) and host country.<sup>136</sup> It is at this level that the idea of departure and loss expressed in ‘Mbombela’, in its initial performance contexts reflecting upon the departure of a loved one to the city for work, could, through its non-specificity and elision of detail, along with what Ramnarine calls the ambiguity of sonic referencing, become interpreted as the same expression of departure and loss at a transnational level. One could also argue that ‘Stimela’ expresses the migrant’s longing for home that is analogous to the exile’s longing for home.

Second, the whole space of migrancy, the dialectic between rural and urban in South Africa, forms a historical unit that becomes ‘home’ as a referent in exile. In other

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<sup>135</sup> In *Sathima’s Windsong*, dir. Daniel Yon (2010), see excerpt on Youtube, available: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aG9B8vrAGPM>>, accessed 14 June 2015.

<sup>136</sup> In the early years of both Makeba and Masekela’s exile, the host countries were in the so-called ‘West’ – Britain and the United States, strengthening the analogue. After several years of exile, however, both artists moved to countries on the African continent and write about feeling closer to home or more at home, thus slightly weakening the dichotomy of ‘home’ and ‘exile’.



words, 'home' in exile subsumes the divides and dialectics of South African experiences of migration into its conception: home is already a plurality.<sup>137</sup> Thus, to return to the point that I made in the analysis of 'Stimela', the whole experience of migration expressed through the song becomes 'home' as a referent. 'Home' is always-already conditioned by the experience of migration. This point seems to be underscored by song titles such as Abdullah Ibrahim's 'Mannenberg' and 'Soweto', recalling places to which communities were relocated (or displaced) from urban centres.

This brings me to a third way that exile relates to migration. I follow Veit Erlmann's suggestion in the context of migration that the opposite of 'home' is not that which is 'away from home', but rather ambivalence – as the reprise of 'Amagoduka' as the enduring condition of the migrant worker in Ngqawana's 'Migrant Worker Suite' suggests. In exile, similarly, 'home' is also shrouded in ambivalence – for if home were not a traumatic, life-inhibiting space, exile would not be necessary. Where home denotes an 'uncomplicated' singularity, it becomes a third term: an imaginary or fictional space. As Zim Ngqawana's 'Homeland' demonstrates, it is prone to the 'inverted utopias' – timeless limitless spaces belonging to the pre-colonial imagination to which return is impossible. This home of the migrant's and exile's imagination is a space that is (always-already) bound up in a dialectic between home and migration. It becomes a symbolic field that recuperates a utopian home irretrievably lost. Following on from this, 'home' becomes a space of musical imagination and imaginative reconstruction, and thus a field where one may read the discursive practices of exile.

## **Conclusion**

Through the contextualisation of South African exile within a longer history of migration in South Africa, I have shown that migration is more than a historical predecessor to exile, that migration reverberates in music performed in exile and thereby directly informs South African exile as a discourse. The music examples

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<sup>137</sup> Erlmann, *Nightsong*, 203.

compel us to think of exile not as an isolated aspect of South African music history and the biographies of exiled musicians, but as a point of aggregation where longer histories of displacement accrete.<sup>138</sup> Or, to improvise or ‘trope’ on David Harvey’s notion of the train as emblem of ‘time-space compression’, music could be understood to perform a poetic ‘time-space compression’: the performance of ‘train songs’ evokes stories of migration and brings it forward into exile, or post-1994 South Africa. It brings stories of then and there into the experiences of here and now, embracing both interrelated coordinates of time and space. Let’s pause to consider the ways that the past is brought into the present.

The experience of labour migration that seeped so thoroughly into urban, mainly black music practices of the 1940s and ’50s bequeathed the South African musicians in exile an extensive and rich repertoire of songs vocalizing the experiences of dislocation.<sup>139</sup> The dislocations experienced in migration from rural homesteads to urban areas become drawn into narratives that express dislocation experienced in exile. The three ‘train songs’ I have discussed powerfully suggest continuities and connections between migration histories and the present in which they are performed.

What kinds of connections does the music suggest? First, repertoires like ‘Mbombela’ or stories or recollections like those that spurred a song like ‘Stimela’ might be understood as tokens of home. Similar to stories or memories told to invoke home and provoke nostalgia, songs like ‘Mbombela’, which derives from home, and ‘Stimela’, which narrates memories of home, serve as mnemonic devices. But these could also be understood as metaphors or allegories of the present. Although the geographical coordinates of the journeys recounted in the songs, or the physical means of transport such as the train, no longer apply (they are displaced by the names of cities outside South African borders and by means of transportation like ships or aeroplanes), they remain significant as metaphors of the journey, connoting notions of ‘home’ and ‘away’. Metaphor, as several authors remind us, operates through similarity as well as difference, in which the distal is made familiar through

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<sup>138</sup> I can oppose this ‘explicit form’ with the ‘implicit’ symbolism that Comaroff and Comaroff suggest in their article ‘The Madman and the Migrant’, 192.

<sup>139</sup> Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, 174-9.

the relation that is drawn between the two terms. Through the ‘train song’ as metaphor for the present, we might therefore read the transposition of a structure of feeling – displacement and disenfranchisement, of longing and loss, but also of memory and nostalgia – from experiences and histories of migration into the condition of exile. This encourages us to look further than the obvious differences between migration and exile to see the similarities: the legacies of racial oppression and disenfranchisement that persist in different forms, but similarly the experiences of loss, displacement and disjuncture that remain a constant emotional presence in song.

All three examples of ‘train songs’ confirm that apartheid did not disrupt an essentially peaceful and egalitarian existence, but built on histories of displacement that were already thoroughly established by the middle of the twentieth century. Similarly, a moment like the first democratic elections in 1994 did not erase the histories that indelibly marked the landscape and power relations of migration and movement; indeed, Zim Ngqawana’s track ‘Amagoduka (‘Migrant Worker’) Part 3’ (culled from the longer trajectory of migration in the ‘Migrant Worker Suite’) suggests that the churning wheel of the migration train, with the power relations it connotes, persists, albeit in a different form in a more globally aware world. This problematizes an understanding of exile only within the context of the circumstances that served as catalyst, namely apartheid and the rule of the National Party from 1948 to 1994. The enduring preoccupation with migration, as articulated in cultural forms such as music, stands testament to the relevance of discourses connected to it (displacement, alienation, and the discontents of modernity) that spill over the formal confines of neat periodization. Cultural forms embed and transmit structures of feeling that transcend formal distinctions between the particulars of time and circumstance, and which do not need to be subjected to the logics and rationalities of verbal discourse.

This brings me to reconsider Floyd’s tropology (to coin a neologism). It bears emphasis that the train is not only a textual reference (in the narrow sense of the word ‘text’), but also a sonic signifier. This means it is not only a topic the music is *about*, but that it also seeps into the music structurally. One of the important ways it

does so is through onomatopoeic devices such as repeated riffs, consistent rhythmic patterns that not only recall the train's actual sounds, but also act as sonic signifiers of what it connotes: the relentlessness of the life of the migrant or the exile. Reading the trope of the train through three examples that are performed, and indeed represent, three different decades in the last part of the twentieth century, offers the opportunity to explore music and its meaning not only through its explicit themes or apparent connections within a particular genre, but to delve deeper into the tropology connecting themes across the apparent divides of time, the details of circumstance, or the specifics of geographical place, in order to explore, as Floyd put it, the 'emotional and visceral power' with which music expresses certain themes. This addresses one of the questions with which this thesis is concerned: how exile becomes musically manifest. This chapter points to one answer to this question: that the experience of exile enters livelihoods and creative processes in subtle ways, through the memory, through the tropes that come into use in music and through the figures of speech or narrative techniques that organise and express daily life.

## Chapter 2

### Establishing (Musical) Relationships: Exile and Diaspora

The first chapter considered how discourses of South African exile developed in relation to earlier discourses of migration in South Africa. This chapter continues to trace exile as it emerges in dialogue with other discourses of displacement, although it also looks beyond the borders of South Africa to significant transnational conversations that shaped South African discourses of exile; it looks to the notion of diaspora, and the trans-Atlantic diaspora in particular. While the discursive resonances between South African exile and the diaspora are especially noticeable in encounters between South African musicians like Miriam Makeba or Hugh Masekela and musicians of the African diaspora whom they met and with whom they collaborated during their time in exile, this chapter argues that the history of musical exchange that preceded these person-to-person encounters was critical to the way exile developed in the experiences and discursive practices of South African exiled musicians.

This chapter presents a literature-based survey of the key texts and issues that ground readings concerned with the overlap between exile and diaspora. It grew out of a search for a theoretical framework that could accommodate and elucidate the nuances of South African exile. Taking Makeba's and Masekela's moments of first encounter with African-American musicians as recorded in their autobiographies as a point of departure, I argue that theories of exile alone do not explain the senses of connection and solidarity South African musicians recall in their encounters with American musicians. Several authors, including Christopher Ballantine and Carol Muller, have commented on the relationship between South Africa and (African) America through the lens of jazz practices.<sup>140</sup> When discussing the resonances between the African (American) diaspora and exile, however, no author has explicitly brought the significant bodies of theory that diaspora and exile have each generated, into the conversation. If the encounter narratives of musicians imply

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<sup>140</sup> See, for instance, Christopher Ballantine's essay 'Looking to the United States: The Politics of Male Close-Harmony Song Style in the Later 1940s and the 1950s', in *Marabi Nights*, 118-145; and Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, esp. Chapters 3 and 4.

resonances and fruitful encounters between these instances of displacement, how might theories of exile and diaspora interact to provide a framework that enriches thinking about the particular matrix that is South African exile?

The first part of this chapter proceeds from an empirical bent, starting with the narratives of Miriam Makeba's and Hugh Masekela's early encounters in exile and suggesting bases for the relationships and collaborations forged in exile that ensued. The second part turns to theory, exploring how these narratives inform, reflect or challenge prevailing academic discourses of exile and diaspora. I situate South African exile at the interstice between South African histories of migration, transatlantic diaspora and exile, seeking to deepen our understanding of the interplay between those concepts.

In drawing on descriptions of exile experiences from the literature, notably Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela's autobiographies, this chapter's geographical focus is the United States.<sup>141</sup> The choice of Makeba and Masekela's narratives as a basis for this chapter rests in part on the iconic figures of South African exile that they have become, both in South Africa and internationally, as this enables an engagement with the tropes that have developed in thinking about South African exile. A corollary of their iconic status is the comparatively more extensive literature available on these musicians compared to their exiled colleagues. This facilitates a literature-based inquiry, which this chapter undertakes, but also highlights the continuing need for the documentation of other narratives of jazz musicians' exile, particularly in locations other than the United States.

The dialogue and entanglements between exile and diaspora that Makeba and Masekela's narratives suggest will be theoretically elaborated through a close reading of two texts that have come to be paradigmatic in their respective fields: 'Reflections on Exile' by Edward Said, and 'Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identity' by Avtar Brah from her monograph *Cartographies of Diaspora*.<sup>142</sup> Both

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<sup>141</sup> See Miriam Makeba and Nomsa Mwamuka, *Makeba: The Miriam Makeba Story* (Johannesburg: STE Publishers, 2004) and Hugh Masekela and Michael D. Cheers, *Still Grazing: The Musical Journey of Hugh Masekela* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2004).

<sup>142</sup> Edward Said, 'Reflections on Exile', in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 173-186; Avtar Brah, 'Diaspora, Border and Transnational

texts unpack the conceptual reach of each term, and bring to the fore their particular nuances. The discussion of these texts will elucidate the ways that exile and diaspora theories contribute to an understanding of South African exile, and conversely, the ways in which the South African example might extend or challenge the theoretical perspectives presented in Said's and Brah's texts.

## Part I

### Scenes of arrival: Two vignettes

I take as my starting point two vignettes of the first encounters of South African musicians with jazz musicians in United States; these may be taken as representative of similar narratives of South African musicians' first encounters with American jazz musicians.<sup>143</sup> Through these vignettes, I aim to discern the nature of the musical relationships forged in exile in the United States and to interrogate the factors that enabled personal and professional connections. While these narratives may not be representative of the experience of all South African exiled musicians, they remain representative of mutual practices and shared political concerns that formed points of identification between South African and American musicians.

In 1959 Miriam Makeba left South Africa to promote the film *Come Back Africa* at the Venice Film Festival, not suspecting that she would not return to her home country for more than thirty years. Following the film's critical acclaim, Makeba was invited to appear on the BBC television programme *In Town Tonight* and the popular *Steve Allen Show* in the United States.<sup>144</sup> While waiting in London for her American visa to be approved, Father Trevor Huddleston, a well-known civil rights activist and acquaintance from South Africa, introduced Makeba to Harry Belafonte – who was, by that time, a famous 'folk' singer and equally well-known for his involvement with

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Identities', in *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 178-210.

<sup>143</sup> See for instance Gwen Ansell's chapter 'Home Is Where the Music Is' for the account of Sathima Beba Benjamin and Abdullah Ibrahim's first meeting with Duke Ellington in Zürich, which parallels the stories of Makeba and Masekela mentioned in this chapter. Ansell, *Soweto Blues*, 234-5.

<sup>144</sup> Makeba and Mwamuka, *Makeba*, 57.

American civil rights causes. Belafonte appealed to his political connections to fast-track the stalling visa application, starting what was to become a professional relationship that would last several years.<sup>145</sup>

Beyond the initial help in overcoming a bureaucratic hurdle, Belafonte's assistance to Makeba in her first years of exile is remarkable indeed. From Makeba and Belafonte's biographies, it appears Belafonte did not spare any trouble to launch Makeba's career in the United States. His efforts included organizing Makeba's first show-run at the Village Vanguard, arranging for the right critics to attend the show to ensure the most advantageous reception, and inviting the leading artists of the day to the performance to introduce her to a network that might lead to future collaborations or performance engagements. He hired the musicians she would rehearse and perform with, arranged legal help to get out of the exploitative recording contract Makeba had with Gallo records in South Africa, which posed an obstacle to her career abroad. His help even extended to outfitting Makeba with dresses for her performances, advising on her professional appearance, and opening a bank account with \$25 000 of his personal funds for Makeba as a start-up gift.<sup>146</sup> The literature available on Makeba and Belafonte's collaborations hint at nothing more than friendship and a professional relationship between Makeba and Belafonte; indeed in her memoir, Makeba evokes a familial connection when she comments on Belafonte's generosity: 'Harry Belafonte immediately took me under his wing in America. He was so good to me, like a brother, I started calling him "Big Brother".'<sup>147</sup>

Miriam Makeba, in turn, made it possible for several other South African musicians to come to the United States as work opportunities for jazz musicians in South Africa became scarce. South African musicians' exile was often facilitated through existing

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid. According to Makeba and Mwamuka, the person who introduced Makeba to Harry Belafonte was Michael Scott, whereas Belafonte attributes the introduction to Father Trevor Huddleston. Belafonte's version seems more plausible, since Father Trevor Huddleston had lived in South Africa from 1940s to 1950s and had, during this time, become deeply involved in civil rights activism, an endeavour he continued after his recall to Britain. He was known for his support of the development of black South African artists. See Makeba and Mwamuka, *Makeba*, 55; Harry Belafonte and Michael Shnayerson, *My Song: A Memoir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 201; and Bernstein, *The Rift*, 253-6.

<sup>146</sup> Belafonte and Shnayerson, *My Song*, 203-5.

<sup>147</sup> Makeba and Mwamuka, *Makeba*, 60.



networks of performers in South Africa, extended through new networks established with (mostly) African-American acquaintances. Makeba, aware of the increasingly difficult professional circumstances for Hugh Masekela in South Africa, and with the help of Dizzy Gillespie and John Mehegan, made it possible for Masekela to study at the Manhattan School of Music. Masekela recalls his first night in New York, when he met Dizzy Gillespie for the first time at a performance at the Jazz Gallery:

Between songs he [Gillespie] spotted me in the audience and smiled at me from the stage, nodding as if he'd been expecting me. Right after his set, he walked to our table and greeted me like a long-lost brother... This jazz legend of bebop and I hugged – he told me how glad he was that I had finally gotten out of the apartheid hellhole...<sup>148</sup>

Later that evening, Masekela recalls:

Dizzy led me to a table where I met Max Roach, who seemed overjoyed to see me.... Max Roach was an anti-apartheid activist, and often organized pickets in front of the South African mission to the United Nations. He was also a fervent civil rights advocate.<sup>149</sup>

These narratives highlight the goodwill shown by the African-Americans to Makeba and Masekela, as well as the extent of their help to the newly exiled South Africans; this went beyond professional interest, and included significant financial and personal assistance. Striking, too, is the immediacy of the bonds that were forged in these first encounters; it is significant and telling that these are described in terms of familial connections. As spatial stories, these narratives gloss over the divides of history, cultural background or political and musical nuance in forging links across the Atlantic. The two motives that emerge most strongly are, first, the space of commonality created through music – and through jazz in particular as a transnational practice – and second, the transnational links that activism for civil rights engendered, which appear to transcend the specificity of regional discourses around this issue. These motifs, I propose, inform three enabling mechanisms that contributed to the welcome the South African exiles received: firstly, the history of American culture's influence on South Africa; secondly, the sense of solidarity

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<sup>148</sup> Masekela and Cheers, *Still Grazing*, 123-4.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 124-5.

enabled through shared political concerns over civil rights and notions of freedom; and thirdly the orientation towards ‘Africa’.

### **A history of cultural exchange**

Before South African musicians went to the United States in what developed into exile, they were already familiar with American vernacular culture and had indeed drawn it into their own cultural practices. In *Marabi Nights*, Christopher Ballantine discusses how American culture influenced the development of South African urban vernacular culture and early jazz, and Rob Nixon draws parallels between cultural life in Sophiatown and Harlem (noting the jazz scene in particular) in his book *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood*.<sup>150</sup> I draw on these accounts to briefly summarise these interactions, highlighting significant aspects of these early encounters between (African) America and South African jazz relevant to (later) exile. What particularly concerns this inquiry into the relationships between exile and diaspora that emerge through these accounts, is the question of how these early histories of connection and emulation served as mechanisms that enabled the bonds forged between South African and American artists when the South African artists arrived in the United States. What do the accounts of the generous welcome the South African artists’ received tell us about transnational relationships and the transmission of culture through media such as film, records and non-human contact, in laying a foundation for personal contact and cultural assimilation in a foreign country?

The earliest American minstrel troupes performed in South Africa’s port cities of Cape Town and Durban in 1862 and 1865 respectively.<sup>151</sup> Minstrelsy had especially taken root in Cape Town where it developed into the ‘Kaapse Klopse’ culture that is still practiced today. This has in turn inflected the Cape Town jazz sound to the extent that it became the distinctive feature in a style of playing known today as ‘Cape jazz’, of which the music of Abdullah Ibrahim is perhaps the most famous

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<sup>150</sup> Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*; Rob Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African Culture and the World Beyond* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>151</sup> Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, 4-5.

example. The touring minstrel groups were followed by the Virginia Jubilee Singers in the 1890s, whose musical style was assimilated into local choral practices and contributed to the development of the South African *isicathamiya* choral tradition.<sup>152</sup>

The significant spread of American cultural influence through travelling performers was quickly superseded by the introduction of the gramophone to South African households in the 1920s. Gramophone players and record collections were ubiquitous and considered a status symbol.<sup>153</sup> In addition to the impact of record-playing technologies, films (mostly American) were widely available to black urban audiences by the 1930s.<sup>154</sup> Consequently, American songs and dance forms were quickly assimilated into South African urban vernacular culture. Variety shows drawing on song and dance routines seen in American films, supplemented with local traditional songs and dances that the migrant workers brought from their rural homesteads, soon became popular. This already hints at a process of cultural assimilation, indigenizing American cultural influence with local practice.

By the 1960s, American culture had left an indelible mark on South African (black) culture and thought, most notably on the development of South African jazz and popular music. Jazz records like those of Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald and Max Roach were the staple of young musicians like Hugh Masekela, Dollar Brand and Miriam Makeba. Keen to adopt these venerated styles into their playing, South African musicians learned American standards and improvisations by ear and in so doing, unwittingly mirrored the methods through which their American counterparts also learnt jazz repertoires.<sup>155</sup> When Makeba and Masekela met their American sponsors, therefore, they were meeting long-held idols with whose music they were very familiar and which had indeed already been braided into their own musical styles. This meant that whereas the South African musicians were perhaps not familiar with how show business was run in the United States, they were familiar with the repertoire and styles of playing, and could musically slot into American music practices with a certain ease.

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 19.

Christopher Ballantine captures a critical political dimension that underpinned the South African gaze towards America: ‘Where American culture fascinated, *black* American culture infatuated’.<sup>156</sup> Black South Africans recognised that the achievements of the black Americans were attained amidst social adversity and inequality – in circumstances not unlike their own. This rendered the American achievement a narrative of overcoming racial inequality in the South African imagination and hence a potent source of inspiration.<sup>157</sup> In short, a recognition of a sameness based on race and racial oppression, and by extension the politics of liberation, formed a significant basis for these affinities. Added to this, the familiarity with the black vernacular musics laid the basis for a comparatively easy acculturation on the part of the South Africans.

### **A gaze towards Africa**

The direction of the gaze was also reciprocated. In *Freedom Sounds*, Ingrid Monson traces the African-American political consciousness of an African heritage back to the pan-Africanism advocated by W.E.B. Du Bois in the first half of the twentieth century. This was concurrent with Marcus Garvey’s assertion of Black Nationalism and his call for a return to Africa. It was, however, only when these views were subsumed in Malcolm X’s potent rhetoric of the 1960s that the idea of African roots gained widespread currency among the majority of African-Americans.<sup>158</sup> By no measure insignificant to the development of this African awareness, was the decolonisation of African states, gaining momentum in the 1950s with the decolonisation of Libya, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco, Ghana, with other countries continuing in rapid succession throughout the 1960s. This was a literal liberation from centuries of colonialism and a symbolic triumph over white hegemony, a process that also rendered Africa a place of desire as a symbol of oppression transformed into one of self-determination, cultural rediscovery and reinvention.

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<sup>156</sup> Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, 13.

<sup>157</sup> As I will show later in this chapter, the impression South African musicians had before exile of the success of civil rights movements in the United States in eradicating racial inequalities were not commensurate with the persistence of racial discrimination in they experienced while in exile in the United States.

<sup>158</sup> Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 107.

The tide of Africanism that swept through politics also affected music practices. Although a minority of African musicians like Asadata Dafora, Prince Efrom Odok and Moses Mianns had been active in performing and teaching African music in New York since the 1930s,<sup>159</sup> African music first enjoyed widespread popularity with the conspicuous chart successes of the Nigerian drummer Babatunde Olatunji with the release of his album, *Drums of Passion* in 1960.<sup>160</sup>

Around the time that Makeba and Masekela arrived in the New York, a number of American jazz musicians had taken up a concern with notions of African liberation in their music. Max Roach's 'We Insist! Freedom Now Suite' (1960), Randy Weston's 'Uhuru Afrika' suite (1960, dedicated to African independence), and Art Blakey's album 'African Beat' (1962) are three examples among many others.<sup>161</sup> Randy Weston and Ahmed Abdul-Malik are especially compelling examples of musicians who cultivated deeply personal and career-long interests in creating fusion between jazz and African music practices. For Randy Weston, music became a critical means in forging a personal connection with the Africa to which his Garveyite father had since his youth given him the impression he belonged. He took an avid interest in African culture and politics through his participation in the United Nations Jazz Society, and visited West Africa several times to learn from and perform with Nigerian musicians. When he finally relocated to Africa permanently, it was to Morocco, where he added the music of the Gnawa into his already-hybrid musical fold. For his part, Ahmed Abdul-Malik associated with the musical practices of Arabic Africa to the extent that he claimed Sudanese descent (his parents were, in fact, Caribbean immigrants and he grew up in Bedford Stuyvesant in New York). As a convert to Islam and a student of Arabic music throughout his musical career, he is remembered for his Arab-jazz fusions.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Robin D.G. Kelley, *Africa Speaks, America Answers: Modern Jazz in Revolutionary Times* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2012), 14.

<sup>160</sup> Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 227.

<sup>161</sup> Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 141; Kelley, *Africa Speaks, America Answers*, 8.

<sup>162</sup> Kelley describes Randy Weston's and Ahmed Abdul-Malik's connections with African music and notions of Africanism at length in his chapter-length studies of each musician in *Africa Speaks, America Answers*, see Chapters 2 and 3.

Weston's Afro-jazz and Abdul-Malik's Afro-Arab jazz fusions were more than casual flirtations with an unusual palette of sounds for a one-off album: they melded years of dedicated study of African music practices, scales, rhythms and instruments into their jazz vocabulary. Indeed, African music principles served as devices through which these musicians 'freed' their music from the conventions of swing and bebop, and thus developed new jazz modernities.<sup>163</sup>

These are arguably all examples of the reclamation of black identity following in the wake of the formal ending of colonial domination – a process that Stuart Hall describes as an 'act of imaginative rediscovery', placing the emphasis on the unstable, malleable qualities of identity and the past. The reimagining of an African heritage was central to this retelling of the past, as it represented the past that diasporic Africans were involuntarily torn from, and histories and cultural practices that were suppressed under white rule. This recourse to Africa, Hall asserts, '...signified a "new" Africa of the New World, grounded in an "old" Africa: a spiritual journey of discovery that led... to an indigenous cultural revolution; this is Africa, as we might say, necessarily "deferred" – as a spiritual, cultural and political metaphor...'.<sup>164</sup>

A key mechanism in this reimagining of Africa, Hall asserts, was mediation through culture and the arts in particular – facilitated through the sounds that represent the new vision (and fusion) of what Africa was within the diasporic context. In music, Robin D.G. Kelley points out the paradox of looking to an African past in constructing a sense of personal and musical histories, which is then put to use in musical innovation and experimentalism that 'envision a different future'.<sup>165</sup>

It was at this moment of African 'rediscovery', when the undertone of pan-Africanism was heightened to audible prominence in jazz practices too, that Masekela and Makeba arrived on the American scene. Their presence contributed to the existing African impulse that captured the African-American cultural imagination and set the political agenda, leading to fruitful musical collaborations like Makeba and Belafonte's. Tsitsi Ella Jaji observes that anti-apartheid activism served as a new

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<sup>163</sup> Kelley, *Africa Speaks, America Answers*, 6-7.

<sup>164</sup> Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, ed. Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, (Malden, Oxford and Carlton: Blackwell, 2003), 241.

<sup>165</sup> Kelley, *Africa Speaks, America Answers*, 6-7.

galvanizing force that created a shared goal and awareness of pan-Africanism. She therefore argues that ‘Africa should be understood as a constitutive component of that diaspora, rather than as a point of origin now removed from the contemporary diaspora.’<sup>166</sup> Underpinning the interest of many American musicians in African musics, are shared histories of resistance to white hegemony and shared commitments to the notion of liberation in its many forms.

### **Mutuality through politics**

In recounting Masekela and Makeba’s accounts of their welcome by their African-American colleagues, I have already noted the sense of political solidarity. Harry Belafonte, Dizzy Gillespie and Max Roach were deeply committed to civil rights causes by the time they met Makeba and Masekela, and this conceivably contributed to the imperative to help the South Africans. By that time, American civil rights had made strides towards a more equitable society, punctuated by landmark events such as Brown vs. The Board of Education of 1952 to 1954, legalising racial integration in schools, and the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955 to 1956, leading to the desegregation of public transport.<sup>167</sup> Similar to the experience of the South Africans, artists like Belafonte faced the indignities of a racialized society resulting in degrading performance circumstances such as separate entrances to performance venues and different amenities than those enjoyed by his white colleagues.<sup>168</sup>

Amidst efforts for the advancement of civil rights in the United States, South Africa’s apartheid regime struck a familiar note. It is possible to argue that the help American musicians lent to South African exiles was not only a manifestation of personal charity, but a recognition of similar political subjectivities and a gesture towards black empowerment. A crucial practical result of the Americans’ assistance in the establishment of South African artists was the creation of a platform from which South Africans could exert international pressure to resist apartheid. One of the most heralded instances of this is Makeba’s address to the United Nations

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<sup>166</sup> Jaji, *Africa in Stereo*, 6-7.

<sup>167</sup> Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 54-56.

<sup>168</sup> See for instance Belafonte and Shnayerson, *My Song*, 105-6 and 108-9.

Decolonisation Committee in 1963. Events on a smaller scale, such as the South African singer Sathima Bea Benjamin's performances for resistance movement activities, and performances related to the British Anti-Apartheid movement could be counted among similar ways that music became expedient in awareness campaigns and bolstered support for political causes.

To put the influence of politics on forging transnational bonds into perspective, one could argue that in the absence of these metanarratives of black identity formation, liberation, the notion of roots in and routes from Africa, it would be hard to imagine that the South African exiles would have been met with similar measures of support. As such, the histories of cultural exchange, pan-Africanism and the politics of resistance formed a complex web of mutual discourses, enabling bonds to form in spite of historical and cultural specificities.

## **Part II**

### **Reflections on diaspora and exile**

This chapter has thus far highlighted the shared points of concern between South African exile the African diaspora through the South African musicians and their African-American benefactors. Music critically functioned as practice through which musicians forged connections and through which these shared concerns came to the fore. When turning to a body of theory that could elucidate South African exile, these experiences make a compelling case not only to consider theories of exile, but also to take account of diaspora. How can we think of these lived and discursive overlaps between exile and diaspora in theoretical terms?

One scholar writing about South African exile, Carol Muller, has considered the overlaps between South African exile and the African diaspora as musicians encountered it during their time in exile. She arrives at her consideration of the relationship between these two conceptual domains through her joint biography with



the South African jazz vocalist Sathima Bea Benjamin, titled *Musical Echoes*.<sup>169</sup> In the book, structured as a series of ‘calls’ (Benjamin’s own accounts of her life) and ‘responses’ (Muller’s musicological reflections on Benjamin’s narrative), Muller elaborates Benjamin’s narratives from a scholarly perspective and, in some instances, develops conceptual frameworks based on Benjamin’s narratives.

Before I delve into Muller’s understanding of exile in relation to diaspora, I first briefly summarise Benjamin’s life as a jazz vocalist in exile for the sake of understanding Muller’s framework (which I describe below). Benjamin’s development and experiences as a vocalist demonstrate the interactions between American music and musicians and South African jazz I have outlined above. She became acquainted with American jazz through recordings and started to emulate the singers and styles she encounters through her listening. Benjamin notably developed a special affinity with the singer Billie Holiday. Facing limited performance opportunities and the pressures of apartheid, she left South Africa in 1962 with her partner (soon to be spouse), the pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, in what developed into exile. In exile in Zurich, she encountered Duke Ellington, who arranged for her (and Abdullah Ibrahim) to record with him. This was a seminal moment that shaped her and Ibrahim’s careers (albeit differently) as it facilitated their move to New York and, along with other networks and assistance, launched Ibrahim onto the international jazz stage.<sup>170</sup>

In response to the convergences between exile and (African) diaspora evident in Benjamin’s biography, Muller formulates her concept of the ‘New’ Diaspora.<sup>171</sup> The ‘New’ Diaspora consists of four subsidiary ‘diasporas’, which serve as ‘stepping stones’ that aid thinking about Benjamin in relation to the notion of place or displacement. Diaspora One, in Muller’s taxonomy, refers to musical surrogacy and the sense of intimacy between South African and American jazz musicians. The notion of ‘musical surrogacy’ encapsulates the deep resonances that South African musicians felt with their African-American counterparts, such as Benjamin’s association with the singer Billie Holiday. Diaspora Two refers to what Muller calls

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<sup>169</sup> Carol A. Muller and Sathima Bea Benjamin, *Musical Echoes: South African Women Thinking in Jazz* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013).

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 173-83.

‘Jazz Migrancy’ – that is, the itinerancy that a musician’s career entails in moving from place to place for performance opportunities, and also the circulation of musical ideas under the jazz rubric. Diaspora Three refers to Sathima’s exile due to political pressures and the lack of performance opportunities. Finally, Diaspora Four refers to what Muller calls Sathima’s ‘Southern Touch’ which intimates the ‘south’ as the place where Benjamin considers her music to come from: South Africa and her imaginary of the American South (to which she has no physical or formal connection, but for which she nevertheless harbours an affinity).

I understand Muller’s rather vague ‘stepping stones’ to refer to the process through which she unpacks the multiple ways the notion of migration (either physical or conceptual) might apply to Benjamin’s life and music. In her concept of the ‘new’ diaspora, she thus unpacks the complex ways in which the notion of migration inheres in the various experiences of place, displacement, and musical transmission that permeate Benjamin’s narrative. While I concur that Muller’s four ‘stepping stones’ help to unpack the various associations Benjamin has with different senses of place, her use of the word ‘diaspora’ as a descriptor is problematic, given the considerable conceptual charge and theoretical baggage the term has accreted. In formulating her notion of the ‘new’ diaspora, Muller does not engage with the body of theory that has amassed around the term ‘diaspora’ and therefore overlooks the specificity and nuance the term has gathered through its conceptual history. As such, the use of ‘diaspora’ as a general descriptor for the literal and figurative migrations that inhere in Benjamin’s biography is problematic. From the theoretical perspectives of diaspora I discuss below, I will show the specificity of the term in the contexts in which it is applied. In the discussion it will become clear that the word ‘diaspora’ has to be considerably loosened or emptied of its meanings and conceptual history to function as a broad moniker in the sense that Muller uses the term. I will also suggest an alternative model for theorizing the relationship between exile and diaspora through my reading of Edward Said and Avtar Brah’s respective theorisations of exile and diaspora. But first, I sketch some historical markers in the use and definitions of these terms.

Martin Baumann traces the connection between the concepts diaspora and exile to early Jewish history.<sup>172</sup> The first distinction between diaspora and exile appears with the translation of the Septuagint in the second century BCE, in which a distinction was made between the condition effected by forced captivity of the Jews by the Babylonians (denoted by the Hebrew word *galût*, which refers to ‘movement under force’), and the continued condition of living away from the Promised Land (denoted by *diasporá*). From these early terminological distinctions we can deduce the differences between these terms’ connotations that are still commonly held today. Exile is a condition that may affect an individual or a group with distinct connotations of involuntary migration due to political forces,<sup>173</sup> while diaspora, typically refers to a collective experience of a group living in a state of perceived displacement for a prolonged period spanning several generations. In contrast with the long temporal range of diaspora, the temporary nature of exile (at least in the expectations of the exile) is marked by the acute homesickness and estrangement of a brief sojourn (with the memory of home still fresh from lived experience). The idea of imminent change and return orientates exile towards the former home and its culture. Yet, lest these differentiations are treated in too concrete terms, it is worth noting a certain strain in these distinctions. This is evident in Baumann’s suggestion that ‘the history and experiences of the classical Jews...do not support such differentiations [between the different attributes and experiences of exile versus diaspora]’ and that ‘the current attributions are rather the result of on-going intellectual discourses and reasoning...’.<sup>174</sup> In this statement, Baumann draws attention to the central premise of the thesis that exile is a discursive construction and thus prone to change according to its uses.

Khachig Tölölyan’s definition of the term ‘diaspora’ in the introduction to the first edition of the journal *Diaspora* bridges this gap: he suggests that ‘diaspora’ connotes a ‘larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guestworker, exile community...’ that form a ‘vocabulary of transnationalism’.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Martin Baumann, ‘Exile’, in *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities*, ed. Kim Knott and Seán McLoughlin (London and New York: Zed Books, 2010), 20-21.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>175</sup> Khachig Tölölyan, ‘The Nation-State and its Others: In Lieu of a Preface’, *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 1:1 (1991), 3.

This provides a useful widening of the term that would accommodate the examples of exile and diaspora under discussion under one conceptual umbrella, but the function of this definition was to open the topic to all its possible manifestations at the start of serious scholarly interest in the topic of diaspora, stimulating discourse in the form of a journal contributions. More than a decade after considerable research in this field, the pendulum has swung. As Safran describes more recent scholarly sentiment, and ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin echoes elsewhere, ‘the extension of the label [diaspora] to almost any group of expatriates, or even to individual migrants... [risks reducing] ...the term to a useless metaphor’.<sup>176</sup>

Whilst acknowledging Safran and Slobin’s objections to the overextension of the conceptual field, I argue that the interpretive function of these terms is limited if too much score is set on clear categorical distinctions. Lived experience is seldom bound to theoretical distinctions, and etymologies are often challenged in the vernacular. A thesis concerned with the ramifications of apartheid would furthermore do well to maintain a measure of scepticism about the imposition of categories, mindful of their limitations (and potential for devastatingly limiting effects) when put into practice. Finally, as the vignettes in the introduction of this chapter suggests, the cultural exchange and contact between South African and diasporic artists indicates the significant cultural flows that inform discourses in South African jazz, including exile. Like Muller, therefore, I argue that in the case of South African exile the constellations of exile and diaspora are not hermetically sealed from each other, as some authors would suggest. However, upon a closer reading of the literature on exile and diaspora in music and cultural studies, I arrive at a different understanding of how theory supports the analysis of the interactions between these two discursive fields.

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<sup>176</sup> William Safran, ‘Deconstructing and Comparing Diaspora’, in *Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research*, ed. Waltraud Kokot, Khachig Tölölyan and Carolin Alfonso (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 10; Mark Slobin, ‘The Destiny of “Diaspora” in Ethnomusicology’, in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 286-9.

## Exile

In the positioning of South African exile in relation to exile and diaspora as analytic constructs, it is at the outset necessary to note that South African exiles referred to themselves as being 'in exile', accompanied by the expectation of an imminent return (even if it was never certain when this might be),<sup>177</sup> as opposed to the longer time trajectories, often spanning generations, inherent in the concept diaspora.<sup>178</sup> Jewish exile in the twentieth century, a seminal experience of exile that is historically close to South African exile and is similarly marked by state-institutionalised practices of racism which prompted exile, seems to be a logical point of reference for contemplating South African exile.

There are a number of important differences, however, that caution one to proceed carefully in taking the analogy further than a surface-level comparison. South African jazz musicians were not in esteemed, established or remotely secure positions when they left, and the highly improvised jazz scene of 1950s South Africa, even if it were in ascendance, was a far cry from the institutionalised tradition of musicianship that provided an artistic home for their Jewish counterparts. In contrast to the complaints of German exiled composers at the time of their lesser acclaim in the United States,<sup>179</sup> South African artists stood to gain immensely from the more developed music industries that existed abroad, in comparison to the fledgling South African music industry of the 1950s that was affected by progressively more prohibitive apartheid legislation. Music industries in locations of exile – especially in the United States – were indeed held in high regard, and held a distinct note of professional promise.

Furthermore, European exile from the Nazi regime is often framed by questions of intellectual drain from Europe and gain in America: the impact of European intellectuals on the cultural and intellectual fabric of the United States during and

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<sup>177</sup> See Matshikiza in Bernstein, *The Rift*, 328.

<sup>178</sup> As Avtar Brah avers, '[d]iasporas are places of long-term, if not permanent, community formations...'. Brah, 'Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities', 193.

<sup>179</sup> Reinhold Brinkmann, 'Reading a Letter', in *Driven into Paradise: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States*, ed. Reinhold Brinkmann and Christoph Wolff (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press: 1999), 3.

after the Second World War was especially significant.<sup>180</sup> While not denying the influence that South African artists' had on the music communities they entered,<sup>181</sup> their influence was far more limited than that of their Jewish or European counterparts: it was mostly confined to collaborations with other artists and therefore localised in the places where South African musicians operated.

The tenor of racial discourses in the cases of Jewish and South African exile was also markedly different. The finely-tuned theoretical apparatuses needed by the Nazi regime to draw distinctions between ethnic groups stand in contrast with the way race worked in South Africa through crude phenotypical markers, which nevertheless generated a host of stories about 'borderline cases' decided by haphazard and arbitrary means.<sup>182</sup> Mass executions based solely on race, as was the case in the Holocaust, was generally not carried out in South Africa, where State persecution was rather connected to political activity (or suspicion thereof) deemed to threaten the state.

In spite of these differences, what can South African exile bring to the table in this broader discussion of music and exile? It adds another voice to the growing pluralisation of exile discourse, and introduces different sets of solidarities. For example, it extends more subtle European issues of race to more radical racial discourses that present what Paul Gilroy described as a 'counterculture of modernity'.<sup>183</sup> It stretches the continuum of Jewish exile into second half of twentieth century, as Nixon has argued, by bringing the plight of the Holocaust into alignment with two other 'definitive experiences' of the century, the 'spirit of Civil Rights' and the 'global impulse of decolonisation'.<sup>184</sup> Perhaps, most telling for the researcher

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<sup>180</sup> See Pamela M. Potter, 'From Jewish Exile in Germany to German Scholar in America: Alfred Einstein's Emigration', in *Driven into Paradise: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States*, ed. Reinhold Brinkmann and Christoph Wolff (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1999), 298-301 and 311-2.

<sup>181</sup> The influence of South African jazz musicians on the London jazz scene, for instance, is discussed in Ansell, *Soweto Blues*, 243-5; George McKay, 'Jazz of the Black Atlantic and the Commonwealth', in *Circular Breathing: Cultural Politics of Jazz in Britain* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 167-189.

<sup>182</sup> The notorious 'pencil test' is an example of the crudeness of racial distinctions under apartheid, where 'race' in ambiguous cases was decided by the texture of a person's hair: a person was deemed 'black' if a pencil stays in his/her hair unaided. See Ansell, *Soweto Blues*, 78.

<sup>183</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London and New York: Verso, 1993), 36-7.

<sup>184</sup> Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood*, 7.

attempting to situate South African exile within exile discourses is that very few South Africans associated their situation with Jewish exile a decade or more previously, in spite of frequent parallels drawn between the Afrikaner Nationalist state and Nazism.<sup>185</sup> Racial politics of the Atlantic diaspora, black identity politics and civil rights causes, on the other hand, formed an immediate point of resonance for many musicians in exile.

## Diaspora

In tracing possible bases to explain the immediate bonds that South African artists formed with their benefactors at the start of their exile, I have suggested jazz as one basis of association. The literature abounds with references to the effect of American jazz on South African jazz musicians through records primarily, and to a lesser extent through films. To name a few examples, Carol Muller writes about the formative influence of Duke Ellington on South African musicians' in their 'musical exposure, training, and senses of themselves as musicians of color in the early to mid-twentieth century'.<sup>186</sup> The personal connection an artist like Sathima Bea Benjamin felt with Billie Holiday, is similarly revealing of the extent to which South African artists could identify with American jazz musicians.<sup>187</sup> By emulating American jazz recordings, South African musicians taught themselves not only the repertoire of American jazz musicians, but modelled their instrumental sound production.<sup>188</sup>

As much as it was venerated and incorporated into local practice, the fascination with American jazz in South Africa was not confined to the music itself. Chris McGregor explains that '[o]ne of the things which always fascinated us, a constant subject of discussion over there [in South Africa] – for white as well as black – was how the American Negro had got his music *through* in a white

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<sup>185</sup> See for instance Michelle Mouton and Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, 'Boundary Crossings: Oral History of Nazi Germany and Apartheid South Africa: A Comparative Perspective', *History Workshop Journal*, 48 (1999), 41-63; or Heribert Adam, 'Anti-Semitism and Anti-Black Racism: Nazi Germany and Apartheid South Africa', *Telos*, 108 (1996), 25-46.

<sup>186</sup> Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 108.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 110-125.

<sup>188</sup> Masekela, *Still Grazing*, 23; Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 78.

dominated society, from people like Armstrong to today's openly defiant musicians.<sup>189</sup> This quote shows how the attraction jazz held as a musical form, was bolstered by its attendant political narrative of overcoming, which conveyed a sense of parallel political struggles. In South Africa, however, the civil rights struggle of American jazz musicians was understood as an already-achieved political success. It was therefore with surprise that Masekela noted the continuing struggles against racial discrimination on American soil:

...[I]t quickly became clear that the freedom we in South Africa assumed existed for people of African origin in America was a mirage. There wasn't too much difference in how most white people felt about black people throughout the West... The methods of racial terrorism might be applied differently here, but the disposition was the same.<sup>190</sup>

This continued political awareness informed and developed South African musicians' own political thought and activities while they were in exile. Hugh Masekela recalls the lively political climate in Harlem where he met Langston Hughes and Malcolm X, who both made a profound impression on him.<sup>191</sup> Soon after, Masekela and Makeba founded the South African Student Association to aid South African students coming to America. The launch of the Association was celebrated by singing freedom and resistance songs from repertoires sung at political rallies and protests in South Africa and other areas of exile, offering an excellent example of the direct transmission of current culture through different journeys of exile. These songs, in turn, were incorporated into the record *An Evening with Makeba/Belafronte*, and were thus shared with a wider audience beyond South African geographical and political routes.<sup>192</sup>

In arguing for common political interests as a thread connecting South Africa and America specifically, but also other regions of the African diaspora, I am mindful of the danger of collapsing complex constituencies into the simple binary of black against white. As Monson cautions,

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<sup>189</sup> Quoted in Maxine McGregor, *Chris McGregor and the Brotherhood of Breath: My Life with a South African Jazz Pioneer* (Fling: Bamberger Books, 1995), 97.

<sup>190</sup> Masekela and Cheers, *Still Grazing*, 127.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-8.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.



the idea of a transnational black music has been synthesised in opposition to racial subjugation. The idea of a unified black musical ethos, consequently, is partially dependent on the continuing experience of racism. The forging of a collective identity through opposition to a common enemy contributes, in turn, to the ease with which the complexities of the African diaspora dissolve into a binary between black and white.<sup>193</sup>

While I agree with Monson that an ‘opposition to racial subjugation’ has drawn together a diversity of musics around this rallying point, South African jazz presents a case where racial binaries have been difficult to uphold. Multi-racial groups like the Blue Notes, productions like *King Kong* or musicians like Abdullah Ibrahim or Sathima Bea Benjamin (who were classified under apartheid as ‘coloured’)<sup>194</sup> forestall a lapse into easy binaries. Arguably, the opposition suggested in South African music is as much informed by an ‘opposition to racial subjugation’ as it is by the opposition of the regulation of society along racial lines – stances that are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Perhaps most telling are the musical collaborations that emerged from these overlaps between South Africa and different regions of the Atlantic. As already mentioned in the vignettes, Miriam Makeba and Harry Belafonte’s collaboration through multiple projects over a period of nearly a decade constitutes one of the best-known examples. Hugh Masekela and Herb Alpert’s collaborations are perhaps less well known, but nevertheless remarkable since they were based on Alpert’s growing interest in African music.<sup>195</sup> Dollar Brand collaborated with Max Roach, who was an anti-apartheid activist and civil rights advocate, as well as Archie Shepp, who also performed with Chris McGregor’s Brotherhood of Breath, the free improvisation big

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<sup>193</sup> Ingrid Monson, ‘Introduction’, in *The African Diaspora: A Musical Perspective* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 2000), 2-3.

<sup>194</sup> The problematic term ‘coloured’ has a different meaning in the South African context than in the United States. Under colonial rule and later apartheid in South Africa ‘coloured’ referred to a heterogeneous group descending from, among others, the Khoikhoi and San peoples, Malay slaves, and whoever could not be categorised as indigenous ‘black’ or ‘white’ under apartheid’s classification system. In the words of Mohamed Adhikari, it refers to those who ‘have held an intermediate status in the South African racial hierarchy, distinct from the historically dominant white minority and the numerically preponderant African population.’ Mohamed Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community* (Athens and Cape Town: Ohio University Press and Double Storey Books, 2005), 2.

<sup>195</sup> Masekela and Cheers, *Still Grazing*, 244. This resulted in the recording *Hugh Masekela/Herb Alpert* (A&M, 75021-0819-2, 1978).

band, on their European tour in 1989.<sup>196</sup> It is noteworthy that some of the most acclaimed musicians with whom South African musicians collaborated were renowned civil rights activists.

Conceptually underpinning the relationships based on jazz practices and political similitude, is Paul Gilroy's notion of the Black Atlantic. The Black Atlantic is constituted by the idea of the black diaspora as a counterculture to white hegemony and modernity. As simultaneously functioning in and outside the Eurocentric cultural web, black culture fosters the pluralisms that defy modernity's fixed notions of the boundaries of the nation-state, cultures, and racial classifications; in short, it disrupts modernity's essentialisms. It is important to point out that links between South Africa and the United States are premised on missionary and performance exchanges, not on slavery as may be the case in other parts of Africa.<sup>197</sup> This chapter's juxtaposition of South Africa and the Black Atlantic seeks to specifically trace the more recent history over the course of the past century where similar tactics of creativity in inventing new paths, and the assertion of identities as they manifested in South African jazz, were deployed.

But what enables the establishment of common discourses in disparate contexts or even across different continents? The cross-fertilization of discourses across physical and social distance is possible, Gilroy argues, through the commonality of the urban experience, through similar experiences of racial segregation, and the shared memory of slavery, which I argue could be extended to the experience of colonial subordination and later apartheid in the South African context. These factors contribute to the formation of what Gilroy calls a 'metaphysics of blackness'.<sup>198</sup>

If we unpack Gilroy's commonalities in the context of South Africa and the diaspora, these would include histories of migration (which Chapter One detailed) and the formation of jazz in the melting pot of new urban settlements. South Africans' early

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<sup>196</sup> See Max Roach and Abdullah Ibrahim [Dollar Brand], *Streams of Consciousness* (Baystate, RVJ-6016, 1977); Archie Shepp and Dollar Brand, *Duet* (Denon DC 8561, 5 June 1978); Archie Shepp and Dollar Brand, *En Concert A Banlieues Bleues*, with The Brotherhood of Breath, (52e Rue Est, RECD 017, 18 March 1989).

<sup>197</sup> Brett Pyper, "You Can't Listen Alone": Jazz, Listening and Sociality in a Transitioning South Africa (unpublished PhD thesis, New York University, 2014), 24-5.

<sup>198</sup> Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 83.

encounters with American culture were a uniquely urban experience and as such, could only have been made possible through the history of labour migrations brought about by industrial and capitalist ventures of the mining industry. The rapidly developing urban areas of South Africa that fostered the development of South African jazz, were accompanied by of alcohol abuse, promiscuity, labour exploitation and gangsterism, not unlike conditions in the urban areas like Kansas City where American jazz developed.<sup>199</sup> Similarly, jazz congregates in urban spaces and cultural nodes like London, Zurich, Paris, Stockholm and New York that became South African exiled musicians' (temporary) homes.

Gilroy's notion of the Black Atlantic is useful in showing how flows of ideas, rhetoric and cultural practice inform and constitute a sense of connectedness across the Atlantic, premised on simultaneously operating in loosely analogous ways in several subject positions. While there are significant overlaps between exile and diaspora discourses in the cases we have discussed, I maintain that each retains its particularity in how it defines itself and its history. But given the senses of mutuality that were evident in lived experiences, how can we conceptualise these overlaps theoretically? I first describe two theories of exile and diaspora respectively, Edward Said's essay 'Reflections on Exile' and Avtar Brah's essay 'Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities' before I consider the ways they interact.

### **On Edward Said's 'exile'**

Said invokes exile in a classical sense, as having 'originated in the age-old practice of banishment', resulting in 'an anomalous and miserable life with the stigma of being an outsider' imbued with 'solitude and spirituality'.<sup>200</sup> He distinguishes between the literal experiences of exile and the metaphorical estrangement that has become the condition of the subject after Freud and Nietzsche – a notion especially

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<sup>199</sup> Compare Ballantine's vivid descriptions of the origins of *marabi*, an early form of South African jazz with Driggs and Haddix's description of similar circumstances in which Kansas City's jazz scene evolved. Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, 26-28; Frank Driggs and Chuck Haddix, 'Tales from Tom's Town', in *Kansas City Jazz: From Ragtime to Bebop: A History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 6-24.

<sup>200</sup> Said, 'Reflections on Exile', 181.

prevalent in literary theory. He weaves the impact of exile on subjectivity, as elaborated in literary theory, into his conception of literal exile.

I find two distinctions that Said makes particularly productive for considering the frameworks through which South African jazz musicians' exile might be understood. First, he notes the contrast between the poetic, romanticised manifestation of 'exile' that is valorised in creative, aesthetic production, and the mass politics of exile that plays out in domains like the United Nations. Encapsulated in this distinction is a tension between the idealised solitude of the individual and the vulnerable desperation of the masses; the former almost slips easily beneath the radar of border regulation while the latter becomes a concern addressed at institutional and state levels. Exile in this second sense starts to resemble diaspora as collective experience. The second of Said's distinctions I draw on is the solitude of the exile in contrast to the collectivity of nationalisms. While exile becomes an alternative to mass institutions and solitude functions an assertion against the collective, this exists in tension with the ideology to be reconstituted in a restored (collective, national) society.

In both distinctions that I have mapped out, tensions exist between senses (and valorisations) of solitude, and the condition of the collective (perhaps scattered, but united in the aspiration to return home) rallying around notions of reconstitution, and operating at institutional level. Khachig Tölölyan has explored the basis on which collectivities emerge, or could be generalised at all, around galvanising points of popular culture, memory and reconstitution.<sup>201</sup> This is what also arguably played out in events in which South African musicians participated such as those of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM), in which broader, collective notions of exile were fostered, if only as a meeting point for those who have similar experiences and concerns (who afterwards return to their individual livelihoods) with little in common beyond a similar aspiration for reconstitution (a new nationalism).

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<sup>201</sup> Khachig Tölölyan, 'The Armenian Diaspora and the Karabagh Conflict Since 1988', *Diasporas in Conflict: Peace-Makers or Peace-Wreckers?*, ed. Hazel Smith and Paul Stares (Tokyo and New York: United Nations University Press, 2007), 106-128.

The jazz musicians' role in this construction becomes a particularly telling manifestation of these tensions. On the one hand, exiled musicians participated in collectivities in resistance movements, and represented themselves under the collective banner of exile on such occasions. The role of the musicians performing at AAM events is not only as participants in the movement, but also as an enabling mechanism that generates collective experiences among audiences. Through sound, not only are senses of home kindled in memory, but it also constructs a reconstituted home: a 'home away from home' in exile, generating interaction and senses of collectivity (creating and uniting 'an audience') and imagining a future home in a different South Africa.

On the other hand, musicians mostly pursued their own senses of creative development and exploration independent of a rhetoric of home, informed by individual invention and assimilation that may, or may not, respond to a new environment and new interactions. In so doing, musicians cultivated what Said calls a 'scrupulous subjectivity'.

### **On Avtar Brah's 'diaspora'**

If Said's 'Reflections on Exile' contributes to an understanding of how South African jazz in exile might be conceived in its own discursive space, Brah's essay 'Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identity' aids a reflection on how the South African exile discourse might be understood in relation to other displacement discourses. Of particular interest here, suggested by South African musicians' narratives of arrival, sketched above, are the convergences between South African exile and trans-Atlantic diasporic discourses. Although this is not the first time that the correspondences between diaspora and South African exile have been probed – Carol Muller, for instance, discusses their overlaps with reference to Sathima Bea Benjamin, as I outlined above –<sup>202</sup> a theoretical engagement with diaspora theory, and Avtar Brah's writing in particular, has not enjoyed any scholarly attention. This chapter argues that the significant resonances between South African exiles and

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<sup>202</sup> Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 170-188.

African-American musicians (and by extension the notion of diaspora) based on shared musical practices and political concerns, merit further investigation in terms of this body of theory – a perspective which this chapter contributes to scholarship on South African exile.

In defining diaspora, Brah notes that diaspora is paradoxically about settling down and that these settlements are crucially not temporary sojourns,<sup>203</sup> pointing to the trans-generational, longer term qualities of a classic diaspora, and problematizing the twin notions of ‘home’ and ‘return’. This forms a first point of divergence with the expectations of South African exiles that their absences were temporary (recalling Hilda Bernstein’s remark that ‘exiles believed they were only temporary sojourners wherever they stayed’, mentioned in the Introduction).<sup>204</sup> If ‘home’ in Brah’s conception of diaspora is relegated to an imaginary place, a ‘mythic place of desire’ and ‘place of no return’ for the diaspora,<sup>205</sup> ‘home’ for the South African exile is a place of active memory and living ties, and ‘return’ hinges on activism and resistance. ‘Home’, as Said suggested, is framed by the immanent hope and marked by concerted effort for its reconstitution. Yet will the South African exile return to the place of memory, and are recollections of home not always ‘mythic places of desire’ or ‘places of no return’, as I have suggested in the discussion of Zim Ngqawana’s ‘Migrant Worker Suite’ and with reference to Veit Erlmann in Chapter One? A reconstituted home is never the one that was departed from, and therefore we may read at least a parallel, if not a similarity, in exile to Brah’s ‘homing desire’ that structures the diasporic experience.<sup>206</sup>

Even if settlement were not the aim of South African exiles, Brah’s conception of diaspora as composite, enveloping multiple (individually undertaken) journeys to different parts of the world, holds true for South African exile as well, albeit in smaller numbers. An awareness of a whole, of a larger constituency, was fostered by Said’s concept of reconstitution actualised through movements like the Anti-Apartheid Movement whose network not only spanned Britain with its nexus in London, but also related organisations in the Netherlands and other parts of Europe.

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<sup>203</sup> Brah, ‘Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities’, 182.

<sup>204</sup> Bernstein, *The Rift*, 266.

<sup>205</sup> Brah, ‘Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities’, 192.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

But other kinds of communities foster senses of belonging too, among which we may count, crucial to this study, the jazz community. It is indeed through the concept of jazz that South African musicians connected with musicians in places of exile. This corresponds to Brah's notion of 'locality', where Brah echoes Said's notion of multiple awarenesses, but problematizes the notion further by relativizing the senses of home as the 'lived experience of locality', shifting the focus away from home as a place of origin to that of a place of belonging (or not belonging).<sup>207</sup>

The one aspect that both Said and Brah acknowledge as characteristic of 'being away from home' is an awareness of a multiplicity of locations and culture – the simultaneous awareness of two or more worlds. Said uses counterpoint as a metaphor to describe the exile's awareness (to paraphrase) of at least two cultures, settings, or homes, that leads to a 'plurality of vision [that] gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions.'<sup>208</sup> Brah refines the senses in which 'counterpoint' might be understood by theorizing 'modalities' of diaspora experiences. Within one identifiable diasporic constellation, there are different experiences shaped by gender, generation, class, 'race' or religion. Diaspora as a composite not only of individual journeys, but also of modalities of experience, again marks a certain strain between the individual and the collective. When speaking of the overlaps between diaspora and exile, therefore, this thesis takes account of the individual experiences, and holds that the contact between a South African and other jazz communities does not necessarily lead to generalisations; it does, however, lead to a more nuanced understanding of the formation of transnational jazz cultures.

### **Counterpoint and relationality: Opening productive spaces**

The discussion of Said's 'exile' and Brah's 'diaspora' above serves as conceptual markers in their respective fields, and subtle as well as significant differences between diaspora and exile have also started to emerge. It is not the intention of this chapter to elide these differences between notions of diaspora and exile, as Muller's conflation of the two terms risks doing. This would be theoretically untenable and

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>208</sup> Said, 'Reflections on Exile', 186.

would not correspond to exiles' lived experiences. But I have begun to show how the tensions that arise from these differentiations open productive spaces and prompt further reflections beyond simple readings of notions germane to exilic discourses, like 'home' or 'community'.

Following James Clifford, Brah suggests a three-pronged approach for the analysis of diaspora: diaspora theory, diaspora 'discourses' and the historical experiences of diaspora.<sup>209</sup> Together, these modes of thinking and experiencing diaspora form 'an ensemble of investigative technologies' that not only enable the researcher to analyse a diasporic formation in itself, but also in relation to other diasporas. In working towards a reading of the overlaps between South African exile and the trans-Atlantic diaspora, these smaller nuances form strands feeding into and constituting larger (conceptual) domains, facilitating considerations of relationship between South African exile and the trans-Atlantic diaspora. As Brah avers, the 'ensemble of investigative technologies [theory, discourse and historical experience] historicise trajectories of different diasporas [or of exile and diaspora], and analyse their relationality across fields of social relations, subjectivity and identity'.<sup>210</sup>

By 'relationality', Brah does not imply that different formations of diaspora operate 'in tandem', in other words the relationship between the different diasporic constructs is not necessarily unified in its aspirations, its operations or its orientation.<sup>211</sup> Brah rather argues for an understanding of relationships past and present that inform and complicate understandings of current formations of affinity or difference. What this implies for the researcher constructing a relational map, as I am doing in tracing the musical configurations of the relationship between South African exile and the trans-Atlantic diaspora, is the need for an approach that takes into account narratives, (self-)representations, and readings of deliberate and non-deliberate alignments, influences and self-assertions that we have encountered in this chapter.

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<sup>209</sup> Brah, 'Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities', 179.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.



Through Brah's model of complex relationality, I am therefore arguing that discourses of exile and diaspora intersect among individuals or constituencies at various points in time around various shared experiences, practices, or causes. So, for instance, a common struggle for civil rights provided the foundation for senses of solidarity between South African exiles and African-Americans in the 1960s – as the scenes of arrival sketched in the vignettes demonstrated. Or, to draw on Carol Muller's discussion of Sathima Bea Benjamin, another point of intersection might be the particular way that being a woman in jazz performance served as a basis for Sathima Bea Benjamin's identification with a figure like with Billie Holiday (as opposed to African-American women performers in general). Crucially, Brah's model also accounts for differences, which confirm that the two conceptual fields are not synonymous. The considerable 'work' that African-American performers – the same musicians who shared South African musicians' concerns with civil rights – put into honing African musical practices and fusing them with jazz, stands as testament to the differences. While this chapter stressed the points of convergence, the chapters that follow and particularly the chapter on Dollar Brand's first years in New York (Chapter Four) will further texture these readings to show divergences in these experiences. Brah's notion of complex relationality allows us to read both these strands with greater nuance; it helps us to understand their intersection at particular points in time around particular shared discourses. In other words, we may read the interactions between exile and diaspora experiences as a counterpoint, producing both consonances and dissonances.

Whereas Brah broadens an understanding of diaspora through a considerable widening of constituent concepts like home (read as a 'homing desire'), and takes into account the smaller (individual) constituencies that inform diaspora as a composite formation (as I have shown above, pointing out a certain strain between the individual and collective in Brah's diaspora), she nevertheless points out that 'diaspora [is not] a metaphor for individual exile but, rather, diasporas emerge out of migrations of collectivities'.<sup>212</sup> If Brah's conception of diaspora can accommodate the specificities of the diasporic experience along the axes of gender, generation and race (among others), or facilitate an understanding of the composite nature of

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 193.

diaspora (consisting of multiple journeys), it speaks to the levels of internal variation that are accommodated within a larger conceptual domain. I contend that Brah underestimates the extent to which her model of complex relationality could negotiate the intersections between the specificities of exile and diaspora, without diminishing their differences. While I argue that exile in the South African case does not lay claim to the same historical trajectories or collectivities as the trans-Atlantic diaspora, and the two displacements maintain their own conceptual definitions, Brah's notion of complex relationality provides a way to foreground the experiences of similarity and solidarity, without diminishing differences.

I am arguing that African-American musicians as well as South African musicians in exile were aware of similar situations and discriminations that affected them both and that this awareness was manifested in practical responses. In a similar way to Said's contrapuntal understanding of exile as fostering multiple awarenesses within the individual exilic experience, the word 'counterpoint' could equally well describe the awareness of similar experiences of other displacements, and formations and performances in everyday life, although this model recognises the substantial differences in experience that each form of displacement, South African exile and the African(-American) diaspora, entails.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have argued that the experiences of South African exiled musicians point to an understanding of exile not only in its own terms, but informed by and conversant with broader displacement discourses, in particular those of the trans-Atlantic diaspora. The discussion of South African exile in relation to the theoretical frameworks of Gilroy's Black Atlantic, Said's exile and Brah's diaspora allowed the particular dimensions of a South African exile discourse to be thrown into relief. Through the engagement with Edward Said's notion of exile and Avtar Brah's notion of diaspora, in particular, the conceptual convergences and divergences between exile and diaspora have come into sharper focus. Against this chapter's theorisation of the interactions between exile and diaspora as conceptual domains, I argue that in Muller's notion of the 'new' diaspora the notion of exile is too easily subsumed in

the broad category of ‘diaspora’ without due consideration for the specific meanings, histories and the particularities of experiences that the term connotes. Stemming from my readings of exile and diaspora theory, I have argued that exile and diaspora are distinct concepts with their own sets of nuances.

While exile remains distinct from diaspora in its shorter temporal range and its endeavours for a reconstitution of home, the two concepts nevertheless overlap in their multiple awareness of at least two places, cultures and sets of social relations, described by Said as ‘contrapuntal’ and problematized by Brah by her notion of ‘locality’ indicating multiple understandings of home. I argued that ‘home’ in its reference to place acquires a mythic status – a place to which return is impossible for diaspora and exile alike. However, ‘home’ for South African exiles sublimates into the imaginary because it is a conflicted space (or memory), as I have argued in Chapter One; whereas for African-American musicians like Randy Weston or Ahmed Abdul-Malik, it becomes the place for imaginative elaboration and discovery through ideas in circulation like Garveyism, and later becomes rooted in concrete experience and exchange. In these discourses, music critically functions as a space for articulating or forging senses of history and belonging as much as it forges senses of aspiration. It is a space where individual and collective identities and histories are negotiated and reimagined.

This chapter’s consideration of the interaction between South Africa and the diaspora comes into sharper focus through the case study of the Transcription Centre that facilitated communication between these areas; this is the topic of Chapter Three. It also opens up some new considerations about this interaction as it is mediated through institutions – in this case, a place called the Transcription Centre that was based in London. Different kinds of politics – for example, that of the Cold War – become a further dynamic in the ways that political solidarities are forged.

## Chapter 3

### **The Transcription Centre as Cultural Node: A Study in the Politics of Performance Space in South African Exile**

1965, London. At 38 Dover Street, the premises of a place called the Transcription Centre,<sup>213</sup> one would find a recording studio, some offices, an extensive library of books, artworks and records by artists and writers of Africa and the African diaspora, and a common room that serves as a meeting place for those who drop in for a cup of tea and conversation. In the corridors one might encounter the African writers Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Christopher Okigbo, or South African writers Lewis Nkosi, Mazisi Kunene (then known as Raymond Kunene) and Cosmo Pieterse. One might also meet the South African musicians Dollar Brand, Beattie Benjamin (later known as Sathima Bea Benjamin) Dorothy Masuku, Gwigwi Mrwebi, and members of the South African jazz ensemble, the Blue Notes.<sup>214</sup>

From the cast of characters that frequented this abode, it is evident that the Transcription Centre formed a node of pan-African cultural activity that burgeoned in London in the 1960s. Indeed, the Africans and Africanists who graced its corridors were seminal to the Transcription Centre's main function: the recording of a regular cultural magazine programme called 'Africa Abroad' that was distributed to radio stations in Africa, the African diaspora and further afield. In addition to this core activity, the Transcription Centre embarked on other projects in the arts, depending on the skills and enthusiasms of those involved with the Centre at the time, and provided various material and immaterial means of support to artists. Of particular interest for this thesis's concern with South African musicians' exile is the presence of Dollar Brand (as he was known at the time, later and better known as Abdullah Ibrahim) and Sathima Bea Benjamin (whom we briefly encountered in the previous chapter), Dorothy Masuku, Gwigwi Mrwebi and Chris McGregor at the

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<sup>213</sup> This chapter is based on the materials of the Transcription Centre Archive at the Harry Ransom Centre at the University of Texas at Austin, United States. Except where stated otherwise, all container and folder numbers mentioned in this chapter refer to those of the Transcription Centre Archive as it was sorted when I visited in September 2013.

<sup>214</sup> All these artists were present at the Transcription Centre in the course of 1965, as the list of recorded interviews indicates. See the list of tapes compiled for the sale of the Transcription Centre's collection to the Schomburg Collection at the New York Public Library, Container 10 Folder 8.

Transcription Centre. These were South African musicians who had left South Africa in the wake of the Sharpeville Massacre in the early 1960s, with no immediate prospects of return.<sup>215</sup> This chapter looks at the ways they were involved in and supported by the Transcription Centre during their time in London.

It is, indeed, in its patronage that the South African musicians' involvement in the Transcription Centre provides a rare window into the broader political climate and the factors that affected musicians' exile at the time. An exposé published in 1967 in the American press revealed that the Transcription Centre was created and funded as a subsidiary of the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) project, the Congress for Cultural Freedom. The embroilment of the Transcription Centre in the propaganda machinery of the Cold War came as news to most of the artists involved with the Centre, who were uncomfortable with their inadvertent co-option into this project.<sup>216</sup> Yet exactly because artists *were* unaware of the ideological agendas during their involvement at the Transcription Centre, and thus were not overtly pressured into the adoption or expression of particular views, the Transcription Centre makes for a revealing case study in considering the relationship between artists in exile, institutions and politics.

That we know of the organisation in detail is in large part thanks to the extensive correspondence necessitated by the geographical remove of the Transcription Centre's operations in London, the locations of its sponsors, the Congress for Cultural Freedom in Paris and later the Fairfield Foundation in the United States (both front organisations for the American Central Intelligence Agency),<sup>217</sup> and its extensive list of contributors to its activities dotted around the globe. The paper trail of the Transcription Centre's operations, comprising contracts, voluminous correspondence, reports to sponsors, press statements, occasional press clippings, scribbled notes and typed pages of transcriptions, now forms the Transcription Centre Archive housed at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at

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<sup>215</sup> See Maxine McGregor, *Chris McGregor and the Brotherhood of Breath*, 91-133; or Benjamin's 'Call' in the chapter 'Jazz Migrancy' in Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 128-167.

<sup>216</sup> Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 169.

<sup>217</sup> Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta, 2000), 86-9 and 125-7; Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe* (New York: The Free Press, 1989) [Kindle Edition], Loc. no. 57-91, 5032-5126 and 1052-1077.

Austin in the United States. As far as its core function of recording of programmes for radio broadcast (called transcriptions) goes, the substantial audio material generated in its recording studios is available at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York, the Archives of Traditional Music at the University of Indiana at Bloomington, and the British Library.<sup>218</sup> If the recordings convey a vivid sense of the characters and debates that animated the Transcription Centre at the time, its archive fills in the details of the other projects that the Transcription Centre embarked upon, as well the funding that made all these activities possible.

From the very mundane fragments of paperwork relating to the practical arrangements of artistic and cultural production, the archive affords a glimpse into the everyday realities that the South African exiled musicians had to navigate, including the bureaucratic and practical challenges they faced. It enables us to explore the question of cultural production in exile, its relationship to patronage and politics and the ways this impacts the quotidian aspects of musicians' lives in exile. Taking a step back to situate the organisation and the musicians it supported within the framework of the Transcription Centre's own funding and support structure, reminds us that South African exile unfolded not only against the backdrop of South African apartheid politics, but also in an international arena where Cold War politics vied for the persuasions of the world. Cultural production, including the South African musicians' endeavours whilst in exile, was not exempt.<sup>219</sup>

There are two levels on which I read the archive, corresponding loosely with the first and second parts of this chapter. The first is at the level of the institution, outlining its history, projects and funding, and reading the Centre's archive specifically with an interest in its support for South African exiles. The second is at the level of the individual and the quotidian, paying attention to the documents relating to South

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<sup>218</sup> The Transcription Centre Tapes, Class Mark: Sc Audio C-1-109, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, United States; Dennis Duerden Collection of African Oral Data, Class Mark: 74-120-F, Archives of Traditional Music, University of Indiana, Bloomington, United States; African Writers' Club, Shelfmark: C134, British Library Sounds, British Library, London, United Kingdom.

<sup>219</sup> See David Cate, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy During the Cold War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Penny von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004); Ingrid Monson, 'Africa, the Cold War, and the Diaspora at Home', in *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 107-151.

African musicians who were supported by the Transcription Centre. This approach to the material foregrounds a particular challenge this archive poses: how to reconcile the Transcription Centre within politics that operates at a global scale as part of the machinery of Cold War propaganda on the one hand, with the very mundane archival material generated by artists' everyday lives and artistic production, on the other? In the last section, I offer reflections on how these seemingly disparate domains interact, and the imperative of the mundane in studying exile.

Although the content produced by the Transcription Centre in the form of radio programmes, recordings and performances is clearly important for understanding the organisation, this chapter's focus on the relationship between South African musicians' exile and broader politics through institutional support structures, of which the Transcription Centre is one, necessitates that I delve into this aspect only in so far as it elucidates the relationship between individual artists and the institution. Needless to say a fuller consideration of the musicians and programmes I mention are worthwhile subjects for future study.

This chapter introduces the jazz pianist Dollar Brand, on which the remaining three chapters of the thesis focus. He later became known as Abdullah Ibrahim, a change I discuss in the next chapter; for the sake of consistency with the archive materials, however, I refer to him as Dollar Brand in this chapter. Taking my cue from the timeframe in which Brand becomes 'visible' through the archive's record – that is, roughly between 1965 and 1969 – I consider Brand/Ibrahim's biography, thought on music and output in the following chapters.

This chapter contributes to the growing body of scholarship that reflects on Cold War politics and their influence on regions such as (South) Africa as involving more than a simple confrontation between Washington and Moscow. It shows how, as Sue Onslow puts it, 'local [African] actors were able to draw on external assistance from these blocs as they pursued their own vision of modernity'.<sup>220</sup> The Transcription Centre's archive is exceptional in the way it shows how South African musicians were drawn into these broader, global political currents, perhaps unwittingly. As

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<sup>220</sup> Sue Onslow, 'Introduction', in *Cold War in Southern Africa: White Power, Black Liberation*, ed. Sue Onslow (London and New York: Routledge, 2009) 2.

such, along with Carol Muller's more cursory overview of the Centre's archive in her joint biography of the South African singer Sathima Bea Benjamin, this chapter presents one of the only studies in South African music scholarship to engage with the questions of how South African musicians in exile were affected by Cold War politics. Given Muller's focus on Sathima Bea Benjamin's biography, she provides an overview of the Centre insofar it illuminates the period of the mid- to late-1960s in Benjamin's life. Although her account captures the broader narrative of the Transcription Centre's history and activities, the present chapter is able to offer a much more detailed reading of the material pertaining not only to Dollar Brand and Sathima Bea Benjamin, but also to the other South African artists involved with the Centre.<sup>221</sup> Before discussing the history and activities of the Transcription Centre, some background on the political and cultural climate during the Cold War and the motivations that led to the establishment of this institution in the first place would help to contextualise the role it played in bolstering pan-African discourse in London, and its role in supporting South African exiles in particular.

### **Music, politics and the Cultural Cold War**

The Transcription Centre is situated at the confluence of two major social and political currents as they meet in London in the 1960s, namely Cold War cultural politics and a pan-African awareness in the era of decolonisation. The Cold War, as is well known today, was not confined to a military or technological flexing of muscle in the arms race or the race to space, but also played out in subtler ways in the fields of arts and culture. What differentiated the Cold War from preceding traditional political and military confrontations between two empires, David Cauter points out, was its ideological dimension; this sparked an 'ideological and cultural contest on a global scale and without historical precedent'.<sup>222</sup> The Cultural Cold War, as this ideological contest came to be known, had recourse to the arts and literature in the quest for ideological dominance, vying for the support of the leading thinkers and

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<sup>221</sup> One of the difficulties of Muller's appraisal of the Transcription Centre for a scholar also reading the archive is the lack of references to specific documents, which makes it difficult to follow up on her claims and conclusions. There is therefore value for future scholarship in another account that traces its references to the source material more clearly.

<sup>222</sup> David Cauter, *The Dancer Defects*, 1



artists. The driver behind this propagandistic quest for the mind was the American Central Intelligence Agency (the CIA), which engendered cultural programmes such as the Congress for Cultural Freedom and its surrogate, the Transcription Centre.

To put the concern with the leading intellectual and cultural figures in perspective, it is useful to be reminded that during the 1930s and '40s, the time preceding the Cultural Cold War's interventions, liberal or left-wing intellectual endeavour was closely aligned with Marxist thought. These were the days that authors like George Orwell and Hannah Arendt, who associated with the so-called left but were nevertheless not of a Marxist persuasion, could not find publishers.<sup>223</sup> After the Second World War, the Marxist-influenced left found itself in the ideological camp of the Soviet Union, but for some this proved an uneasy alliance as the totalitarianism of the regime and its suppression of intellectuals and artists, of which Shostakovich and Prokofiev are but two famous examples in the field of music, came to light.<sup>224</sup> Those who dissented from right-wing politics and Marxist doctrines alike found themselves in what Peter Coleman described as an 'intellectual no man's land'.<sup>225</sup> Concerned that this group might fall prey to the increasingly vocal communist propaganda and seeing an opportunity to simultaneously counter the latter, American ideologues quickly moved in to fill this gap.

Rather than overtly supporting right-wing sentiment, which needed no further persuasion and risked polarising the intellectual field, the promoters of American cultural affairs at the CIA determined that the most effective response to the totalitarian Left in cultural and intellectual terms would be to court the greyer middle ground. It therefore sought to foster the Non-Communist Left (NCL) – a community of artists and intellectuals who, if not aligned with pro-American sentiment, at least were not enamoured of the Soviet cause.<sup>226</sup> The United States embarked on a programme of cultural diplomacy, which Mary Niles Maack usefully reminds us entails 'a government's efforts to transmit its national culture to foreign publics with the goal of bringing about an understanding for national ideals and institutions as

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<sup>223</sup> Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy*, Loc. no. 238 and 255.

<sup>224</sup> David Cauter, *The Dancer Defects*, 381-383; also see Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy*, Loc. no. 187 and 200.

<sup>225</sup> Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy*, Loc. no. 136.

<sup>226</sup> Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy*, Loc. no. 265.

part of a larger attempt to build support for political and economic goals.<sup>227</sup> The Congress for Cultural Freedom, a cultural organisation founded at the eponymous conference in Berlin in 1950, was one initiative covertly funded by the CIA that took up this cause. The organisation was anti-Fascist and anti-Communist, yet its members, who considered themselves ‘of the Left and on the Left’, were ‘liberals or social democrats, critical of capitalism and opposed to colonialism, imperialism, nationalism, racism and dictatorship.’<sup>228</sup> Its activities included arranging music festivals, convening seminars and conferences, the establishment of journals such as *Encounter*, *Survey*, *Preuves* and *Transition*, and the organisation of campaigns against the oppression of intellectuals. The intended effect of these endeavours was to develop a climate in which liberal points of view could be advanced.<sup>229</sup>

The buzzword that animated these discourses was intellectual freedom. In Arthur Koestler’s impassioned speech at the initial 1950 Congress that marked the Congress for Cultural Freedom’s establishment, he claimed intellectual freedom to be ‘one of the inalienable rights of man’, one that the Soviet Union crucially did not afford its leading thinkers and artists. ‘Deprived of the right to say “no”’, Koestler asserted, ‘man becomes a slave.’<sup>230</sup> Freedom meant the toleration of divergent opinions, luxuries that the examples of Shostakovich and Prokofiev (among many other artists) clearly showed the Soviet Union did not entertain. In a final call aimed to prod those who remained unconcerned by this matter out of their neutrality, Koestler claimed that indifference ‘amounts to a betrayal of mankind and to the abdication of the free mind.’<sup>231</sup>

But the notion of freedom and liberation were central to another constituency too: that of Africa and the African diaspora. At the same time as the Cold War coalesced in the 1950s, Africa and its diaspora (as well as other colonies in Asia and Latin America) were in the throes of liberation struggles which aimed to shed the yoke of colonialism, and entered the era of independence in the latter half of the decade. The

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<sup>227</sup> Mary Niles Maack, ‘Books and Libraries as Instruments of Cultural Diplomacy in Francophone Africa during the Cold War’, *Libraries and Culture*, 36:1 (2001), 59.

<sup>228</sup> Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy*, Loc. no. 343 and 502.

<sup>229</sup> Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy*, Loc. no. 277.

<sup>230</sup> Francis Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, 82-83.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

United States worried that the newly liberated states in Africa and the African diaspora would turn against their former colonisers, who represented the West and capitalist interests, and thus be liable to Soviet sympathies. In particular, it was concerned that the racial inequality still reigning in the United States would belie the US's claim to be the champion of the 'free' world, advocated so eloquently by Koestler, and deter the newly liberated states from allying with the West.<sup>232</sup> As the participation of several African countries in the 1955 Afro-Asian conference in Bandung, Indonesia shows – a conference which proved to be a critical stepping stone in the eventual formation of the Non-Aligned Movement that maintained neutrality from major power blocs – Africans on their part were concerned that they were being drawn into the prevailing political currents of the American-Soviet antinomies, in which they desired no part. American ideologues therefore had to exercise discretion in their flirtations with the sentiments of African thinkers. One of the consequences that have been well-documented in the jazz literature, was the State Department tours, that saw figures like Dizzy Gillespie, Herbie Mann and Randy Weston travel to Africa and Latin America to counter perceptions of American racism and bolster diplomatic relations.<sup>233</sup>

While the State Department also sponsored tours of classical musicians and ballet companies as ambassadors to assert American cultural aplomb,<sup>234</sup> jazz in particular was co-opted as a diplomatic tool to counter the Soviet argument that persisting racism in America was one reason for independent African states to embrace communism.<sup>235</sup> The United States' programmes to counter Soviet cultural propaganda, as several commentators note, were beset by contradictions. Built on the premise that culture in the West was free, not dictated by or subject to State interventions, it did exactly that: it intervened, in order to manipulate cultural perceptions. The State-sponsored tours elevated jazz from its status as degenerate to that of a national music, as Penny von Eschen writes, with the stroke of a pen.<sup>236</sup> The hitherto 'disreputable' music that was jazz, was now promoted as national culture

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<sup>232</sup> Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 108.

<sup>233</sup> Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*; Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 107-151.

<sup>234</sup> David Caute, *The Dancer Defects*, see chapters 14, 15 and 17.

<sup>235</sup> Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 110.

<sup>236</sup> Monson also underscores American ambivalence about the status of jazz and its desirability as a cultural 'showcase' of America. See Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 112.

(‘America’s music’). The tours projected an image of America that was ‘more [racially] inclusive than the reality’, and furthermore sought out jazz to counter perceptions of American racism in the 1950s (indeed Jim Crow was only lifted in 1965). And while promoting jazz for its race-transcending inclusiveness, it simultaneously relied on jazz as a ‘black’ cultural form to foreground the importance of African America in the conception of American nationhood.<sup>237</sup>

Lest we think that jazz musicians were unwittingly roped into these initiatives, Von Eschen stresses the confluence of impulses that shaped the State Department tours and programmes. Far from being a unidirectional process of co-opting musicians for State-conceptualised purposes and ideals, it was rather the convergence of various interest groups, including Cold War foreign policy, the Black American freedom movement, and the changes underway in American culture that ‘produce[d] the dynamic synergy that animated the programs.’<sup>238</sup> Each of these contributors, including the musicians, brought their own motivations to the table. Von Eschen furthermore describes the arrangements of the early tours as ‘highly opportunistic and haphazard’, contradicting notions of these propaganda projects as calculated and painstakingly orchestrated. The processes were moreover marred by contradictions, in which various currents of ideas and agendas (personal and institutional) coexisted within hazy margins of latitude.<sup>239</sup>

One of the important impulses behind the State Department tours, from the musicians’ side, was the burgeoning interest in Africa in the 1950s. As we have seen in Chapter Two, Africa captured the imagination of African Americans at this time, stimulated by Marcus Garvey’s pan-African advocacy (Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association was the black organisation with the largest membership in the world), the presence of a small yet significant number of African musicians who had transmitted their practices since the 1930s, and eventually the conspicuous chart successes of Babatunde Olatunji. For Africans and African Americans, the notion of freedom revolved around aspirations for liberation from colonial rule and self-governance and, in the United States, the struggle for civil rights. In Chapter Two, I

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<sup>237</sup> Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 3-4.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

have shown how senses of political solidarity and histories of musical exchange paved the way for South African exiled musicians to enter the American music circuit. In this chapter, we visit another scene of these encounters between Africa and its diaspora: London.

As the former colonial centre of the British Empire, London is a particularly interesting meeting point for the music of Africa and the African diaspora in the era of decolonisation and civil rights struggles. In the 1950s, according to George McKay, ‘African sounds could be heard in London, but more pertinently, musicians from Africa could experience *and play* in London mixes of music, such as American(-style) jazz, English dance band music, and [...] Caribbean musics [...], not all of which would be available to them to the same extent in their home communities.’<sup>240</sup> McKay’s comment draws attention not only to the presence of musicians from Africa and the diaspora, but to the unique space this provided for a cross-pollination of music practices in the melting pot that was London. Early African diasporic presences on the British jazz scene of the 1920 and ’30s include the Jamaican jazz trumpeters Leslie Thompson and Leslie ‘Jiver’ Hutchinson. The first black British band, however, was Ambrose Campbell’s West African Rhythm Brothers, who performed in the 1940s and ’50s. The arrival the ‘Windrush’ generation – so named for the ship that brought the first group of post-World War West Indian immigrants to British shores in 1948 – bequeathed to Britain a vibrant calypso scene and some of its leading jazz artists in the 1950s. Part of this wave of immigrants were Joe Harriott, Shake Keane, Dizzy Reece and Harold McNair, who started playing conventional bebop in the 1950s, but are better remembered for their experiments with free improvisation and cross-over with Indian classical music (in the form of a double quintet) in the 1960s.<sup>241</sup>

The Ghanaian drummer Guy Warren (later known as Kofi Ghanaba) visited London around 1950, hosted a series of jazz programmes for the BBC and performed with Kenny Graham in his Afro-Cubist ensemble.<sup>242</sup> When he left London in 1951, Robin D.G. Kelley writes, he departed ‘laden with Cuban percussion instruments (bongos

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<sup>240</sup> McKay, ‘The Black Atlantic and the Commonwealth’, 167.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>242</sup> Kelley, *Africa Speaks, America Answers*, 20-21.

and conga drums) as well as a deeper knowledge of jazz, calypso, rumba, and other diasporic music.’<sup>243</sup> If he was ‘struck by the similarities between West African highlife and Trinidadian calypso’ during his time in London, which he went on to incorporate in his music practices back in West Africa, he was not the only one.<sup>244</sup> The recordings of Trinidadian calypsonians Lord Kitchener and Lord Beginner (who had arrived on the HMT Windrush) on the Melodisc label were exported to English West Africa, where they made a profound impression on the Ghanaian E.T. Mensah (known as the ‘King of Highlife’), the bandleader of the popular highlife band, The Tempos. He travelled to England in 1955 with the intention of studying the musical styles of Trinidadian calypsonians Edmundo Ros and Lord Kitchener, but also performed with the British bandleader Chris Barber and recorded with the Nigerian guitarist Brewster Hughes. Back in Accra, Mensah incorporated these influences in his highlife band, and also opened a club that was to become one of the centres of highlife; it was called Paramount, named after the Paramount Dance Hall situated on Tottenham Court Road in London.<sup>245</sup>

By the time that the South African production of *King Kong* (referred to in the Introduction) arrived, West Indian musicians were playing alongside South African musicians to fill out the ranks of the orchestra.<sup>246</sup> Besides being notable for the musical presences (and overlaps) between African and its diaspora, however, London was also a significant locus in South African exile and resistance politics. The British Anti-Apartheid movement was established in London between 1959 and 1960, and already as early as 1955 the Anglican activist, Father Trevor Huddleston, had called for boycotts against South Africa.<sup>247</sup> In the pages that follow, I discuss the embroilments of South African authors and musicians in the Transcription Centre with the politics of the Cold War. The Transcription Centre, we will see, was an important node where these existing encounters and exchanges intensified.

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Markus Coester, ‘Localising African Popular Music Transnationally: “Highlife-Travellers” in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s’, *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 20:2 (2008), 136-7.

<sup>246</sup> Gwen Ansell, *Soweto Blues*, 224.

<sup>247</sup> McKay, ‘The Black Atlantic and the Commonwealth’, 175.

## Part I

### An African oasis in Dover Street

By the time the Transcription Centre sold its tapes in 1972 to recover the deficit that had amassed in its slow decline in the latter half of the '60s, 2 727 hours of tape was sent to the Schomburg Collection of the New York Public Library.<sup>248</sup> The cultural magazine programme titled 'Africa Abroad', the core output of the Centre, comprising the bulk of the tapes, had garnered an impressive list of contributors, among whom counted the leading writers and artists of Africa and the African diaspora during the 1960s. Under the direction of its first programme director, the South African exiled writer Lewis Nkosi, 'Africa Abroad' featured Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, James Baldwin, C.L.R. James, Langston Hughes, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (at the time known as James Ngũgĩ), Mbelle Sonne Dipoko, as well as some South African literary luminaries such as Mazisi Kunene (known as Raymond Kunene at the time), Bloke Modisane, Dennis Brutus, Cosmo Pieterse, Ezekiel Mphahlele (later known as Es'kia Mphahlele), to name a few.<sup>249</sup> It is equally significant for understanding the place that was London in the 1960s that these intellectuals and artists were present in or passing through London regularly during the 1960s, and the Transcription Centre was a prime meeting point. This indicates the secondary function of the Transcription Centre as a cultural centre and informal meeting place for Africans and Africanists in London.

These frequenters of the Transcription Centre contributed interviews, book and album reviews, music, and discussions on cultural and political matters in Africa, usually for a small fee. Spin-off projects from the ideas coined and circulated in its corridors include theatre productions of plays, a television production of Wole

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<sup>248</sup> See Container 10 Folder 8 for the list of tapes and accompanying letter that was sent to the New York Public Library on 28 July 1972. Most of the recordings in the collection are available at the British Library in the 'African Writers' Club' collection. As Liz Gunner notes, it is not always clear which of the recordings of the 'African Writers' Club' collection was made by the Transcription Centre and which by the BBC's African Service at Bush House. It would be possible to use the lists of the Transcription Centre's programmes to identify the Transcription Centre's recordings in a future project. See footnote 1 in Liz Gunner, 'Reconfiguring Diaspora: Africa on the Rise and the Radio Voices of Lewis Nkosi and Bloke Modisane', *Social Dynamics*, 36:2 (2010), 268-269.

<sup>249</sup> Mphahlele was working for the Congress for Cultural Freedom at the time. Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, 391-2.

Soyinka's play, *The Swamp Dwellers*, art exhibitions and jazz concerts. Of equal importance as its recorded output, therefore, was the Transcription Centre's role as a cultural hub where Africans and Africanists in London met, and as a general support structure for the pan-African arts in London (and further afield) – within the confines of its modest means.

A number of overviews of the Transcription Centre's history have emerged in recent years, including those by Michael Moore, who participated in the Centre's activities in the 1960s, and Jordanna Bailkin.<sup>250</sup> These are bird's eye view accounts of an archive extending over twenty-five containers, and are valuable for any appreciation of the history and extent of the Transcription Centre's activities. The voluminous correspondence and paperwork generated by some of the projects will no doubt support more detailed analyses, which would also serve to refine an understanding of the Transcription Centre's impact on British and African cultural life at the time.

Stepping in this direction, Liz Gunner's study of the impact of two South African exiled authors, Bloke Modisane and Lewis Nkosi, at the Transcription Centre offers a more detailed consideration of South Africans' involvement with the Centre's activities. An important link between South African exiles and the Transcription Centre was no doubt its first programme director, Lewis Nkosi. Closer to music, Carol Muller provides an overview of the Transcription Centre's music activities insofar as these pertain to the South African singer (and the book's co-author) Sathima Bea Benjamin's life in exile. Given this focus, the level of detail and critical engagement with the material on South African musicians at the Centre is more limited than the archive material could sustain.<sup>251</sup> This chapter discusses South African musicians' involvement with the Transcription Centre more extensively, and adds further detail and nuance to the understanding of the institutional role of the Transcription Centre and Cold War politics in South African musicians' exile.

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<sup>250</sup> Gerald Moore, 'The Transcription Centre in the Sixties: Navigating in Narrow Seas', *Research in African Literatures*, 33:3 (2002), 167-181; Jordanna Bailkin, 'The Sounds of Independence? Lessons from Africa and Beyond at the Transcription Centre Archive', *History Workshop Journal*, 78 (2014), 229-245.

<sup>251</sup> See Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 145-153, 164, and 168-170.



Because the Centre is not widely known, its history merits brief repetition here, with a particular focus on the way it involved and supported South African exiles. In November 1960, Dennis Duerden was approached by the Congress for Cultural Freedom to look into the possibility of broadcasting in Africa.<sup>252</sup> Having established its presence in Europe, Britain and America since its founding in 1950, the Congress now sought to widen its reach by expanding to Africa, Asia, Australia, Latin America and the Soviet bloc.<sup>253</sup> Duerden was indeed well-placed to make such inquiries. An art historian and critic by training, he was the former principal of the Teaching Training College in Keffi in Northern Nigeria, and had worked at the BBC's African Section at the time.<sup>254</sup> In an initial report on broadcasting in Africa he compiled for the Congress for Cultural Freedom in November 1961, he outlined his requirements for such an endeavour: a studio for recordings, a permanent sound engineer, and a good secretary. The idea that the Transcription Centre should be more than merely a recording facility arose from the problems he experienced from a pilot project, recording a radio talk on the telling topic 'Marxism in Africa':

The difficulty of arranging meetings with all the people concerned would indicate the necessity of a social centre to which they would all be accustomed to coming for preliminary discussions and for general cultural activities.

This informal meeting space became one of the central features of Transcription Centre. As an official publicity brochure of the Transcription Centre reflects on its inception: '[t]he Transcription Centre began by being a radio studio attached to a cultural centre, a kind of radio-workshop for writers and artists and students of the social sciences.'<sup>255</sup> If Duerden's idea for a 'social centre' seems somewhat manipulative, it is worth bearing in mind the minimal representation and support Africa and its diaspora received in British public forums at the time. In her memoir, Maxine McGregor, the wife of the late South African jazz pianist Chris McGregor and erstwhile secretary at the Transcription Centre, remarks on the 'invaluable meeting space' that the Transcription Centre provided for Africans and Africanists in

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<sup>252</sup> Letter Nelson W. Aldrich, Jr. to Dennis Duerden, 29 November 1960, Container 21 Folder 6.

<sup>253</sup> Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy*, Loc. no. 277-303. At its height the Congress had 280 staff members and offices or representatives in thirty-five countries. *Ibid.*, Loc. no. 266.

<sup>254</sup> Kaye Whitman, 'Remembering Dennis Duerden, 1927-2006', *ASAUK Newsletter*, 12:46 (January 2007), 18.

<sup>255</sup> Dennis Duerden, 'The Transcription Centre', Container 24 Folder 1.

London, unique given that the Africa Centre was only established years later.<sup>256</sup>

Valerie Wilmer similarly gives a sense of the exceptionality of the Transcription Centre in London when she comments that her interests in African culture and socio-political debates were ‘neither echoed nor welcome elsewhere’, recalling that appeals to the general media to publish her writing on black artists were met with ‘incredulity that anyone would be interested in reading about Black endeavour and achievement.’<sup>257</sup> Or, in more hyperbolic terms, as one article in *West Africa* magazine put it, ‘[the Transcription Centre’s] office in Dover Street...has become a kind of African cultural oasis in the London desert.’<sup>258</sup>

This was especially the case for a wave of African political exiles in the 1960s (a notable example is Wole Soyinka) as well as South African exiles. Some of South Africa’s most promising authors at the time were present in the Transcription Centre: John Nagenda, Lewis Nkosi, Bloke Modisane, Cosmo Pieterse, Richard Rive, Alex la Guma, Lionel Ngakane, Nat Nakasa, and Esk’ia Mpahlele. As one of the few spaces for pan-African cultural debate in combination with the material support within its modest means, the Transcription Centre provided intellectual space and material support for pan-African discourse that was hard to find elsewhere.

But more specifically, the Transcription Centre was a space for experimentation with radio transcription as a medium. It echoed the spirit of experimentalism and African cultural assertion that characterised African cultural endeavour in the post-independence era – examples are Ngũgĩ’s Kamĩrĩĩthũ Community Theatre and African cultural initiatives like the Mbari Cultural Centres and ChemiChemi in Nairobi.<sup>259</sup> It embarked on one-off projects such as the adaptation of Wole Soyinka’s play *The Swamp Dwellers* into a television production, and a recording of a poetry reading by Dollar Brand in counterpoint with a saxophone improvisation, and the coordination and marketing of two albums.

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<sup>256</sup> McGregor, *Chris McGregor and the Brotherhood of Breath*, 83.

<sup>257</sup> See Val Wilmer, *Mama Said There’d Be Days Like This: My Life in the Jazz World* (London: The Women’s Press, 1991 [1989]), 186-7.

<sup>258</sup> Correspondent, ‘Oasis in Dover Street’, *West Africa* (28 January 1967), Container 24 Folder 1.

<sup>259</sup> See Ngũgĩ, *Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams*, 52-53; also see Jeanne M. Dingome, ‘The Ibadan Cluster: Mbari’, in *European-Language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa, Part 2*, ed. Albert S. Gérard (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986), 679-688.

The South African author Lewis Nkosi, the Transcription Centre's first programme director, initiated the programme 'Africa Abroad'.<sup>260</sup> Described as 'a cultural magazine', the programme initially focussed on writers and writing in Africa, featuring radio plays, poetry and prose readings, but also included debates on African cultural matters and later on politics. Programme titles are indicative of the cultural and political concerns of the time. 'What is African Literature?' asks one programme, articulating one of the central debates in African writing of the 1960s. Other programme titles more clearly address ideological concerns in relation to artistic production (e.g. 'Cultural conflicts and the responsibility of the writer'), or questions of cultural heritage (e.g. 'Tribalism and Modern Political Development in Africa'). More overt political discussions consider the legacy of colonialism ('The Church in Africa'), pan-Africanism ('The African and the Afro-American: The Brotherhood of Blackness' and numerous talks about *négritude*) and themes rooted in post-colonial concerns (such as 'Africa and Democracy' or 'African Socialism').<sup>261</sup> The Transcription Centre furthermore provided a space for interaction between artists from Africa and the African diaspora. The Jamaican-Haitian author Andrew Salkey, for instance, reviewed Lewis Nkosi's volume of essays *Home and Exile*, or the Ugandan playwright Robert Serumaga reviewed James Baldwin's *Amen Corner*.<sup>262</sup>

An 'Africa Abroad' programme would follow more or less the following pattern:

A typical number would begin with a brief interview with some African or West Indian artist or writer currently in town, followed by a review of a recent literary or critical work in the same field. Programs usually ended with a notice of some recent jazz record release by the brilliant Nigerian critic Aminu Abdullahi, who later took over the editorship from Nkosi.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Dennis Duerden, 'The Transcription Centre', Container 24 Folder 1.

<sup>261</sup> List of programmes, Container 10 Folder 8.

<sup>262</sup> Draft list of transcription tapes, Container 9 Folder 4.

<sup>263</sup> Moore, 'The Transcription Centre in the Sixties', 178. Africa Abroad No. 27 (available in the African Writers' Club Collection, British Library Sound Archives), for instance, is a good example of this sequencing, as well as how programmes were fragmented on different recorded tapes. Africa Abroad No. 27 is a framework of an entire Africa Abroad programme, with Robert Serumaga doing the introduction and continuity commentary. Parts of the programme that are announced are not included in this recording: these were probably recorded separately and inserted at the time of broadcast. These inserts would probably be interviews that are not announced at the start of the recording, such as the interview of Dollar Brand by Julian Beinart, for instance.

From the Transcription Centre's archive, it is difficult to surmise this sequence, as the lists of tapes index individual recorded items, such as an interview with an artist or writer, rather than full programmes.

If the Transcription Centre already functioned as a 'nerve centre' of African thought and cultural activity through the constant stream of visitors who passed through its corridors and the production of the 'Africa Abroad' programmes, the 'Cultural Events in Africa' newsletter, launched in 1964, consolidated this role. The newsletter editors established contact with galleries, theatres, arts venues and universities throughout Africa and its diaspora to send regular updates of their activities and planned events to the Transcription Centre. This was collated into a monthly newsletter and distributed to nearly 150 university libraries, organisations and individuals, as one subscription list shows.<sup>264</sup> Beyond the 'Africa Abroad' programme and 'Cultural Events in Africa' newsletters, the Transcription Centre branched out into television production, theatre production (it put on performances of Athol Fugard's and Wole Soyinka's plays); it built up a library of African books, magazines and music available for perusal in a reading room, and planned to release the recordings on LP. (The two albums the Transcription Centre did release, *Kwela by Gwigwi's Band* and *Tunji with Chris McGregor*, which I discuss below, were the first and, as it turned out, only examples of these.)

The 'Africa' we encounter through the Transcription Centre's archive is a thoroughly cosmopolitan space. It bears the traces of the era's heightened pan-African awareness, and registers the increased interest in developing African epistemologies and approaches to cultural expression that mirror political concerns with decolonisation at the time. Through all its activities, and particularly through programmes like Africa Abroad and the 'Cultural Events in Africa' newsletter, the Transcription Centre not only managed to stay in touch with cultural events, trends, publications and opinion, but also actively produced 'Africa' through its broadcasts, concerts and other modes of cultural production. This is highly significant, especially given the location of the Transcription Centre in the former colonial metropolis,

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<sup>264</sup> Container 22 Folder 8.

London.<sup>265</sup> From the South African perspective, London is furthermore one of the central locations of the ANC in exile, which adds a further dynamic to a reading of South African exile mediated through London.

The presence of jazz musicians (rather than, for instance, traditional musicians) at the Transcription Centre rounds out the picture of a 'modern', cosmopolitan Africa represented in its offerings. It is, however, less likely that this was due to intentional programming on the Transcription Centre's side (as it was in the State Department Cultural Presentations Program tours, for instance)<sup>266</sup> than by happenstance. It could thus be understood as reflective of Africa's 'modern', cosmopolitan outlook in the era of decolonisation and the deep histories of colonial entanglement and circum-Atlantic cultural exchange. As much as the music programmes, like the literary ones, could be understood as a 'mirror' of the cultural production coming from South Africa at the time, they are also (re-)productions of a remote 'Africa' from the vantage point of South African exile in London.

We could consider the impact of the Transcription Centre in two ways: the impact of the Transcription Centre as a cultural node in London itself, and the impact of the transcriptions produced by the Transcription Centre from where these were broadcast. If the stature of the people who visited the Transcription Centre and the prolific output of transcriptions are taken into account, the Transcription Centre as a cultural presence in London was very successful indeed. It is, however, much more difficult to estimate the impact the Transcription Centre's output made when it was broadcast abroad. Although distribution lists in the Transcription Centre's archive give some indication of where transcriptions were sent, it would be difficult to establish if the tapes were used, when they were broadcast and what the number of listeners might have been.<sup>267</sup> Liz Gunner stresses the importance of radio in

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<sup>265</sup> See, for instance, Ramnarine, *Beautiful Cosmos*, 49, giving a sense of the historical reach of the relationships between the Caribbean and London; also George McKay, 'Jazz of the Black Atlantic and the Commonwealth', 130-189.

<sup>266</sup> See Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 112; Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 6.

<sup>267</sup> Distribution lists were regularly updated and sent as part of the reports to the Transcription Centre's funding bodies; see for instance Container 9 Folder 7. Bailkin writes about Duerden's difficulties in tracking how the tapes were used, see 'The Sounds of Independence?', 10.

independence-era Africa,<sup>268</sup> but the Transcription Centre's programmes were arguably not the kind of material that would appeal to mass taste.

Dennis Duerden's initial report to the Congress for Cultural Freedom shows that the programmes were aimed at a small 'intellectual elite' who fell between the cracks of mainstream broadcasting staples such as music and talk shows that were popular at the time.<sup>269</sup> The fact that the Transcription Centre was established despite the small numbers of listeners it anticipated (as the initial report indicated) is indicative of the other aims of the Transcription Centre: it was a way to keep a finger on the pulse of prevailing sentiments among African and diasporic intellectuals.

Since the principal interest of the Congress for Cultural Freedom was to penetrate African and African diasporic airwaves to promote a (West-friendly) liberal agenda, the fees for the transcription recordings were determined according to each country's economic strength, thus ensuring accessibility. Despite the Congress's intentions for the Transcription Centre to become financially self-sufficient, the sales of the transcriptions were never able to cover their production costs. The recordings were nevertheless not offered for free, as this would have aroused suspicion in countries that were well aware of ideological pressures of the Cold War and dangers of co-optation by its main factions. As it turns out, these suspicions were not unfounded.

### **Positioning the Transcription Centre ideologically**

In the two major accounts of the Congress for Cultural Freedom's intriguing history, Peter Coleman's *The Liberal Conspiracy* and Francis Stonor Saunders' *Who Paid the Piper?*, little attention is paid to the Congress's operations in Africa and the African diaspora.<sup>270</sup> The Transcription Centre is barely mentioned, which is indicative of the

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<sup>268</sup> Gunner, 'Reconfiguring Diaspora', 257 and 269 footnote 2.

<sup>269</sup> Dennis Duerden, 'Broadcasting in Africa: A Report Prepared for the Congress for Cultural Freedom (September 1961)', Container 21 Folder 1.

<sup>270</sup> Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe* (New York: The Free Press, 1989); Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta, 2000).

small scale and relative unimportance of the Transcription Centre: it evidently easily slipped below the radar within the broader context of the Congress's worldwide operations. Even if the Transcription Centre's activities were dwarfed by the Congress's global operations, the relationship between the Transcription Centre and the Congress for Cultural Freedom was not a secret (although the CIA's financial backing was).<sup>271</sup> Indeed, the ways and frequency with which the Congress received credit in the Transcription Centre's endeavours was the cause for occasional reproach.<sup>272</sup> The link, however, was tenuous and fraught.

The Transcription Centre was incorporated in Duerden's personal name in 1962, indicating that there was to remain some distance between the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Transcription Centre – at least formally.<sup>273</sup> Yet behind this public façade, great care was taken to indemnify Duerden from any liability should the worst transpire with the Centre's financial and intellectual operations.<sup>274</sup> Duerden remained the central pillar of this small organisation with its handful of staff members who were appointed to various supporting roles in the Centre's operations through the years. His centrality to the day-to-day running of the Transcription Centre and the content it produced can be deduced from the substantial number of interviews and debates he conducted on the list of tapes, and the frequency of his name appearing at the bottom of correspondence. Gerald Moore comments that in Duerden's absence 'the Centre always threatened to grind to a halt'.<sup>275</sup> As the main driver of the programmes and projects, the (CIA's) buck, coming via the Congress for Cultural Freedom, moreover stopped with him.<sup>276</sup>

In the choice of programme content, employees and collaborators, it appears that Duerden was mostly left to his own devices and imprinted a significant part of his own vision and personal connections on the Transcription Centre's activities. Maxine McGregor, secretary and interviewer at the Transcription Centre, maintains that she

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<sup>271</sup> See, for instance, the article by an anonymous correspondent, 'Oasis in Dover Street', *West Africa* (28 January 1967), Container 24 Folder 1.

<sup>272</sup> Moore, 'The Transcription Centre in the Sixties', 171.

<sup>273</sup> Transcription Feature Services Ltd. Certificate of Incorporation, Container 19 Folder 10.

<sup>274</sup> Letter from S. Charles to Dennis Duerden, 23 October 1963, Container 21 Folder 2.

<sup>275</sup> Moore, 'The Transcription Centre in the Sixties', 171.

<sup>276</sup> See letters between Dennis Duerden and John Hunt, Container 21 Folder 6.

was never aware of interference with the views expressed.<sup>277</sup> Exactly because of this unawareness, the output of the Transcription Centre merits consideration as more than mere cultural propaganda.

The Transcription Centre's programmes were not always congruous with the Congress for Cultural Freedom's anti-communist stance. A case in point is the South African author Alex la Guma's involvement with the Centre. La Guma came through the ranks of the Young Communist League in South Africa and was a card-carrying member of the South African Communist Party before its official dissolution in 1950. At the time of his death in October 1985, he served as the African National Congress's Chief Representative in Cuba.<sup>278</sup> During his time affiliated with the Transcription Centre, La Guma worked on an adaptation of his novella *A Walk in the Night* as a musical, for which Dollar Brand was to compose the music. Despite the fact that 'A Walk in the Night' has strong Marxist undertones, Jack Thompson of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, who was in New York at the time, responded very enthusiastically when Brand told him about the project. One suspects that he was not familiar with La Guma's curriculum vitae or with his writing.<sup>279</sup>

Twelve radio plays penned by La Guma were recorded between May and August 1968 at the Transcription Centre, although *A Walk in the Night* is not among them (I could find no traces that this production or Brand's music ever came to fruition).<sup>280</sup> Nevertheless, the presence of La Guma at the Transcription Centre and the planned production of *A Walk in the Night* present an interesting case for reading the relationship between the Transcription Centre and its patron, the Congress for Cultural Freedom. First, it shows that the Congress neither screened, nor interfered with the Transcription Centre's engagement of artists, for here was a writer whose communist leanings were fairly evident – especially to an institution with an eye trained on seeing the proverbial 'red'. Duerden, who would have been abreast of

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<sup>277</sup> McGregor, *Chris McGregor and the Brotherhood of Breath*, 87.

<sup>278</sup> See Alex la Guma's obituary by the anonymised author ANC Veteran, 'Hamba Kahle Comrade Alex la Guma', *Sechaba: Official Organ of the African National Congress of South Africa* (January 1986), 28-31.

<sup>279</sup> Letter Dollar Brand to Dennis Duerden, 10 July 1965, Container 2 Folder 1.

<sup>280</sup> If the Transcription Centre or the Congress for Cultural Freedom had objections to La Guma or his work, he would not have been hosted, nor his plays recorded and eventually sold with the collection of tapes that formed the Transcription Centre's output.



Alex la Guma's background or at the very least have been familiar with his writing, appears not to have minded its overt Marxist leanings. The last observation supports the conclusion that Dennis Duerden, and by extension the Transcription Centre, operated relatively autonomously from the Congress for Cultural Freedom's programme, and that political orientation was not always at the forefront of the Centre's activities – indeed, in La Guma's case, it seems not to have mattered at all. It thus operated quite loosely from the auspices under which the Transcription Centre itself was established, that is, as a cultural counter to the reach of communism.<sup>281</sup> Even though the Transcription Centre formally acknowledged its sponsorship by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, there was evidently considerable latitude between this formal structure and the Transcription Centre's day-to-day activities.

If the Transcription Centre was ever a front to be maintained for the Congress for Cultural Freedom, or only a job for Duerden, it certainly developed into a personal vocation. Duerden's personal investment in its projects is evident in the ways he stretched his personal energies, resources and briefs to bring the Transcription Centre's projects to fruition. In a letter from 1965, Duerden mentions that he considered selling his house to obtain extra funds for the Transcription Centre.<sup>282</sup> It is not clear whether this transpired, but by 1967 Duerden wrote to Dollar Brand that he was relying on writing to earn a living, while he still coordinated the Transcription Centre until it eventually closed its doors in 1970. This displays a considerable measure of personal investment in the Centre, and certainly appears to be more of a personal project than a calculated, propagandistic initiative.

The considerable latitude in creating programmes, spearheading new initiatives and operations within the rather slim budget of the Transcription Centre's sponsorship prompts us to carefully consider the issue of its institutional patronage. Divergent agendas converged to produce the 'dynamic synergy that animated the programs', as Penny von Eschen also notes in the State Department tours.<sup>283</sup> De Certeau's 'tactics' come to mind, referring to ways of using (or navigating) established structures or spaces with a degree of plurality and creativity to devise opportunities ('making do')

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<sup>281</sup> Moore, 'The Transcription Centre in the Sixties', 167-169.

<sup>282</sup> See letter from Duerden to Thompson, 9 February 1965, Container 23 Folder 4.

<sup>283</sup> Refer to Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 5-6.

in the crevices between the ‘official’ usage.<sup>284</sup> I will return to this idea later in the chapter. But first, we turn to the South African musicians’ presence and activities at the Transcription Centre.

## **Part II**

### **Fragments of the quotidian: South African musicians at the Transcription Centre**

There were fewer musicians who graced the Transcription Centre’s corridors than there were authors. Even a cursory glance at the files of those affiliated with the Transcription Centre confirms the literary emphasis of its output: the Transcription Centre’s archive contains folders on thirty-four writers, and only four on musicians, including one ethnomusicologist, Gerhard Kubik. Its recorded output reflects much the same picture. (See Figure 4 for a list of music programmes recorded at the Transcription Centre.) The material contained in the Transcription Centre’s archive furthermore indicates that the musicians hosted by the Transcription Centre were all South African, with the exception of Gerhard Kubik who produced programmes on African Music remotely from his fieldwork in Africa, as a folder of correspondence suggests.<sup>285</sup> From the folders on South African musicians, we learn that the South African singer Dorothy Masuku, a child prodigy who made a name for herself as singer and song-writer of jive in 1950s South Africa and Zimbabwe, was managed by the Transcription Centre in 1965. Her time there briefly overlapped with Dollar Brand and Sathima Bea Benjamin’s, whose residency in turn overlapped with the arrival of the Blue Notes for a sojourn in Britain that was to last for several years, and which made a deep imprint on the development of British jazz.<sup>286</sup> By far the most extensive of these folders are on Dollar Brand: of which one folder contains correspondence between Brand and Duerden after Brand had left the Transcription

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<sup>284</sup> Michel de Certeau, “‘Making Do’: Uses and Tactics”, in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Randall (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1988), 29-42.

<sup>285</sup> See Container 2 Folder 4.

<sup>286</sup> Jason Toynbee, Catherine Tackley and Mark Doffman identify the Blue Notes’ arrival on the British jazz scene as one of five ‘moments’ that critically shaped the history of jazz in Britain. See ‘Another Place, Another Race? Thinking through Jazz, Ethnicity and Diaspora in Britain’, in *Black British Jazz: Routes, Ownership and Performance* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 5-6.

Centre and moved to New York. (Chapter Four considers the correspondence in greater detail.)

Contributor/artist	Description	Duration	Date of recording
Gerhard Kubik	Illustrated Talks by on African Music		
	1) Music of the Central African Republic	28'42''	Nov '66
	2) Music of Cameroun	28'42''	Oct '66
	3) Music of N. Nigeria	26'48''	Oct '66
	4) Yoruba Talking Instruments	24'40''	Oct '66
	5) Music of African Children	24'36''	Nov '66
	6) Music of Mocambique	29'09''	Nov '66
	7) Creative Musicians in Africa	29'20''	Aug '66
	8) Understanding African Music	25'20''	Nov '66
	9) Musical Traditions of Uganda	29'58''	Nov '66
	10) Xylophone Playing in Uganda	30'00''	Oct '66
Dollar Brand	Four Illustrated Talks on South African Jazz		
	No.1	13'50''	May '65
	No. 2	13'00''	May '65
	No. 3	13'10''	Jun '65
	No. 4	13'00''	Jun '65
Barna Karnute	Interviewed by Todd Matshikiza	2'56''	Jun '62
'Lucky' Thompson	Interviewed by Aminu Abdullahi	25'15''	Jun '62
Miriam Makeba	Interviewed by 'Unnamed Frenchman speaking English'	2'16''	May '64
I.K. Daire	Samuel Akpahot	4'49''	Sep '64
Dollar Brand	Julian Beinart	3'39''	11 February '65
Ben Kalanzi	Robert Serumaga	3'42''	Oct '65

*Figure 4: List of music programmes recorded at the Transcription Centre. This list is extrapolated from the list of tapes sent to the Schomburg Collection at the New York Public Library when the Transcription Centre's collection of recorded materials was sold. The grey blocks indicate contributions by South African musicians. See Container 10 Folder 8, Transcription Centre Archive, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, U.S.A.<sup>287</sup>*

<sup>287</sup> The list does not include any reference to talks or interviews with Chris McGregor, the members of the Blue Notes or Gwigwi Mrwebi's band, nor the 'Mbaqanga! Kwela by Gwigwi's Band' programmes, although the folder on Chris McGregor in the Transcription Centre Archive contains McGregor's notes for the first programme on *mbaqanga*, which matches the British Library's holdings of this series of four talks. This seems to indicate that the 'Talks on Mbaqanga' in the British Library's collection were indeed recorded at the Transcription Centre (and not by the BBC at Bush

What we learn from these folders (with the exception of the correspondence between Brand and Duerden) neither concerns the career highlights of the musicians, nor significant albums or performances, nor insight into creative processes that shaped these musicians' output. Instead, the documents cast light on the very mundane struggles and everyday processes that musicians had to navigate. In many ways, they serve as snapshots of the quotidian in musicians' lives in exile. They offer fragmentary pieces of information of whatever needed to be officially documented, disclosed, arranged, offering little preamble of what came before or after, affording only brief glimpses into certain events. And it is exactly in this – how the quotidian was institutionally mediated – that these odd fragments become relevant for this chapter. In a sense, these fragments can only be an index of on-going process that happens 'off-stage', or perhaps more accurately 'off the page', outside the purview of the paper trail that constitutes the archive's preserving eye. If we read 'between the lines' of what these fragments of paperwork convey, we see the everyday manifestations of exile: the struggles to find work, the gigs that were cancelled and the consequent lack of income, the tours that didn't work out, the opportunities missed and the relationships that soured. This section describes the archive material, but also provides a brief background on these artists in order to read 'between' the fragments.

### **Dorothy Masuku**

Dorothy Masuku<sup>288</sup> arrived in Britain in 1964, and at the Transcription Centre in January 1965.<sup>289</sup> Discovered at the age of sixteen, Masuku started her career as

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House), although the reason this was overlooked in the compilation of the Schomburg Center tapes list, and in the current catalogue of the Transcription Centre recordings at the Schomburg Center and Indiana University, remains unclear. See the folder containing documents pertaining to Chris McGregor, Container 2 Folder 5. Also see 'Mbaqanga! The Gwigwi Mrwebi Band, Part 1', African Writers' Club, C134/286, Sound Archive, British Library.

<sup>288</sup> There is some discrepancy in the spelling of Dorothy's surname: most sources refer to her as Masuka (including her albums), and others to Masuku. In a personal interview, Dorothy clarified that her surname is indeed Masuku, but a misprint on the album sleeves of her first records led to her becoming known in the music industry as Dorothy Masuka. In this chapter I refer to Dorothy Masuku by her original surname; however, where I cite I use the spelling as in the quoted text. Interview with Dorothy Masuku, 23 April 2013, Yeoville, Johannesburg.

primarily a recording artist with Troubadour Records in 1952 and soon achieved success with her self-composed hit 'Hamba Nontsokolo' the following year. Her early career in the 1950s oscillated between her native Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe today) and South Africa (mainly Johannesburg), where she performed with the revered jazz band, the Harlem Swingsters (featuring Todd Matshikiza and Gwigwi Mrwebi who also make brief appearances in the Transcription Centre Archive), local jazz diva Dolly Rathebe, and Miriam Makeba.<sup>290</sup> Although Masuku featured in what might pass as light entertainment performances such as Alfred Herbert's 'African Jazz and Variety' shows, as the decade progressed her own compositions became increasingly political, and increasingly attracted the attention of the South African security forces. Following her last recording on Troubadour with the song 'Lumumba', paying tribute to the assassinated Patrice Lumumba, Masuku became a 'wanted person' in South Africa.<sup>291</sup>

Thus the circumstances that brought her to British shores were political rather than musical: after touring in what was formerly known as Malawi and East Africa with the African Follies in 1964, she was unable to return to South Africa. As Masuku explains:

I was more on the political part of it. You know, I didn't get to London to do performances. No. I was in London because I couldn't come back to South Africa. You know, I was all over the places in Africa [with the African Follies production], and the next thing I had to go to, they had to send me to England because I couldn't come back to South Africa.<sup>292</sup>

In Britain, Masuku briefly joined another South African exile, Joe Mogotsi, for a performance called 'The Blackbirds in 1964' at the Palladium in Edinburgh. The Transcription Centre's documents, however, reveal no more of the circumstances that brought her to the Transcription Centre.

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<sup>289</sup> The letter outlining the informal agreement appointing the Transcription Centre as management agency for Dorothy Masuku states that this agreement starts on 28 January 1965. See letter from Dennis Duerden to Dorothy Masuku, 10 March 1965, Container 2 Folder 6.

<sup>290</sup> For an insightful account of Masuku's early career and music, as well as her relationship with the Southern African music industry in the 1950s, see Lara Allen, 'Commerce, Politics, and Musical Hybridity: Vocalizing Urban Black South African Identity during the 1950s', *Ethnomusicology*, 47:2 (2003), 228-249.

<sup>291</sup> Allen, 'Commerce, Politics, and Musical Hybridity', 236.

<sup>292</sup> Interview with Dorothy Masuku, 23 April 2013, Yeoville, Johannesburg.

Masuku's relationship with the Transcription Centre was restricted to artist management.<sup>293</sup> There is no evidence that artist management was an area of operations that the Transcription Centre had embarked upon before Masuku's arrival, or launched in any formal way. It was, in all likelihood, an opportunity that grew from the contacts and infrastructure it could provide to Masuku, developed improvisationally rather than planned strategically. The rather informal agreement between Masuku and the Transcription Centre, a letter confirming a verbal agreement with a back-dated commencement of the agreement, supports this hypothesis. According to this agreement, the Transcription Centre would endeavour to find work for Masuku in television, radio, stage, film or other performance engagements, and would take a not inconsiderable 25% of the earnings as a management fee.

As non-British musicians could not obtain employment on the regular gig circuit owing to Equity's prohibition of foreign artists to perform in Britain without an engagement in exchange elsewhere (an impossibility given the circumstances in South Africa), finding work in London as a foreign jazz performer required alternative routes than the usual club performances.<sup>294</sup> Letters promoting Masuku and seeking engagements were sent to a range of organisations, including the BBC, Granada Television Network, the Emlyn Griffiths Agency, Rediffusion Television, the Pan-African Union of Journalists, Scott Solomon Productions (upon a referral by Decca), and Island Records. The way the promotional letters marketed Masuku are revealing of the way African artists fitted into the performance environment in London. Masuku was promoted as a 'qwela [sic] folk singer'<sup>295</sup> (referencing the South African genre, *kwela*, that would have been familiar to British audiences owing to the immense popularity of the penny-whistle player, Lemmy Special in the 1950s) who was 'better than Miriam Makeba' (using another well-known South African figure as a marker), who sings in 'colloquial [African] tongues' and would

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<sup>293</sup> There is one written transcript for a programme in which Dorothy Masuku introduces and sings several songs, in all likelihood recorded by the BBC rather than the Transcription Centre since the songs included in the transcript match with the set list sent to the BBC for her recording there on 22 February 1965. See letter Maxine Lauré to Philip Treleven, 4 March 1965, and transcripts, Container 2 Folder 6.

<sup>294</sup> McGregor, *Chris McGregor and the Brotherhood of Breath*, 84.

<sup>295</sup> Letter Maxine Lauré to Harold Davison, 18 February 1965, Container 2 Folder 6.

provide ‘historic interest as well as light entertainment’.<sup>296</sup> These descriptors give an indication of the cultural markers that were in circulation at the time. A refusal letter from Island Records found Masuku’s voice ‘most attractive but completely uncommercial’, referring Maxine Lauré, corresponding on behalf of the Transcription Centre, to Decca which made records for export. Another reply claims not to ‘understand this type of folk singing too well’ and sent the details of an American colleague who managed Pete Seeger.

But there were also successes. Contracts show that Masuku performed for the television show ‘London Line’ twice on 12 March and 2 April 1965,<sup>297</sup> and another show called ‘That’s For Me’ on 15 March 1965. There were engagements with the BBC to appear on a ‘Special Programme for English Speaking Union’ (recorded on 22 February 1965), a recording simply titled ‘Dorothy Masuka Sings’ (broadcast on 2 April to Central and East Africa) and a recording scheduled for 30 April to appear on the programme ‘Tonight’. The band with which she performed on one occasion, we learn from a contract where names were specified, included Dollar Brand and the Guyanese guitarist Tommy Eytle. Masuku also remembers a performance with John Dankworth and Cleo Laine, as well as other nightclub performances that must have been informally arranged or happened under the radar of the Transcription Centre’s management and Equity.<sup>298</sup>

A set list in Masuku’s handwriting, reproduced in correspondence the Transcription Centre sent to the BBC ahead of a recording session, gives an indication of the repertoire Masuku performed (see Figure 5). The list shows a number of South African songs, like ‘Mama la Wena’, ‘Kwazulu’, ‘Te’a Te’a’ (elsewhere spelled ‘Teya Teya’, composed by Masuku)<sup>299</sup> and ‘Iqixa’, the kiSwahili song ‘Malaika’ (performed and popularised by Miriam Makeba at the time) as a nod to the bigger African continent. These were complemented with widely-known songs like Consuelo Velazquez’s ‘Besame Mucho’, ‘Que Sera Sera’, and a bluesy boogie by

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<sup>296</sup> Letter (sender unknown) to the Student Union, Leicester University, 9 March 1965.

<sup>297</sup> Recording dates, the dates of broadcast are not mentioned.

<sup>298</sup> Interview with Dorothy Masuku, 23 April 2013.

<sup>299</sup> Liner notes, Dorothy Masuka and Job’s Combination, *Ingalo* (Starplate 001, 1981).

Champion Jack Dupree ‘Shake Baby Shake’, and even a song made famous on the vaudeville circuit, ‘My Yiddishe Mama’.<sup>300</sup>

Mame la Wena
Summertime
Kwa Zulu
Malaika
Iqixa
Lucky Old Sun
Te’a Te’a
Besame Mucho
Salama
My Yiddisha [sic] Mamma
Que Sera Sera
Houn’ Dog
Shake Baby Shake
Starlight

Figure 5: Dorothy Masuku's setlist for the BBC English-speaking Union concert, recorded on 22 February 1965.<sup>301</sup>

It is interesting to note that these songs added to the African repertoire all signal ‘otherness’. Overall, the song selection is clearly aimed to cater for a general familiarity, although the spattering of South African songs, spaced between the better-known numbers, offered a degree of novelty (though not too much). Whereas Masuku was known in South Africa as a singer of jazz and jive, in London she is perceived and marketed as ‘folk’ – a euphemism signalling the ethnic ‘other’. Nowhere is it mentioned that she is also a songwriter. Yet, commenting on her performances in London, Masuku notes:

In the music part of it, I was not really in a way of [pause] leisure performances. No. I was sending messages. The songs I was singing were political at the time.

This might be hard to believe of crowd-pleasing covers such as ‘Besame Mucho’ or ‘Que Sera’, though more plausible in songs like her composition ‘Te’a Te’a’ and ‘Salama’. The former tells the story of a murder committed without witnesses save for a little bird that flies to the highest tree in the forest and tells everyone about it – a

<sup>300</sup> Indeed, South African jazz has its roots in vaudeville, see Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, 24-30.

<sup>301</sup> Letter Maxine Lautré to Philip Treleavan, 4 March 1965, Container 2 Folder 6.



fitting allegory for artist-activists in exile from apartheid.<sup>302</sup> The latter, ‘Salama’, is a celebration of freedom.<sup>303</sup> ‘My Yiddishe Mama’ presents a middle ground, an internationally famous and popular song that yet reveals subtle political leanings if the context of its performance by a political exile is taken into account.

Composed by Jack Yellen and Lew Pollack, ‘My Yiddishe Mama’ expresses longing for the Jewish mother, the archetypal symbol of home and the home country. The lyrics’ sense of longing for a faraway place and time (i.e. childhood) is amplified by the implicit Jewish exile narrative. Jewish exile becomes metaphorically extended to South African exile when Masuku performs ‘Yiddishe Mama’ in her own exile in London. Recalling the discussion of metaphor in Chapter One, metaphor always implies a play between similarity and dissimilarity, and Masuku’s performance provides an excellent example of how this metaphorical extension is enacted through musical performance. If ‘Yiddishe Mama’ demonstrates the entanglements of South African and Jewish exile, it also shows the musical entanglements between South African and the United States. ‘Yiddishe Mama’ was made famous on the Vaudeville circuit of the 1920s by Belle Baker, Sophie Tucker and the Barry Sisters, and as Ballantine had shown, South African jazz had its roots in vaudeville practices. It is possible that ‘Yiddishe Mama’ was part of the common repertoire of musicians in the 1950s dance hall and variety show scene in South Africa. The song featured more recently in Hugh Masekela’s production ‘Songs of Migration’ (various shows in Johannesburg and London, 2010-2013), a music revue that constituted a veritable trip down memory lane of songs well-known and loved in South Africa. It was not only in remembering well-known songs from yesteryear that ‘Songs of Migration’ was interesting. Structured around the theme of migration, the show is rooted in a prevalent and deep-seated aspect of South African life, and gives a sense of the circumstantial and emotional backdrop against which many of the songs will have been listened to – here so amply demonstrated by Dorothy Masuku’s rendition sung in exile.

As important a consideration as the songs themselves for this thesis’s concern with exile, is Masuku’s sense of vocation, noting the distinction she draws between

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<sup>302</sup> Typed fragment of document, Container 2 Folder 6.

<sup>303</sup> Letter Maxine Lautré to Philip Treleavan, 4 March 1965, Container 2 Folder 6.

singing for leisure and political activism in her discourse. In practice, as this set list shows, it is more difficult to maintain a clear boundary between these categories, as the dictates of work that was difficult to secure no doubt played a role in the selection of songs she performed and recorded. But Masuku's discursive distinction is significant amidst contemporary debates about opportunity, privilege and suffering between musicians who remained in South Africa and those who had left. Perhaps it demonstrates the clarity that can only come from hindsight, from circumstances whose tricky navigation had dimmed with the advantage of historical distance. More clearly it demonstrates how clear distinctions remain the privilege of discursive rhetoric, but become much more tricky to maintain in practice. This is where music becomes the prime place for reading exile's ambiguities that discourse can (too easily) escape: music is exactly where leisure and political expression, aesthetic and practical considerations, vocation and the pragmatics of livelihood are difficult to disentangle.

As rapidly and informally as the arrangement between Masuku and the Transcription Centre had begun, it also ended. Masuku, we learn from an angry letter from Duerden, had suddenly left and he was unable to trace her. The recording scheduled at the BBC for 30 April was missed. A later letter of explanation from Duerden to the BBC averred that she was in Zambia visiting her children,<sup>304</sup> and indeed Masuku sent a pleading letter from Lusaka offering suggestions to recoup the monies she owed to the Transcription Centre and asking Duerden about a prospective engagement in Ghana.<sup>305</sup> And then the correspondence stops, leaving the reader of the archive only this small window into Masuku's life in exile.

### ***Kwela by Gwigwi's Band***

The archive material on South African jazz musicians Chris McGregor and Gwigwi Mrwebi adds a further dimension to the Transcription Centre's engagement with South African exiled musicians. Here, the Transcription Centre plays not only the role of artist manager, but also that of record producer. Already in 1964 Duerden

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<sup>304</sup> Letter from Dennis Duerden to Bush Bailey, 7 May 1965, Container 2 Folder 6.

<sup>305</sup> Letter from Dorothy Masuku to Dennis Duerden, 2 June 1965, Container 2 Folder 6.

expressed an interest to extend the Transcription Centre's activities to music recordings,<sup>306</sup> but this only came to fruition in 1967 with the record *Kwela by Gwigwi's Band* (77 AFRO 101) and two 45-rpm records released in 1968 simply titled *Tunji and Chris McGregor* (JIKA 101 and 102). The production of these records enables us to see how networks of acquaintances connected with the Transcription Centre operated, and how the Transcription Centre in turn operated through networks and the opportunities that particular presences and connections presented.

The particular constellation of presences that led to the album was as follows. First to arrive, and the seminal link between the musicians performing on the album and the Transcription Centre, was Maxine McGregor, the partner and later wife of South African jazz pianist Chris McGregor. Introduced to Dennis Duerden by Dollar Brand and Bea Benjamin, Maxine McGregor was appointed as secretary at the Transcription Centre in April 1965,<sup>307</sup> although the ambit of her role extended much further as interviewer for transcription recordings, editor of the 'Cultural Events in Africa' newsletter and administrator of the artist management side of business. Maxine McGregor arrived from Zurich, where she had left the Blue Notes to complete their performances at Club Africana – an engagement they had taken over from Abdullah Ibrahim.

Maxine counts among the numerous wives and life partners in the jazz world who provided the critical support for musicians to record, produce and perform their music. She had managed the Blue Notes during their rise to prominence in early 1960s South Africa, and used her time in London to seek new employment for the band. Having sought to escape the increasing economic pressures and threats of arrest that faced a multi-racial band in South Africa under the rigorous segregation of the Group Areas Act, the Blue Notes faced no less of a struggle to scrape together a living since leaving South Africa in July 1964 to perform at the Antibes Jazz Festival. In London, however, Maxine McGregor managed to secure a two-week residency for the Blue Notes at Ronnie Scott's, and persuaded the Musicians' Union

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<sup>306</sup> Letter from Doug Dobell to Dennis Duerden, 1 April 1964, Container 19 Folder 7.

<sup>307</sup> Letter from Dennis Duerden to London Accommodation Bureau Ltd., 6 October 1965, Container 20 Folder 8.

to waive the rule that prohibited foreign musicians to perform in the UK.<sup>308</sup> The Blue Notes, comprised of Chris McGregor on piano, Dudu Pukwana on alto saxophone, Mongezi Feza on trumpet, Johnny Dyani on bass and Louis Moholo-Moholo on drums, arrived in London in time to commence their performances at Ronnie Scott's Old Place on 26 April 1965.<sup>309</sup>

In Maxine McGregor's account of her life with Chris McGregor, we learn that the McGregors and the other members of Blue Notes stayed in a house owned by the Transcription Centre in the initial months they were in London.<sup>310</sup> The relationship between Duerden and the musicians exceeded the bounds of what falls strictly in the ambit of institutional affiliation: Duerden signed as guarantor of accommodation the musicians leased, lent his car to transport the band and Maxine to gigs, and once personally drove them to a performance in Oxford.<sup>311</sup>

Duerden had known about the Chris McGregor before Maxine arrived. How Duerden came to know about the Blue Notes is a study in how networks of artists were connected through the Transcription Centre and, ultimately, the role it played in disseminating their artistic output to audiences in Africa and beyond. It was the South African academic and long-time correspondent of Dennis Duerden, Julian Beinart, who introduced Duerden to the music of Chris McGregor. Beinart was the recipient of a Congress for Cultural Freedom Grant in 1962 to research design education in Nigeria, and it is probable that this was the original point of contact between him and Duerden. Beinart produced two LPs of the live jazz recordings made at one of the landmark events in South African jazz history, the 'Cold Castle National Festival Jabavu Moroka Jazz' in 1962. Among iconic bands like Mackay Dvashe's Jazz Dazzlers, the Jazz Giants (with Makaya Ntshoko on drums and Tete Mbambisa on piano), and the Jazz Ambassadors, the Chris McGregor Septet

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<sup>308</sup> McGregor, *Chris McGregor and the Brotherhood of Breath*, 83-4. Maxine McGregor's memoir gives a personal and detailed account of these early years of exile in chapters titled 'From the Antibes Festival to London' and 'London and Copenhagen 1965', 75-105.

<sup>309</sup> Mike Fowler's blog, *The Blue Notes: The South African Jazz Exiles*, is a virtual archive of information on the Blue Notes including scans of concert notices and reviews. It gives a detailed list of performances and newspaper clippings of, amongst others, the Ronnie Scott's gigs. Available: <[http://www.mfowler.myzen.co.uk/?page\\_id=110](http://www.mfowler.myzen.co.uk/?page_id=110)>, accessed 30 August 2015.

<sup>310</sup> Maxine McGregor, *Chris McGregor and the Brotherhood of Breath*, 91.

<sup>311</sup> See the staff folder on Maxine Lautré (McGregor), Container 20 Folder 8, and Maxine McGregor's accounts, *Chris McGregor and the Brotherhood of Breath*, 95.

performed too.<sup>312</sup> Beinart sent a copy of the LP to Duerden, and it was quickly seized by the Transcription Centre's jazz critic, the Nigerian Aminu Abdullahi, who reviewed the album.<sup>313</sup> The review, we may surmise, was incorporated into one the Africa Abroad programmes, and disseminated the sound of this South African band over various broadcasters' airwaves.

How Gwigwi Mrwebi came into contact with the Transcription Centre is less clear, although it is probably through the network of South Africans involved with the Transcription Centre. Mrwebi was part of the first generation of musician exiles who left South Africa with the production of *King Kong* in 1961. As one of the key protagonists in what Dalamba calls South Africa's 'jazz creation myth', Mrwebi was instrumental in the development of the South African jazz style *mbaqanga* in the 1950s.<sup>314</sup> He was a member of the Harlem Swingsters, with whom Dorothy Masuku performed in the 1950s, and which included another figure we briefly encounter in the Transcription Centre's records, the pianist Todd Matshikiza.

The paper trail of the recordings *Kwela* and *Tunji* in the Transcription Centre's archive is scant, probably owing to the fact that the recordings were mostly verbally arranged and only the formalities that were documented in contracts thus survived in the archive. A draft contract outlines the terms of the band's agreement with the Transcription Centre for the production of *Kwela by Gwigwi's Band*. The Transcription Centre is appointed as sole representative of the band for the following two years, has the right to 'exploit commercially the recording throughout the world without any restriction whatsoever...' For this, the artists received a mere 3% of the

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<sup>312</sup> The septet featured Chris McGregor (piano), Sammy Maritz (bass), Monty Weber (drums), Christopher Columbus (tenor saxophone), Ronnie Beer (tenor saxophone), Danayi Dlova (alto saxophone), Willy Nettie (trombone). But there were also some personnel swaps in parts of the performances. Beinart gives an account of the festival in sleeve notes, commenting on the significance of Festival as an indicator of the scale of jazz in South Africa. It was one of the few occasions where several bands could perform on a single platform, permitting a collective appraisal of the state of the state of jazz. South African jazz, Beinart pronounced, had greatly developed since the Jazz Epistles had set a new benchmark with their album, *Jazz Epistle Verse 1* in 1959. See the 1962 entry on *The Blue Notes: The South African Jazz Exiles* [blog], available: <[http://www.mfowler.myzen.co.uk/?page\\_id=87](http://www.mfowler.myzen.co.uk/?page_id=87)>, accessed 30 August 2015.

<sup>313</sup> See letter Julian Beinart to Dennis Duerden, 25 November 1963, and Dennis Duerden to Julian Beinart 31 December 1963, Container 12 Folder 13.

<sup>314</sup> Lindelwa Dalamba, Gwigwi Mrwebi, Ghetto Musicians and the Jazz Imperative: The Social and Musical Dynamics of South African Jazz in 1960s London, unpublished PhD thesis chapter, presented at the Wits Interdisciplinary Seminar in the Humanities Series, Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER), Johannesburg, 15 October 2012.

sale price of 34 shillings as royalties, distributed among the band members: 1% (for Mrwebi and Pukwana) or ½% each to Chris McGregor and Ronnie Beer.<sup>315</sup> Bassist Coleridge Goode and drummer Laurie Allen were paid according to the Musicians' Union rates.

By December 1969, a total of 770 copies of *Kwela* had been sold, and a year later the record was still deemed 'worth keeping in stock'.<sup>316</sup> Alan P. Merriam personally wrote to order a copy.<sup>317</sup> The first shipment of the *Tunji with Chris McGregor* records sold so well in Ibadan that Tunji requested a further 1500 to be sent, with the message to be conveyed to Chris McGregor that 'he's made a hit in Nigerian native blues'.<sup>318</sup> The album's success, however, seems to have been mostly in Nigeria.

These fragments of information make for sparse reading, but already allow a few observations. The Transcription Centre was clearly the central point through which the recordings were orchestrated, and therefore an essential mediator in cultural production. This was the first record produced by Gwigwi Mrwebi and Chris McGregor and the members of the Blue Notes since they arrived in exile. Recording opportunities for South African music in London were evidently rare (although more opportunities were available as session musicians). The Transcription Centre was therefore integral to the opportunity to record, and thus for documenting South African musicians' musical output in London. The Transcription Centre also played a critical role in South African music's dissemination, of which the record sales are only a partial indicator.

Lindelwa Dalamba has written about the significance of *Kwela by Gwigwi's Band* and, to a lesser extent, *Tunji with Chris McGregor* in disseminating the South African jazz style *mbaqanga* in the United Kingdom in the wake of the production *King Kong*, as well as further afield to West Africa. This is one way in which the Transcription Centre facilitated cultural exchange besides the recording and dissemination of its transcription recordings. The equally important observation that

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<sup>315</sup> Undated document, 'Recording 77 Afro/101 *Kwela by Gwigwi's Band*', Container 2 Folder 7.

<sup>316</sup> Correspondence between Dennis Duerden and Doug Dobell, 1 December 1969 and 12 October 1970, Container 19 Folder 7.

<sup>317</sup> Letter Alan P. Merriam to the Transcription Centre, 14 February 1967, Container 2 Folder 7.

<sup>318</sup> See letter from Tunji Oyelana to Maxine McGregor, 23 February 1968.

she makes is that the incorporation of non-South African musicians such as bassist Laurie Allen and drummer Coleridge Goode in the recording of *Kwela*, choices based on musical competence rather than nationality, also impacted the sound of *mbaqanga* as it developed in the specific cultural coordinates of London in the late '60s:

[M]baqanga, [...] a musical style that had once indexed the syncretism of South African popular music (marabi) and American popular music (swing jazz) now signalled an emergence of London's black diasporic jazzing subculture. Mbaqanga was extended to include calypso, highlife and Ghanaian rhythmic structures, such as *sibisa*, rather than American swing or Zulu *indlamu* stomp. Mbaqanga musicians, too, increasingly affiliated with the carriers of these different musical traditions and came to an identification with them that was based not only on music but also on the fact of colonialism. Read as such, *mbaqanga* emerges as crucial in the stories of postwar black British cultural life[.]<sup>319</sup>

It is striking how *mbaqanga*, once the product emerging from the crucible of different migrations in South Africa – from rural to urban (as suggested by its incorporation of *indlamu*, for instance) spaces, where it interacted with American music that made its way to South Africa – becomes compounded with even more musical forms (calypso, highlife, *sibiso*) that adds another layer of migration: exile. Music from 'home', as a referent that represents the migratory landscape exhibiting musical syncretism, becomes musically compounded in exile. These are the cultural processes that the Transcription Centre's recordings put into motion that could not have been anticipated or captured in the archive's rather scant documentation of the recording projects. Dalamba's analysis serves as an important reminder of the effects that the cultural exchanges facilitated by the Transcription Centre had, and particularly that which it had no control over and could not have anticipated: the content and effect of musical endeavour.

The production of *Kwela* and the affiliation with the McGregors and the members of the Blue Notes show how the Transcription Centre operated through networks of acquaintances. Instead of the image of a strategic, planned operation with formal hierarchies, it emerges that the operations were fluid, opportunity-based, and relied

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<sup>319</sup> Dalamba, Gwigwi Mrwebi, *Ghetto Musicians and the Jazz Imperative*.

on the initiatives and particular talents and possibilities of those present. Personal and work relationships were similarly fluid. But it also demonstrates the role the Transcription Centre played in the dissemination and exchange of music.

If the paper trail of the *Kwela* band in the Transcription Centre's archive is anything to go by, this formation of musicians did not receive many bookings and subsequently could have benefited very little from the Centre's formal artist management agreement. The musicians did perform in various formations and with various other artists, as the list of concert notices and album outputs show, and so became increasingly engrained in the British jazz scene. The struggle to get work as a quintet, combined with the meagre support that their increasingly free jazz experimentation garnered, resulted in the Blue Notes increasingly going their separate ways by the end of 1965 and eventually making their lives in exile individually. The 1968 album, *Very Urgent*,<sup>320</sup> marks the last recording of the Blue Notes in its original formation with Chris McGregor, Mongezi Feza, Dudu Pukwana, Johnny Dyani and Louis Moholo-Moholo, although they re-joined for the later Brotherhood of Breath big band collective – incorporating a number of British musicians in collaborations through which they impacted the British jazz scene the most. Maxine McGregor worked at the Transcription Centre until 1968, and continued on an ad hoc basis until the McGregors moved to France in 1974.

### **Dollar Brand**

It is to 'an accident of circumstance' that the Transcription Centre's 'Cultural Events in Africa' newsletter ascribes Dollar Brand, Beba Benjamin and the Blue Notes' coinciding involvement with the Transcription Centre.<sup>321</sup> It was indeed circumstance rather than plan which brought Brand and Benjamin to stay for four months at the Transcription Centre, even though this connection proved to be serendipitous for Brand's career in New York over the next few years (as I will discuss in Chapter Five). Brand and Benjamin were stranded in London after a planned tour to South Africa was cancelled due to the difficulties posed by tightening apartheid legislation

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<sup>320</sup> As the Chris McGregor Group (Polydor 184 137, 1968).

<sup>321</sup> *Cultural Events in Africa*, 8 (July 1965), 1.



that prohibited musicians from playing in front of mixed audiences. Apart from any moral or political objections, this rendered concerts economically unviable and posed the problem of finding venues that adhered to legislative constraints.<sup>322</sup> Benjamin and Brand arrived in London from Zurich, where they had been based since leaving South Africa in 1962, on account of a lack of performance opportunities (even though they were well-known and respected musicians).<sup>323</sup> They were, however, on their way to perform at the 1965 Newport Jazz Festival, and their tour of South Africa would have preceded their travels to New York for this purpose.

The first record of Brand's involvement with the Transcription Centre is a letter from Duerden to Jack Thompson of the Congress for Cultural Freedom dated 9 February 1965, in which Duerden mentions the recent arrival of a 'South African drummer' [sic] by the name of Dollar Brand.<sup>324</sup> Since Brand and Benjamin's stay in London was prolonged due to the cancellation of the South Africa tour, Dennis Duerden wrote to Brand to offer him a position as Music Adviser at the Transcription Centre on 9 March 1965. The vague, catch-all job description of 'music advisor' and the duration of the contract – a year, in spite of Brand's evident imminent departure – were probably for the benefit of the British Ministry of Labour and Home Office and designed to obtain residency and work permits rather than formal terms of engagement, for Brand spent little more than four months at the Transcription Centre.<sup>325</sup>

The papers in the Transcription Centre archive contain records of Brand's divorce from his first wife, and his marriage to South African vocalist Bea Benjamin on 26 February 1965.<sup>326</sup> The couple stayed in the Transcription Centre jazz reviewer Aminu Abdullahi's a flat while he was travelling, and Brand participated in the Centre's

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<sup>322</sup> 'New-Wed Dollar Weeps at Tour Cancellation', newspaper clipping (source unknown, 1965?), Rasmussen Papers, Jazz-Institut, Darmstadt. According to the article, no fewer than three government departments were involved in such a matter: the Group Areas Board, the Community and Development Department, and the Bantu Affairs Board. Also see letter from Duerden to Jack Thompson, 9 February 1965, Folder 4, Container 23, Transcription Centre Archive. One of Hugh Masekela's tours arranged by Union Artists was also cancelled around this time for similar reasons. See Masekela and Cheers, *Still Grazing*, 106.

<sup>323</sup> Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 94.

<sup>324</sup> Letter from Duerden to John Hunt, 24 March 1965, Folder 6, Container 21.

<sup>325</sup> Letter from Dennis Duerden to Dollar Brand, 9 March 1965, Folder 3, Container 2.

<sup>326</sup> Folder 2, Container 2.

operations.<sup>327</sup> Brand had clearly found a kindred creative spirit in Duerden, for his residency (and their subsequent correspondence) was characterised by ambitious ideas – some of which probably did not come to fruition. So, for instance, Duerden wrote to Jack Thompson of his and Brand’s intention to start a Jazz Club with weekly Sunday concerts at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, a regular venue used by the Transcription Centre for its events.<sup>328</sup> Another letter proposed a Jazz Festival in Africa, an idea already raised by Julian Beinart in 1963, but which never materialised. Several letters refer to the incidental music that Brand was to compose for an adaptation of Alex la Guma’s novella *A Walk in the Night* (mentioned above), yet I could find no evidence of the music’s existence or of the fate of this project, and it thus has to be surmised that the project, like the others, remained incomplete.<sup>329</sup>

On 16 March 1965, Brand recorded the solo album *Reflections* in Pye Studios in London,<sup>330</sup> although there seems to be no connection between this recording and Transcription Centre. Brand’s time and output at the Transcription Centre remains most substantially represented by the ‘Four Illustrated Talks on South African Jazz’ that Dollar Brand recorded in May and June 1965. The scope of this series is surpassed only by Gerhard Kubik’s series of ten ‘Illustrated Talks [...] on African Music (including on-the-spot recordings)’, each talk focussing on a different region.<sup>331</sup> The ‘Talks on Jazz’ is interesting from a number of perspectives. It demonstrates the frequently experimental nature of the programmes the Transcription Centre produced, but also Brand’s thought on music, his recollections of home, his poetry and musical influences at the time.

The first ‘Talk on Jazz’<sup>332</sup> is anecdotal: Brand opens with a recitation of his poem ‘Rhythm Afrique’<sup>333</sup> that segues into a sketch of music-making in everyday life in

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<sup>327</sup> Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 145.

<sup>328</sup> Letter from Dennis Duerden to Jack Thompson, 22 March 1965, Folder 4 Container 23.

<sup>329</sup> If it were ever executed by the Transcription Centre, there would almost certainly have been some paper trail of the arrangements of such a production would generate. See the correspondence Dollar Brand and Dennis Duerden, Container 2 Folder 1.

<sup>330</sup> One of the tracks, a rendition of Fats Waller’s ‘Honeysuckle Rose’, will be discussed in Chapter Six.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>332</sup> The transcriptions of the ‘Talks on Jazz’, to which I refer in the following paragraphs, are available through the American Centre for Research Libraries. See ‘Africa, Lectures on Jazz 1965’ compiled by

Cape Town, where he grew up. It immediately situates music in a social environment, from which Brand extrapolates his view that ‘jazz allows us to portray our experiences freely’, highlighting the potential for ‘every individual [to] paint his own musical picture ... [which] becomes even more beautiful’ in ensemble playing. The second anecdote is about the bird, Tintiyana, through which Brand illustrates his idiosyncratic definitions of melody (‘a single line of notes which I prefer to think of as single objects – a man, a bird’), harmony (‘a group of objects – people, birds’) and rhythm (‘that force which keeps the whole universe together’). I will discuss Brand’s conceptions of music in greater detail in Chapter Five; for now it suffices to note Brand’s highly individual thought on music.

The second talk is a recitation of a long poem explaining the origin of different skin colours as ‘drops’ dripping from the sun as it passes over the earth at different times of the day:

The sun rose out of the sea...showed its face and dripped yellow...  
drops...people.  
It was morning and they called it east

From this tale explaining ‘difference’, Brand proceeds to recount the beginnings of rivalry and oppression by the ‘cold’ and ‘white’ from the ‘north’, and the onset of slavery. Although the account lends itself to interpretation as an American narrative, with references to ‘the blues’ as ‘the cry of people in distress, enslaved in a strange land’, the music that accompanies this talk is all South African. There is a blues number played by Dudu Pukwana and Johnny Dyani, ‘Prayer for South Africa’ sung by Sathima Bea Benjamin, and ‘Coming Home’ performed by the Blue Notes. This interpolation of South African music into the American narrative becomes one of the points where one could read a sense of a pan-African exchange that links South African exile with the African diaspora.

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Dennis Duerden, Chicago: Centre for Research Libraries, 2012, Record no. b2849221, OCLC number 814278144.

<sup>333</sup> Later published as one of the twelve poems in the poetry cycle ‘Africa, Music and Show Business: An Analytical Survey in Twelve Tones plus Finale’, in *Seven South African Poets: Poems of Exile*, ed. Cosmo Pieterse (London, Ibadan, Nairobi: Heinemann, 1971), 1-11.

In the third jazz talk Brand recreates the music scene in South Africa where he honed his skills as a musician. He tells about the concert and dance tradition in Cape Town, which started with a concert featuring a band and four male singers performing an eclectic repertoire ‘from traditional African songs [such as the Zulu song performed by Patience Gcwabe that Brand includes in the programme] to popular American tunes’. Because of curfews imposed on the ‘black’ population, the second part of the evening, the dance, was established to entertain the audiences until the curfew lifts at dawn. Musicians would play songs requested in exchange for a tip. An evening included colourful characters and dramatic events, such as the ‘boss man’ who collects the money who leaves ‘customers’ short of change, a knife fight between gangsters, and threat of police arrest on the way home, which musicians escaped by performing at the side of the road for the officers’ amusement. Brand pays tribute to ‘the most influential jazz musician in South Africa’ and jazz mentor to many, the clarinet player Kippie Moeketsi, and includes two of Moeketsi’s performances of Brand’s compositions in the programme, ‘Kippy’ and ‘Eclipse at Dawn’.

The fourth and final episode surveys different styles of jazz, but also reads as a list of key influences on Brand’s music. As may be expected, Duke Ellington featured first and foremost (the example played is Ellington’s ‘My People – the Blues Ain’t’), along with Charles Mingus (illustrated with the track ‘Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting’), Ornette Coleman (‘EPDD’) and Eric Dolphy (‘Lady Gabor’). This personalised collection of American jazz favourites demonstrates the familiarity of South African musicians with an American repertoire, but also reveals what appealed to South African musicians. Indeed, the list exemplifies the ways that South African musicians drew on American musicians discussed in Chapter Three.

The ‘Talks on Jazz’ weave together a picture of jazz that is highly creative and experimental (even idiosyncratic). Even though the ‘Talks’ are clearly impressions informed by Dollar Brand’s own social background, at the same time they index key influences in South African jazz (and indeed Brand’s own music practices, as we shall see in Chapters Five and Six), such as its social settings and its familiarity with American jazz. In this way, it is highly experimental in the way jazz is theorised,

countering any conventional notion of the educative purposes that the title ‘Talks on Jazz’ might give rise to.

The recordings made by South African musicians at the Transcription Centre – both Dollar Brand’s ‘Talks on Jazz’ and the album *Kwela* – could be understood as a ‘mirror’ of the cultural production coming from South Africa at the time, but also as the (re-)production of such an Africa to the extent to which the programmes ‘organise’ latent and received knowledge, imagine it and ultimately produce it, confirming my argument stated earlier. If the Transcription Centre programmes, as Gunner argues in the case of Lewis Nkosi, could be seen as an expression of an artist’s ‘aspirations for this era’, or to paraphrase it in terms of the ‘Talks on Jazz’ and the album *Kwela*, the musical imagination of an era, the Transcription Centre could be seen as a vehicle used by the artists to express themselves and their ideas in an unconstrained environment.<sup>334</sup> Within the bounds of the available resources and limited funding, projects seem to have been facilitated with Duerden’s orchestration, rather than dictated by him or the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Content-wise, it is difficult to see how Brand’s ‘Talks on Jazz’, or indeed an album like *Kwela by Gwigwi Mrwebi’s Band* could be regarded as anything else than the artists’ own expression which, through the Transcription Centre, found a means to be recorded. Nor could Dorothy Masuku’s management by the Transcription Centre be seen as something other than a desire to find a means to work in a city where there were no agencies representing black artists at the time.<sup>335</sup> At the same time, the Transcription Centre’s links with cultural propaganda programmes cannot be ignored. This leaves the question of how to reconcile the macro-politics evident in the establishment and funding of an institution like the Transcription Centre with the seemingly unrelated day-to-day activities that it supported. The last section will reflect on this question.

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<sup>334</sup> Gunner, ‘Reconfiguring Diaspora’, ‘257’.

<sup>335</sup> Indeed, this was the gap that Edric and Pearl Connor’s artist management agency stepped into at about the same time. Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 145.

## Reflections

I describe the Transcription Centre's material as it pertains to South African musicians in exile in some detail, for it illuminates the ways that exile manifests in everyday experiences of musicians – even (and especially) where it is tedious and concerns the administrative details of lives that are seemingly unconnected with artistic production. Edward Said remarks on the disjuncture between exile celebrated through subjective modes of creativity, and the harsh realities that govern the statelessness and isolation of exile – for which he uses Unesco's refugee programmes as a metonym.<sup>336</sup> The tendency for music studies to focus on creative output and the figure of the musician, a legacy of nineteenth century conceptions of the great man and the work of art, means that studies of exile in music run the risk of overlooking the everyday circumstances that so critically shape musicians' experiences of exile. If we are to move beyond a romanticised, poetic notion of exile, the quotidian struggles to find work, the realities of registration with ministries of labour, of acquiring permits to perform, of contracts that pay little and the compromises that are made artistically for the sake of audience appeal go some way to bring the harshness of the reality of exile into purview.

Many of the Transcription Centre Archive's documents pertaining to South African musicians support rather unglamorous tasks such as securing work permits, bank accounts, Union Cards (or the circumvention for the need of them) and visas. These represent more than mere administrative procedures: they highlight the gatekeeping mechanisms that delimit performance spaces and mark foreignness. Overcoming these bureaucratic obstacles are certainly not the activities that musicians will be remembered by, but it grounds readings of their careers, aesthetic possibilities and output in very real possibilities or restrictions that shaped their careers as foreigners in a country (as they were perceived by its bureaucratic systems).<sup>337</sup>

But how do we reconcile the glimpses of seemingly arbitrary events in the daily life of the South African exiles that the Transcription Centre's archive affords with the

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<sup>336</sup> Said, 'Reflections on Exile', 173-4.

<sup>337</sup> This point will be further elaborated in the next chapter's discussion of Dollar Brand's experiences of exile in New York and his first return to South Africa in the latter half of the 1960s.

broader politics that frame the establishment and aims of this institution? And, more pertinent to this thesis's project to refine an understanding of South African exile, what can the relationship between these actors tell us about South African musicians in exile and their relationship with politics?

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's theorisation of performance space offers a useful framework to bring into focus the various force fields at work between the Transcription Centre, the South African musicians involved in its activities, its affiliation with the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Cold War politics that governed it. Ngũgĩ distinguishes between three sets of spatial and power relations that shape performance space. In the first, most conventional definition, performance space is understood as a 'self-contained field of internal relations', as in, for instance, a theatre, a concert hall, or a jazz club. The second relation is between this self-contained field (such as the jazz venue or the concert hall), and all external fields and sites of power, for instance, the church, parliament, state, or courts of law. The third way performance space may be understood is as a historical space; in other words, the performance space in its entirety of internal and external factors, may be seen in relationship to time. This places the performance space in relation to what has gone before – history – and what could follow – the future.<sup>338</sup>

In applying Ngũgĩ's notions of performance space to the Transcription Centre, the complex dynamics of this institution come into view more clearly. As a performance space in Ngũgĩ's first sense, the Transcription Centre is shaped by the relations between figures like Dennis Duerden, Maxine Lautré and programme directors such as Lewis Nkosi and their interactions with the visitors from Africa and the diaspora at the Centre. This perspective alerts us to the informal networks of acquaintances through which musicians in exile navigated their lives and careers. It also sheds light on the similarly informal, opportunity-based production of transcriptions (as well as other, spin-off projects like the production of LPs or the artist management initiative) that depended more on the particular constellation of presences and interests present at the Transcription Centre than on pre-determined agendas.

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<sup>338</sup> Ngũgĩ, *Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams*, 39-41.

The internal relations of the Transcription Centre, however, are not limited to the administration of the Centre and its interaction with those who participated in its projects and production of content; it is also governed by the audiences *for whom* content was produced. In a conventional performance space, such as Ngũgĩ's example of a theatre, audiences are on site and engaged in an immediate feedback loop as the live performance takes place. The Transcription Centre as performance space, however, transcends the border of a physical performance space as Ngũgĩ's definition implies, for not only did its performances take place within the Transcription Centre in London, its transcriptions were transmitted beyond Britain's national borders over the airwaves in Africa, the African diaspora and further afield. The same principle applies to the artist promotion and the production of LPs: these were aimed at distribution outside the physical confines of the Transcription Centre itself. Even though audiences were not physically present at the Transcription Centre, they nevertheless need to be taken into account in Ngũgĩ's first relation, since this audience was borne in mind when artistic output was planned, recorded and marketed. It is in this regard that the Transcription Centre did not always present a neat or unproblematic meeting of interests, as this is the field that required some compromises.

Dollar Brand's output presents the least problematic case in the way South African exiled musicians were employed at the Transcription Centre. It appears that Brand had *carte blanche* over the content and format in the production of the 'Four Talks on Jazz' within the confines that transcription presented as a medium. The inclusion of poetry, anecdotes, as well as his highly personal takes on the development of jazz, show the extent to which the Transcription Centre functioned as a space that permitted a considerable amount of experimentation. In the artist promotion of Dorothy Masuku and the records produced by Gwigwi Mrwebi's Band and Chris McGregor, however, we see a greater measure of compromise.

In the case of Masuku, we see a remarkable change in artistic identity. Whereas Masuku performed as a singer and a songwriter in Southern Africa, an empowered female performer who was highly popular and at the edge of political critique, her profile in exile could hardly be more different. Here, she performs a rather sedate



repertoire ('Que Sera' and 'Besame Mucho') that gently signals 'otherness' without relinquishing audience familiarity. The 'new' African repertoire in the setlist, is limited and well-spaced between the old favourites like 'Shake, Baby, Shake' and 'Nothin' but a Hound Dog', infused with just enough African songs and a few of her own compositions to set her apart from other singers. Nowhere in the promotional materials is she presented as a songwriter – a role that commands considerably more respect in the usual hierarchies of music production and performance. Instead of a public figure who taps into the political consciousness of people and gives voice to it, as she was in South Africa, in London she is simply another new singer marketed under the banner of 'otherness'. *Kwela by Gwigwi's Band* was shaped by similar distribution and audience imperatives. Whereas *Gwigwi's Band* performed a style they knew as *mbaqanga* (and which South African audiences would also have recognised as that), the record was nevertheless titled *Kwela by Gwigwi's Band* to appeal to British audiences who were familiar with earlier popular *kwela* recordings. The repositioning of artistic identity is an imperative that arguably faces any musician who forges a career abroad, and as such, serves a marker of not being at home.

Thinking through Ngũgĩ's second relation – that of the performance space in relation to the external institutions of power – helps to unpack the complex entanglements between the Transcription Centre and the notion of the state. The Transcription Centre was certainly created as an institution that would act on behalf, or at the very least, in the interest of the (American) state, although 'state', in this case, requires much more nuance. In the Transcription Centre, the 'state' is not a single, monolithic machine. Rather, a particular state's interests are mediated by a sequence of actors, philanthropic organisations like the Farfield Foundation, cultural organisations like the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and finally the Transcription Centre. The Transcription Centre's archive therefore compels us to be cautious before making claims on behalf of macro-politics. While it is certainly the case that the Transcription Centre was part of larger ideological machinery, it was driven by the ever smaller and ever more ideologically remote cogs of smaller organisations that did not consistently bear the same programme at heart.

For the consideration of South African exile in particular, this notion of the State reminds us that South African exile was not only framed by the politics within South Africa, although this is admittedly a critical dimension as it provides the reason for exile in the first place. However exiles were also subject to the existing politics in countries they resided in during exile. In thinking about the politics that affected South African musicians in exile, we thus need to widen our view beyond the apartheid politics in South Africa, and position exile within the broader concerns of the global reach of Cold War politics at the time. The role and impact of Cold War politics are not always as apparent in literature on music as it is in political and social commentaries on South African exile. As, for instance, Stephen Ellis's account of the funding and founding of the armed resistance movement Umkhonto we Sizwe in *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990* shows, South African resistance politics was profoundly influenced by networks and resources at the forefront of Cold War politics in the early 1960s, even though it was not public or even party knowledge at the time.<sup>339</sup>

Coming to Ngũgĩ's third relation, that of performance spaces in relation to history, the Transcription Centre has to be seen in terms of London as a historical space. The connections that a shared colonial history of the British Empire had put in motion – English as a common language, shared music practices through the dissemination of Western music through churches and missionaries (amongst other modes of transmission), the musical exchanges facilitated by military service during the World Wars, for instance – now converged and reformed in the former colonial centre. The unique constellation of presence was the product of diverse circumstances; those of Africa and its diaspora nevertheless connected around shared concerns that had to do with the experience of being (former) colonial subjects and all it entails.

The overriding point that emerges from these considerations is that the Transcription Centre's daily operations belie any uncomplicated reading of its actions as a simple execution of the wishes of the CIA, or conformity with the Congress for Cultural Freedom's agenda. While funding mechanisms and infrastructure of these larger institutions serviced the Transcription Centre's operations, it was, if anything,

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<sup>339</sup> Stephen Ellis, *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990* (London: Hurst and Company, 2012), 18-36.

Dennis Duerden's vision for the Centre, informed by the writers, musicians and thinkers who surrounded him, that ultimately prevailed in the broadcasts and various projects that formed the Transcription Centre's output. The way that Duerden and the participants in the Transcription Centre's activities used the space created by this institution recalls Michel de Certeau's concept of tactics. If strategies, the opposite of tactics, represent the ordered use of space in their ability to 'produce, tabulate, and impose these spaces, when those operations take place', 'tactics', on the other hand, 'can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces' created by strategies.<sup>340</sup>

Even though the Transcription Centre was, at first glance, part of a large and hierarchical organisational structure (CIA → Congress for Cultural Freedom → Transcription Centre), in the day-to-day operations of the Transcription Centre in particular these hierarchies were by and large absent, or at the least the hierarchy was a force that only seldom made itself felt. It is evident from the production of the records that the Transcription Centre operated not in a carefully planned, strategic way but rather responded to the opportunities that presented through the presence of particular artists and the resources it had at its disposal. Many of the ideas, such as the jazz festival Julian Beinart and Dollar Brand and Dennis Duerden enthusiastically discussed, never came to pass. It was not within the modest means of the Transcription Centre to put on such an event with its own resources, and the project was refused by the purse-holders (the Congress for Cultural Freedom) higher up. This places in perspective the link between the Transcription Centre and its funding bodies, the Congress and later the Farfield Foundation. Within its existing budgetary allowance it could easily embark on side projects with relatively little interference. While it would not be accurate to say that these enterprises slipped beneath the radar (regular reports were made), it was within an area where there was considerable room for manoeuvre. Yet the Transcription Centre, and perhaps more accurately, Dennis Duerden, was often frustrated that the potential of the Transcription Centre could not be fully realised given the funding constraints, and this is where we can most clearly see how the Transcription Centre was tied to the dictates of its funding bodies.

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<sup>340</sup> Ibid., 30.

It is this grey area of latitude that is particularly highlighted in the South African musicians' activities at the Transcription Centre. And it is here where we may read the interaction between 'big' politics and institutional 'hierarchies' and the everyday. De Certeau helps us to think about the tactical ways that, firstly, the Transcription Centre operated strategically within the structures of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and secondly, Duerden and the artists and intellectuals who participated in the Transcription Centre's output, operated mostly tactically within this frame that Transcription Centre provided.

What results from thinking through the Transcription Centre's case study through the performance spaces Ngũgĩ suggests along with the tactical ways these are traversed, is a picture of currents and undercurrents, a meeting of different agendas and motivations, that converged in a particular output or constellation, and then again dissolved.

How do conceptions of exile shift when it is not a narrative of state organisation and institutional affiliation, but rather a series of opportunity driven, ephemeral encounters that galvanise around a shared event or cause, often for differing and even incongruous motivations, and then dissipate? Against this question, the fragments of musicians' lives evident through the Transcription Centre archive are not valuable in and of themselves, but rather become symbolically important as indexes of the impermanence of exile, of the tactics and contingency of exilic living that needs to grasp the fleeting opportunities while they last.

The discussion of the archive material in this chapter also draws attention to the highly individual experiences of exiled musicians. Exile stories for South African musicians of the 1960s, are mostly individual stories. In environments where work was never plentiful, performance opportunities often involved a lot of travel, scattering even those who arrived and performed in groups, like the Blue Notes, in different directions. Exile for performing musicians was a doubly itinerant life: the travel usually entailed by a performing musician's profession was compounded by the fact that the 'home' returned to was often a temporary place of dwelling. It is this

quality of musicians' exile that makes the Transcription Centre remarkable as a place where exiles' journeys briefly overlap.

The picture that emerges from the Transcription Centre's archive is one of a fleeting constellation of presences, informal networks established through mutual acquaintances, and opportunity-driven engagements. All these could be read as markers of the precariousness of exile. These are improvisatory tactics of lives that are never certain where the next opportunity will come from, and that are always on the move. As such, these insignificant fragments are exemplary in charting the itinerancy of exile, even more so in the case of musicians who are, as we have seen, constantly on the move in search for work. Notwithstanding the important ways that everyday life indexes the politics of exile, Tina K. Ramnarine reminds us that musicians were often more 'concerned with timbres, textures and structures, with music as an aesthetic, rather than political practice' – as will become clear in the discussion of Dollar Brand's biography and musical development after he left the Transcription Centre.<sup>341</sup> In essence, what Ramnarine suggests is that not all aspects of the everyday are consciously enacted with political intent, although this is a statement that has profound political implications. This serves as a powerful reminder that musicians felt and engaged with 'politics' of exile at various times and in various ways. The necessity to regard exile as a marker that is in flux, as a descriptor that is never stable and always a state of becoming, is the topic of Chapter Four.

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<sup>341</sup> Ramnarine, *Beautiful Cosmos*, 23.

## Chapter 4

### **On Exile and Becoming: Departures and Returns in the Life and Music of Dollar Brand/Abdullah Ibrahim in the 1960s**

Of the South African musicians who were involved with the Transcription Centre, the most extensive material in its archive relates to Dollar Brand, who becomes later known as Abdullah Ibrahim.<sup>342</sup> The most substantial part of the material is Brand's correspondence with Dennis Duerden between 1965, when he left the Transcription Centre to perform at the Newport Jazz Festival and settled in New York, and 1969, when the archival record of the correspondence stops. This is a significant period in Brand's life and career, for it represents his first years in New York, a city that becomes 'home' for the following three decades.<sup>343</sup> If the correspondence is read together with a series of articles that Brand wrote for the *Cape Herald* newspaper upon his first return to South Africa in 1968 and '69, in which he reflected on the six years he had spent abroad and shared his thoughts on being back, a fuller picture emerges of Brand's biography and music in the latter part of the '60s.

This chapter draws on these materials to give an overview of Dollar Brand's life during this period, pausing to consider significant shifts in his approach to music, his first return to South Africa in 1968, as well as a key moment when he reframes his identity and adopts the name Abdullah Ibrahim. These are moments, as I will show, in which senses of dislocation, longing, ambivalence, and a preoccupation with questions of identity register. Despite Lewis Nkosi's 1966 essay that already refers to Brand under the rubric of 'exile',<sup>344</sup> Brand never explicitly refers to this period as such in the documents that underpin this chapter, and it is problematic to unambiguously point to this period as exile, given that Brand and Benjamin managed to return to South Africa for a brief period from July 1968 to May 1969.<sup>345</sup> It is,

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<sup>342</sup> In this chapter (as indeed in the following chapters), which consider(s) the significance of Abdullah Ibrahim's name change, I will refer to the name Dollar Brand/Abdullah Ibrahim, was as it appears on the documentation, letters, albums or reviews to which I refer. This is for the sake of consistency with the sources I mention, but also in recognition of the significance of a name change, which becomes more apparent through this discrepancy.

<sup>343</sup> Container 2 Folders 1-3, Transcription Centre Archive, at the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas, United States.

<sup>344</sup> Nkosi, 'Jazz in Exile', 34.

<sup>345</sup> Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 151-2.

however, possible to trace the slow realisation of the path that becomes recognised and referred to as exile. As we shall see, Brand and Benjamin's time in Zurich, London and New York was perennially plagued by an uncertainty regarding when they will return to South Africa, a decision that was not subject to their own will. The senses of dislocation and longing that become apparent in Brand's writing provide a compelling account of the slow onset (and later realisation) of exile.

Born in Cape Town in 1934, Dollar Brand had been a prolific pianist in the night-club circuit in South Africa since the age of seventeen, and by the time he left South Africa in 1962 for economic reasons (though closely connected with political developments in apartheid South Africa, as I have pointed out in the Introduction), he departed with a solid reputation and one album to his name.<sup>346</sup> The period between 1962 and 1969 is significant, a time when Dollar Brand's international career as a jazz pianist is in ascendance. The Transcription Centre is a crucial link between his first three years, based in Zurich, and his move to New York in 1965, the city that becomes as close to a home base as constantly travelling musicians could find for the next four decades. The Transcription Centre, it transpires, is more than an initial stop-over in London: it became a temporary abode and income solution when Brand and Benjamin's tour to South Africa was cancelled; and the connections he made through the Transcription Centre proved vital for launching his career in New York, as this chapter demonstrates.

Through the letters in the Transcription Centre Archive and the *Cape Herald* articles, we learn of Brand's impressions of the American jazz scene, and his simultaneous longing for and ambivalence towards South Africa. During this time, Brand's performance aesthetic develops, moving away from performing jazz standards in jazz trio formations, turning increasingly to his own compositions and honing his skills as a solo performer – for which he is best known today. In 1968 Dollar Brand converted to Islam, and in the same year the letters he wrote to Dennis Duerden show the beginnings of his experimentations with his name. This prompts my interrogation of the significance of names in articulations of identity in the context of exile.

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<sup>346</sup> Jazz Epistles, *Verse 1* (Gallo, AC 56, 1960).

These sentiments and shifts, I suggest, become critical markers in reading exile through which we may read a ‘contrapuntal awareness’, following Edward Said.<sup>347</sup> In this chapter, I consider Brand’s early years in exile from the perspective of his biography. In the chapters to follow, I pursue different modes of inquiry into this same period, considering Brand’s discursive practices regarding music in Chapter Five and his musical output in Chapter Six. These chapters build on the relationality of exile I have outlined in Chapters One and Two: they show how the middle space between two terms, home and exile, as theorised through the notion of the train and metaphor in Chapter One, becomes articulated in Brand’s biography, writing and music. I will show how these function as spaces where the ‘logic of ambiguity’ as well as imaginative elaboration and construction – idealisation, even – of home play out, that which marks ‘home’ as a space of absence.

### **From Zurich to New York via London**

Between 1965 and 1969, thirty-one letters from Dollar Brand to Dennis Duerden (interspersed with the occasional copy of Duerden’s reply) document the nomadic and contingent nature of Brand’s career and activities during this period. Contrary to what might be expected from an archive of an institution based in London, the Transcription Centre papers on Brand reveal less about his time in London than its immediate aftermath: his arrival and settling in New York, as well as his first visit to South Africa since leaving the country in 1962. This is due to the fact that collaborations in the same locale, which were mainly verbal, leave few material traces. Yet the multi-sited nature of the Brand letters in the archive is somehow appropriate as a record of exile. It defies attempts to be pinned down to one place, and instead indexes several geographic locations, temporary addresses from which letters were written or should be forwarded to (care of a friend, club owner or relative), relationships and routes that string together these temporary abodes, through which the contingent and improvised nature of Brand’s travels becomes apparent.

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<sup>347</sup> Said, ‘Reflections on Exile’, 186. Also refer to the discussion further nuancing my reading of counterpoint in relation to Avtar Brah’s ‘modalities’ of diaspora experience in Chapter Two.



In Muller and Benjamin's account of the circumstances that led to Brand and Benjamin's departure from South Africa in 1962, the couple were 'literally starving for lack of [performance] opportunities' following of the State of Emergency declared after the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, which effectively stifled the South African jazz scene.<sup>348</sup> The situation in Zurich, however, turned out to be hardly less dire.

They arrived in the bitter cold of a Swiss winter. The room Brand and Benjamin rented was infested with bedbugs, necessitating their temporary move to a farm outside the city. It was a struggle to find work. Club Africana, with which Brand's contact in Zurich, Paul Meyer, had put him in touch, found his music 'too modern' for their usual programme featuring 'primitive blues'. Brand resorted to a short-lived stint of playing cha-chas for Swiss farmers with an unnamed 'West Indian group'.<sup>349</sup> Finally Brand 'managed to strike the right note' with the managers at Club Africana – implying some form of musical compromise on his part – and secured a residency for four and a half months per year. He was joined by South African bassist Johnny Gertze and drummer Makaya Ntshoko, although we learn little more about them in subsequent articles and letters.<sup>350</sup> Brand and Sathima Bea Benjamin (later to be his wife) secured an additional gig at the Bar du Theatre at the Swiss National Exposition. One memorable story recalls how even this opportunity was riddled with challenges:

On opening night they showed me to an old, beat-up, upright piano leaning against a glass wall. [...] I continued playing the old upright until a friend [...] offered me his grand piano. That at least was a blessing – or so I thought. One night, while I was playing, I felt something sticky under the fingers of my left hand. I had just killed a bug – the whole piano was crawling with them.<sup>351</sup>

Nevertheless, Brand's musical approach developed despite these challenges. He honed his skills as a solo performer, even turning to physical exercise to 'sustain a

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<sup>348</sup> Muller discuss the policies that were passed and the way it impacted musicians in Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 94-5.

<sup>349</sup> Dollar Brand, 'Bed Bugs, Cold and Cha-Chas in Sub-Zero Switzerland', *Cape Herald* (3 August 1968).

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*

long period of two-handed attack'.<sup>352</sup> He describes the change in his composition thus:

A lot of the forms I had been working with in South Africa had become restrictive. I moulded new pieces which allowed me unfettered freedom an[d] improvisation and I employed lots of rhythmic patterns using the pulse – at least the feeling of the pulse as the foundation.<sup>353</sup>

Undoubtedly the most significant event of Brand's time in Zurich was his encounter with Duke Ellington. Carol Muller and Sathima Bea Benjamin give an extensive account of this meeting, rightly emphasizing Benjamin's role in bringing the meeting about.<sup>354</sup> I briefly summarise the events and their significance here.

Duke Ellington performed in Zurich in February 1963, and Sathima Bea Benjamin sought him out after the performance, and persuaded him listen to Brand and his trio performing at Club Africana. At the time, Ellington was in charge of artists and repertoire for Frank Sinatra's label, Reprise, and invited the South Africans to record their music in Paris. Three days later, the Dollar Brand Trio (with drummer Makaya Ntshoko and bassist Johnny Gertze) and Sathima Bea Benjamin arrived at Barclay Studios in Paris for the recording. Two albums resulted from the studio session that Paris morning: *Duke Ellington Presents The Dollar Brand Trio*, released in 1964, and the recordings of Sathima Bea Benjamin performing with Ellington, Strayhorn and Svend Asmussen deemed 'not commercial enough' to be released at the time, and ultimately only appearing as the album *A Morning in Paris* in 1997.<sup>355</sup> The album, bearing the stamp of Duke Ellington's validation ('Duke Ellington presents...') launched Dollar Brand into the jazz public's eye. Ellington furthermore secured an opportunity for Brand to perform at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1965, and became an invaluable source of support as Brand and Benjamin later established themselves in New York.<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

<sup>354</sup> See Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 129-40.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid., 147-8.

Before the move to New York, however, there are two places of temporary sojourn worth highlighting as Brand neared the end of his time in Europe. One of his residencies was at the Jazzhus Montmartre in Copenhagen, first in May 1963, then in March and April 1964 and again in January 1965.<sup>357</sup> Two live recordings were made of these performance dates, *Round Midnight at the Café Montmartre* and *Anatomy of a South African Village* – the latter which I discuss the latter in greater detail in Chapter Six.<sup>358</sup> The second is Brand and Benjamin’s time in London at the Transcription Centre, as elaborated in the previous chapter. As will be recalled, Brand was temporarily involved at the Transcription Centre after a planned concert tour to South Africa was cancelled. It was in London that Brand and Benjamin were married, and from where they departed to New York – facilitated by the Transcription Centre’s financial assistance with their travel costs.<sup>359</sup>

The importance of the Transcription Centre as a springboard to the New York jazz scene becomes clear in Dollar Brand’s letters detailing his arrival in early July 1965, recounting the challenges of settling in, finding work and arranging his first concerts in his new abode. Dennis Duerden had put Dollar Brand in touch with a number of contacts upon his move to New York, notably Frank Platt of the Farfield Foundation that sponsored the Transcription Centre, later described by Brand as ‘a wonderful cat’.<sup>360</sup> Platt assisted Brand to secure a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to study composition with Hall Overton for a year, which proved an important experience for Brand’s artistic development. The funding and institutional backing, in addition to the professional and personal support lent by Duke Ellington, meant Brand had formidable support in establishing his career. Despite the relative security these opportunities offered during his initial years in New York, however, Brand encountered a diminished jazz scene in the United States and experienced an acute longing for South Africa even as he renounced it in frustration over political and bureaucratic struggles.

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<sup>357</sup> Ibid., 144-5.

<sup>358</sup> Brand, Dollar, *Anatomy of a South African Village* (Black Lion, BLCD 760172, 1992 [1965]); Dollar Brand, *Round Midnight at the Jazzhus Montmartre* (Black Lion, BLP 60111, 1988, recorded on 30 January 1965).

<sup>359</sup> Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 147.

<sup>360</sup> Letter Brand to Duerden, 11 August 1966, Container 2 Folder 1, Transcription Centre Archive, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, United States. Unless mentioned otherwise, all the letters referred to in subsequent footnotes are from Container 2 Folder 1 in this collection.

Dollar Brand played his first solo concert in Carnegie Hall in 10 October 1965, shortly after arriving in New York. The Transcription Centre correspondence and the *Cape Herald* articles offer two accounts of this momentous event. In the letters between Duerden and Brand, it becomes apparent that the concert was set up by Jack Thompson at Farfield Foundation<sup>361</sup> and according to Brand's report to Duerden, eighty per cent of the seats were offered as complimentary tickets to the Foundations' benefactors and contacts, confirming its strategic use in showcasing support for black artists. Yet the concert launched Brand into the New York jazz scene in a grand and symbolically significant manner. As Brand informs his Capetonian readers in the article titled 'District Six in Carnegie Hall...', Carnegie Hall was the 'home of the Rubinsteins and the Ellingtons'.<sup>362</sup> A slightly different picture of the self-arranged concert, however, emerges from Brand's recollection in his *Cape Herald* article. Brand tells in the first person about the funds he raised for expenses such as hiring the concert hall, and for pamphlets, posters and press releases that Brand distributed himself – which struck him as remarkably similar to his concert arrangement efforts when he was still in South Africa.<sup>363</sup> The complimentary tickets were, apparently, not only for the Farfield Foundation: a whole block was filled by the Duke Ellington organisation; Langston Hughes was present and Billy Strayhorn sent a telegram to convey his best wishes for the concert.<sup>364</sup>

If anything, the lack of ticket sales was certainly not an indication of artistic merit. Brand's abilities as a pianist and a composer made a favourable impression on a critic of *DownBeat* magazine, who commented that '[a]ny doubts that Brand... is a remarkably gifted musician were decisively dispelled at this concert.' He noted in his compositional style '...a very personal blend of elements including American jazz, African folk music, and European hymns and liturgical music that, in South Africa as in the United States, were the first Western music made available to the Negroes',<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> Letter 14 October 1965.

<sup>362</sup> Dollar Brand, 'District Six in Carnegie Hall...', *Cape Herald* (21 September 1968).

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

<sup>365</sup> Author unknown, 'Caught in the Act: Dollar Brand', *DownBeat* (16 December 1965), review of Dollar Brand's performance in Carnegie Recital Hall, with Dollar Brand (piano), Morris Goldberg (alto saxophone), Ron Carter (bass), and Sonny Brown (drums). Container 2 Folder 2.

identifying in problematically essentialist terms some of the elements as Lucia does in her more scholarly grounded and nuanced analysis four decades later.<sup>366</sup> I will return to this appraisal of the music in the following chapters, but for the moment it is important to note the shift in performance mode from club gigs to the concert hall, in tandem with the shift of Brand's musical language from song forms to larger compositional structures, already evident in 'Anatomy of a South African Village' (1965, album by the same title). Brand's preference for solo piano performance is already noticeable, although he was not yet performing exclusively in this mode. He writes that '[t]he usual line-up of bass and drums was becoming too restricted and it was quite difficult to find a bass-player who could play the fast figures I wanted.'<sup>367</sup> In terms of form, the expansion from the forms used in South Africa, which he noted earlier, had now reached a new scale:

My themes were developing into larger works and I needed bigger canvases and more colours to paint with. I had to have at least one hour of undivided time to complete a statement or just create variations on a theme.<sup>368</sup>

This shift also implies an aesthetic move away from shorter forms usual in club settings. In a letter to Dennis Duerden, Brand comments that '[it] seems that the best arena for the music will be the concert hall, though I can hardly see how one could survive in such a limited (work-wise) field.'<sup>369</sup>

The turn to larger forms and a concert hall aesthetic were reinforced by Brand's studies with Hall Overton in 1966 to 1967, thanks to funding from the Rockefeller Foundation – a philanthropic organisation also implicated in the CIA's cultural agenda.<sup>370</sup> It is difficult to estimate the extent and dimensions of Hall Overton's influence on Dollar Brand. This was the first and only time that Brand had had formal tuition, with the exception of the piano lessons he received as a child from his mother, who was the pianist for the African Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>371</sup> Brand, like most South African jazz musicians at the time, had come to play jazz mostly

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<sup>366</sup> Christine Lucia, 'Abdullah Ibrahim and the Uses of Memory', *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 11:2 (2002), 125-142.

<sup>367</sup> Dollar Brand, 'District Six in Carnegie Hall...', *Cape Herald* (21 September 1968).

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

<sup>369</sup> Letter 20 February 1966, Container 2 Folder 1.

<sup>370</sup> Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, 135.

<sup>371</sup> Lucia, 'Abdullah Ibrahim and the Uses of Memory', 133.

autodidactically. As is common in South African jazz practice, senior figures mentored younger players, thereby transmitting styles and ways of playing mostly orally.<sup>372</sup> The influential and unsung reed-player Kippie Moeketsi served as such a mentor figure to Brand, who mentions that he only started playing *mbaqanga* and *marabi* (the quintessential South African jazz genres) while he was in Johannesburg living with Moeketsi.<sup>373</sup>

Hall Overton, however, was cut from a different cloth. Except for the fact that he, too, has arguably not received sufficient recognition in the literature for his enormous influence on jazz players in the New York scene in the 1950s and '60s, his musical background was in many respects the opposite of Moeketsi's.<sup>374</sup> Overton, an established classical composer, taught classical composition courses at the Juilliard School of Music, the Yale School of Music and the New School of Social Research, but moonlighted as jazz pianist, arranger and pedagogue. The recent Jazz Loft Project has portrayed him as a central figure in the artist hub on 821 Sixth Avenue – a space where more than 589 jazz musicians, including some of the most esteemed performers of the time, graced its dingy rehearsal studios. The project that captures Overton's stature in the jazz world best is his collaboration with Thelonious Monk on arrangements for the famous Town Hall (1959), Lincoln Center (1963) and Carnegie Hall (1964) big band concerts.<sup>375</sup> It was into this sphere, saturated with jazz innovation, that Brand was immersed as a student of Overton.

By his own admission Brand benefited from the technical and historical grounding his studies with Hall Overton afforded, remarking in one letter that he was '[l]earning the whole works from then till now. It is giving me a better perspective and technical (Yankee-know-how) to cope with what I really want to do. Composing and working with a large orchestra.'<sup>376</sup> This turn is indeed discernable in the larger compositional forms, like suites and symphony, Brand explored later in his career. In

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<sup>372</sup> This is confirmed in a number of interviews in Devroop and Walton, *Unsung*.

<sup>373</sup> Titlestad, *Making the Changes*, 233.

<sup>374</sup> Titlestad, *Making the Changes*, 158.

<sup>375</sup> See Sam Stephenson, *The Jazz Loft Project: Photographs and Tapes of W. Eugene Smith from 821 Sixth Avenue, 1957-1965*, (New York: Albert Knopf, 2009). The Jazz Loft Project's website also contains fascinating information, including links to a series of radio programmes compiled from the Project's tapes of which one is devoted to Hall Overton. See [www.jazzloftproject.org](http://www.jazzloftproject.org).

<sup>376</sup> Brand to Duerden, 16 June 1967.

a letter of Bea Benjamin's we read, for instance, that in 1969 Brand was composing his first symphony commissioned by Danish radio.<sup>377</sup> Yet Brand retained a healthy scepticism regarding what the academy could offer to an aspiring musician, issuing the following advice to the *Cape Herald* readers:

Be very, very careful what you allow yourself to assimilate when you want to retain your originality. Many a promising composer has had his sad creative demise on entering the academy. Select only what you need. And if you don't know what you need stay away from it until you have found out what your shortcomings are.<sup>378</sup>

Apart from these engagements, however, Brand's livelihood in the States was fraught with difficulty. In contrast to the vibrant jazz scene described by Hugh Masekela on his arrival at the height of bebop in the early 1960s,<sup>379</sup> the heydays of a thriving club circuit appear to have dimmed in the five intervening years. A disillusioned Brand writes that 'the club scene for the music [jazz] is dead... The music just doesn't function in those dumps anymore and most of the younger musicians understandably don't want to work there anyway.'<sup>380</sup> In 1966 after a disastrous tour with Elvin Jones ('missing planes, crummy clubs where no one listens') Brand proclaims that 'America is a mess'.<sup>381</sup> On at least two occasions, he advised Blue Notes pianist Chris McGregor against coming to the United States as 'even name groups are not working or working for far less their worth',<sup>382</sup> adding that he '[doesn't] know what would have happened if the [Rockefeller] grant didn't come.'<sup>383</sup> The difficulties of establishing a career or even securing a livelihood were compounded by the red tape surrounding performance opportunities, necessitating the procurement a Union Card and Cabaret Card to be eligible to perform at clubs.<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> Bea Benjamin to Dennis Duerden, 8 June 1969.

<sup>378</sup> Dollar Brand, 'No More New York Blues', *Cape Herald* (12 October 1968).

<sup>379</sup> Masekela and Cheers, *Still Grazing*, 123-126.

<sup>380</sup> Letter to Duerden, 20 February 1966.

<sup>381</sup> Indeed, one of the striking features of the album *Anatomy of a South African Village* is the background noise of the jazz club. Even though the recording was made at Jazzhus Montmartre (Copenhagen, January 1965) and not in America, it could stand in for the general club gig reception: the conversations, glasses clinking, the occasional (inebriated?) patron singing along, can clearly be heard, lending support to Brand's laments. Dollar Brand, *Anatomy of a South African Village*, with Johnny Gertze (bass) and Makaya Ntshoko (drums) (Black Lion, BLCD 760172, 1992 [1965]).

<sup>382</sup> Letter 14 October 1965

<sup>383</sup> Dollar Brand to Dennis Duerden, letter 20 February 1966; reiterated in letter 15 November 1966.

<sup>384</sup> Letter 1 September 1965.

These were difficult years for Dollar Brand by his own admission. In a touching account in the *Cape Herald* prefaced by his poem ‘spring winds’,<sup>385</sup> he writes about his struggles in 1966 for mere survival. Despite generous assistance from the Ellingtons, Brand could find no work. Echoing Muller and Benjamin’s account of the circumstances that drove Brand and Benjamin to leave South Africa in 1962, Brand writes about this time as a ‘long period of virtual starvation.’<sup>386</sup> He poured himself into practicing, studying scores, and gradually ‘[t]he solo piano form was beginning to take shape.’<sup>387</sup> Finally, having ‘paid his dues’, the period of drought lifted for Dollar Brand. His letters to Duerden increasingly mention performances in concert halls. Although he could not avoid playing at clubs altogether – in his letters he mentions at least two stints at Village Vanguard in 1965 and more club gigs probably went unmentioned –<sup>388</sup> one notices a significant shift. Concert dates include venues such as the Performing Arts Library, college concerts, the Museum of Modern Art, another Carnegie Hall concert, and a solo concert in Kingston, Jamaica, interspersed with work for television and radio.<sup>389</sup>

In addition to the challenges of forging a career as an emergent musician on the New York jazz scene, Brand experienced considerable difficulties with obtaining immigration papers. His American immigration application depended on the issuing of a new South African passport, and the process astonishingly dragged on until November 1966 before it was finalised, causing no small amount of anxiety.<sup>390</sup> These delays were in part to blame for the postponement of a countrywide concert tour of South Africa that was under negotiation as early as January 1965 with Union Artists,<sup>391</sup> first to 1966 and eventually to 1968.

At the same time, Brand’s relationship with South Africa was on an equally difficult footing. Following its release in early 1966, Dollar Brand’s album *Anatomy of a*

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<sup>385</sup> Dollar Brand, ‘Africa, Music and Show Business: An Analytical Survey in Twelve Tones plus Finale’, in *Seven South African Poets: Poems of Exile*, ed. Cosmo Pieterse (London, Ibadan, Nairobi: Heinemann), 1-11.

<sup>386</sup> Dollar Brand, ‘No More New York Blues’, *Cape Herald* (12 October 1968).

<sup>387</sup> Ibid.

<sup>388</sup> Letters to Dennis Duerden, 6 December 1965 and 14 October 1965.

<sup>389</sup> Letters Dollar Brand to Dennis Duerden, 19 October 1967, 19 January 1968, 20 February 1966, 23 June 1966, and 15 October 1965.

<sup>390</sup> Letter 1 September 1965 and 15 November 1966.

<sup>391</sup> Letter Richard Daneel (Manager at Union Artists, South Africa) to Dollar Brand, 19 January 1965.



*South African Village* was banned in South Africa.<sup>392</sup> The precariousness of Brand's relationship with South African authorities seems to have sparked a bitter attitude on his part towards the country. By June 1966, Brand writes in a postscript to a letter, unrelated to its content, 'have decided NOW, will never put my foot in South Africa'.<sup>393</sup> 'I ain't going back there,' he confirms in the following letter,<sup>394</sup> responding to news of former Blue Notes hornman Nik Moyake's death in South Africa caused by a brain tumour.

Yet, in the very next letter written on 11 August 1966, Brand writes to Duerden: 'we've been out for almost 5 years and it's beginning to tell. [P]erhaps a short stay at home will revitalise the long dormant other half of our souls.' In the same letter, Brand writes about his plans to go to South Africa in November 1966 – after the finalisation of the United States visas. The prospects seemed promising: Union Artists arranged a concert tour and the South African record company Gallo confirmed a recording. The visit, however, was fated not to be realised, for on 6 September 1966 the South African Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd was assassinated. Political conditions were too precarious for a musician whose records were banned in South Africa to safely travel and perform.

### **Return to South Africa; Return to New York**

Brand and Benjamin finally returned to South Africa for ten months between July 1968 and May 1969, and significantly it was during this time in 1968 that Dollar Brand converted to Islam.<sup>395</sup> The visit got off to a rocky start with local audiences as Dollar and Bea could not get a through flight from Johannesburg to Cape Town and resorted to taking the train.<sup>396</sup> Meanwhile, disappointed Capetonians waited in vain at

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<sup>392</sup> Letter Dollar Brand to Dennis Duerden, 29 March 1966.

<sup>393</sup> Letter Dollar Brand to Dennis Duerden 23 June 1967.

<sup>394</sup> Letter Dollar Brand to Dennis Duerden 13 July 1967.

<sup>395</sup> Lucia, 'Abdullah Ibrahim and the Uses of Memory', 133; and Lars Rasmussen, *Abdullah Ibrahim: A Discography*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Copenhagen: The Booktrader, 2000), 10. Interestingly Brand makes no mention of his conversion to Islam in his letters to Duerden.

<sup>396</sup> Letter Dollar Brand to Dennis Duerden, 17 July 1968.

the airport for the arrival of the now internationally acclaimed local artists – a small misunderstanding that nevertheless made it into the local newspaper.<sup>397</sup>

If Dollar Brand ‘returned to his roots’ during this time, it was certainly a more idiosyncratic version of ‘roots’ or ‘home’ than that which the community he hailed from in Kensington, Cape Town, would have recognised or likely would have condoned. ‘Am living in the bush. Sax, cello, flutes, woman + all,’ Brand writes to Duerden shortly after arriving in Cape Town, ‘[m]uch more rewarding.’<sup>398</sup> Yet this could only have struck a dissonant chord with the so-called ‘coloured’ community of Cape Town.<sup>399</sup> One of the ways apartheid ideology operated to forestall opposition was through the exacerbation of ethnic divisions in order to fracture the formation of a broader ‘black’ constituency opposing apartheid. Mohamed Adhikari captures these divisions when he explains the way that ‘Colouredness functioned as a social identity under apartheid’:

The principal constituents of this stable core [Colouredness as a social identity] are the Coloured people’s assimilationism, which spurred hopes of future acceptance into the dominant [white] society; their intermediate status in the racial hierarchy, which generated fears that they might lose their position of relative privilege and be relegated to the [lower] status of Africans; the negative connotations with which Coloured identity was imbued, especially the shame attached to their supposed racial hybridity; and finally, the marginality of the Coloured people, which caused them a great deal of frustration.<sup>400</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> ‘The Bird for Dollar at his SA Comeback’, author and publication unknown, although it is likely that the review could have been published in the *Cape Herald*. Container 2 Folder 1, Transcription Centre Archive.

<sup>398</sup> Letter 24 July 1968.

<sup>399</sup> The problematic word ‘coloured’ was historically used by the apartheid government to refer to the population it deemed neither of indigenous African descent (referred to as ‘black’), nor of European descent (passing under the designation ‘white’). The term ‘coloured’ referred to a heterogenous group descending from, among others, the Khoekhoe and San peoples, and slaves of South-East Asian descent. Also see John Edwin Mason, “‘Mannenberg’”: Notes on the Making of an Icon and an Anthem’, *African Studies Quarterly*, 9:4 (2007), 29; Denis-Constant Martin, ‘What’s in the Name “Coloured”?’, in *Social Identities in the New South Africa: After Apartheid*, Vol. 1, ed. Abebe Zegeye (Cape Town and Maroelana: Kwela and South African History Online, 2001), 249-267.

<sup>400</sup> Mohamed Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community* (Athens and Cape Town: Ohio University Press and Double Storey Books, 2005), vii.

Brand's 'living in the bush' would conceivably have touched on what Adhikari describes as fears of 'being relegated to the status of Africans', a tension that Edwin Mason also notes.<sup>401</sup>

These dissonances, if apparent to Brand at the time, could evidently not dampen his elation at being back. An overwhelmingly positive tone in his first letter to Duerden accompanied good news on all fronts: Brand had just signed a two-year recording contract with RCA, was preparing for a nation-wide tour organised by Union Artists, started writing a weekly column for the local newspaper the *Cape Herald*, and had several 'offers of jobs'.<sup>402</sup> Apart from material circumstances, Brand's letters also record his captivation with the rich soundscape in South Africa and an interest in indigenous instruments, which he started to incorporate into his performances.<sup>403</sup> His very first article for the *Cape Herald* indeed reads as a compendium of the sounds characteristic of Cape Town, defamiliarising the familiar to his readers, as his experience of Cape Town must have struck him after his long absence. I quote a brief excerpt:

I hear the sound of the waves beating against the dock and Chris and Dicky singing with their friends in the flats in Eighth Avenue. I hear the South Easter blowing and rattling the zinc fence in our backyard.

I hear the bass drum, flute and side-drum of the 'Acha-Americans' and Tommy and Jewell singing 'It's Doekum' and Fatima's laughter and Dinah's piano and Babs selling fruit from his push-cart and Judge and Bolly – guitars and alto – and Sunday church voices and preachers on street corners and bells.<sup>404</sup>

More than just urging his readers to appreciate anew the richness of the everyday sounds of their sonic landscape, the article takes an activist turn, probing another of the sensitivities that apartheid attributed to 'colouredness', understood as a social identity captured in Adhikari's quote above:

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<sup>401</sup> Mason, "'Mannenbergs'", 32.

<sup>402</sup> Letter Dollar Brand to Dennis Duerden, 24 July 1968.

<sup>403</sup> See letter Dollar Brand to Dennis Duerden, 22 August 1968.

<sup>404</sup> Dollar Brand, 'Don't Be Ashamed of Doekums and Coons', *Cape Herald* (27 July 1968).

Are you ashamed of yourselves? Are you ashamed of the minstrels and Doekum's trumpet? We know some of you who are shamed. Then we ask – but what have you in their place?<sup>405</sup>

In a later article Brand passionately advocates pursuing musical originality rather than imitation,<sup>406</sup> which presents another instance where Brand advocates for the positive assertion of 'coloured' as a social identity.

A review of the first concert he played in his hometown of Kensington, however, reveals he had left his audience behind in his musical developments of late. Although the figure that walked onto the stage 'was the old scruffy, well-loved Dollar all right', he was 'chewing on a wooden flute' – the first jarring image signalling some measure of perplexity at Brand's newfound interest in instruments other than the piano. Furthermore,

the music was new. For ten minutes the crowd listened and then, as Dollar began playing for Dollar, way-out stuff started soaring right above the heads of the audience. They whispered, they fidgeted. Then they started shouting "Go back to America". Dollar was unperturbed. He finished his stint at the ivories then strolled out without a hello or a thank you. Later he came back with a guitar but quit without playing. So what has happened to Dollar? Seems like he has outgrown his old hometown.<sup>407</sup>

The review's description of 'Dollar Playing for Dollar' is indicative of the shift in Brand's musical approach since he had left: it was the opposite of the club-playing musician catering to the audience's whims – the very music he described in his reminiscences about the concert and dance practices in Cape Town in his third 'Talk on Jazz' (described in Chapter Three). Indeed, the contrast between a concert hall aesthetic and club scene conviviality is acute in this incident. As if to extend the chasm between performer and audience to the theatre of the wider community, the review ended by regaling the incident of Brand disappointing his fans by his arrival by train instead of plane.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Dollar Brand, 'Imitation – The Destroyer of Originality', *Cape Herald* (24 August 1968).

<sup>407</sup> 'The Bird for Dollar at his SA Comeback', Folder 1 Box 2,

<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

Then again, the idea that Brand had been in touch with his audiences before he left South Africa is not quite the case. While it is true that Brand played in the enormously popular dance bands in the 1950s before he left – a common training ground for South African jazz musicians – he had already left his audience behind before leaving for Zurich. In an article of 1965, Brand is quoted on the struggle of a musician in South Africa:

It was not just me that they didn't want to listen to. It was the overall scene. They just didn't know what was going on. I think the Pop market is even bigger down there than here. About once a year there's some new dance craze.<sup>409</sup>

This statement itself contradicts what Brand optimistically, and no doubt exaggeratedly, writes three years later: 'South African audiences are the most intelligent in the world – bar none.'<sup>410</sup> These apparent contradictions suggest a profound ambivalence in Brand's attitude towards the Cape Town community who socially constitute the notion of 'home'. In his consideration of the apparent dissonance between Brand and his audiences, Mason argues that '[n]either audiences nor musicians were prepared for the music which blurred distinctions between high art and popular entertainment and which seemed to look back to a provincial and slightly embarrassing past' – the latter referring to Brand's improvisation on *moppies*, associated with *Kaapse Klopse*.<sup>411</sup> Brand's return to the United States in May 1969 is the most telling indication of this break. Ultimately, Muller and Benjamin write, it was the 'gap between what they were striving to achieve musically [...] and what their audiences wanted to hear' that underlay Brand and Benjamin's decision to go back to New York.<sup>412</sup>

### **Tracing Dollar Brand-Xahuri – Dullah Brahmin – Abdullah Ibrahim**

Dollar Brand's conversion to Islam in South Africa in 1968 is a significant event in the narrative of Brand's return. Sathima Bea Benjamin ascribes this turn to

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<sup>409</sup> Dollar Brand quoted in 'South African Musicians Make their Mark', *Crescendo* (June 1965), 30.

<sup>410</sup> Dollar Brand, 'District Six in Carnegie Hall...', *Cape Herald* (21 September 1968).

<sup>411</sup> Mason, "Mannenberg", 32.

<sup>412</sup> Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 152.

difficulties Brand faced in New York, in which his declining health owing to heavy drinking and smoking was conceivably not unconnected.<sup>413</sup> Brand recounts that a period of cleansing and spiritual exploration led to his eventual conversion. It mirrored the technical development in his musical practices, which Brand perceives to be connected with internal development.<sup>414</sup> Almost concurrently, in January 1968, Brand started experimenting with his name. In a letter to Dennis Duerden on 19 January 1968, he signed off as ½ Dollar Brand-Xahuri, to which he added by way of explanation: ‘devaluating and rain-caller’.<sup>415</sup> On 20 May 1968, he simply signed ‘Xahuri’. Finally, as is widely known in the literature, Dollar Brand became Abdullah Ibrahim – congruent with his conversion to Islam.

In Dollar Brand/Abdullah Ibrahim’s case, his change of name was not a case of the immigrant conforming to the host country’s naming practices. On the contrary, the name ‘Abdullah Ibrahim’ or the affixed ‘Xahuri’ set him further apart from the normative practices in American society, although it aligns him with the a number of jazz musicians who converted to Islam, for example Sulieman Saud (formerly McCoy Tyner, with whom Brand had performed at Carnegie Hall in 1965) or Abdullah Ibn Buhaina (Art Blakey). Ingrid Monson points to the counter-hegemonic impulse that Islam presented, arguing that ‘[t]he universalist message of Islam provided an alternative to Western modernism’s vision of universality that would play an increasingly important role in the spiritual visions of the jazz musicians of the 1960s.’<sup>416</sup> She quotes Abdullah Ibn Buhaina (Art Blakey) who explains that ‘Islam brought the black man what he was looking for, an escape like some found in drugs or drinking: a way of living and thinking he could choose in complete freedom. This is the reason we adopted this new religion in such numbers. It was for us, above all, a way of rebelling.’<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> Sathima Bea Benjamin in the documentary on Abdullah Ibrahim, *A Struggle for Love*, dir. Ciro Cappellari (Cine +, 2004); Mason, “‘Mannenberg’”, 31; Maya Jaggi, ‘The Sound of Freedom’, *The Guardian* [website] (8 December 2001), available:

<<http://www.theguardian.com/music/2001/dec/08/jazz>>, accessed 14 September 2015; Christine Lucia, ‘Abdullah Ibrahim and the Uses of Memory’, 126; Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 152.

<sup>414</sup> Abdullah Ibrahim, interview with Ian Carr, broadcast on BBC Radio 3 (14 June 1990), British Library Sound Archive, Call number: B5970/1.

<sup>415</sup> Letter ½ Dollar Brand Xahuri to Dennis Duerden, 19 January 1968.

<sup>416</sup> Monson, *Freedom Sounds*, 147.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

Commenting on the significance of Dollar Brand's conversion to Islam in the context of South Africa in particular, Christopher Chase argues along similar lines that Islam places emphasis on unity, while apartheid presents its antithesis through a ruptured society.<sup>418</sup> While this is one aspect that Benjamin confirms in her account of Brand's conversion, Chase's reading overlooks another critical dimension: the strong presence of Sufism in the Cape Town community in which Brand grew up.<sup>419</sup> The adoption of Christian dogma in formulating and sustaining apartheid ideology in combination with the presence of Islam in the specifically Capetonian cultural *habitus* within which Brand grew up, and to which he returned (physically and through his musical practice), lend a particular social dimension to the adoption of Islam in the context of Brand/Ibrahim's identity and artistic production.

Ibrahim's name change and conversion was also crucially accompanied by the increasing homeward turn of Dollar Brand-Xahuri-Abdullah Ibrahim's gaze in his music. Titles are indicative: albums include *Anatomy of a South African Village* (1965); *African Piano* (1970); *African Sun* (1972); *African Sketchbook* (1968); or tracks like 'Mannenberg – is where it's happening' (1974, referring to a suburb in Cape Town), or 'Soweto – is where it's at' (1975). It is also notable that Ibrahim's music only starts to clearly reference Islamic culture after his conversion to Islam in 1968, after which direct references in song titles follow, as well as ornamentation that could be understood as indexing Islamic practices of recitation (the track 'Zikhr' on *Echoes from Africa* is one example).

### **A genealogy of transition through a song**

Dollar Brand's transition to Abdullah Ibrahim unfolds through the genealogy of songs in his discography.<sup>420</sup> Several threads run through the albums between 1968 and 1973, which trace this transformation. I take as my starting point the song 'Salaam-Peace-Hamba Kahle' (see the transcription in Figure 6). The song title

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<sup>418</sup> Christopher W. Chase, 'Prophetics in the Key of Allah: Towards an Understanding of Islam in Jazz', *Jazz Perspectives*, 4:2 (2010), 161.

<sup>419</sup> Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*, 152.

<sup>420</sup> This section draws on Lars Rasmussen's discography, see full discographical details in *Abdullah Ibrahim: A Discography*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Copenhagen: Booktrader, 2000), 22-77.

suggests a composite greeting indexing three cultural strands: ‘Salaam’ as a gesture of greeting in Islamic culture, ‘Peace’ as a benediction perhaps connoting the West, and ‘Hamba Kahle’ a greeting used in Zulu meaning ‘go well’. These greetings encapsulate the ingredients that Brand/Ibrahim braids into his increasingly South African sound: the rhythms, tonal systems and structural organisation of African music, and musical references to both Christian hymnody and Sufi *dhikr*. The track first appeared on the album *Hamba Khale! / Confluence / Hamba Khale* [sic], recorded on 16 March 1968 with the Argentinian saxophonist Gato Barbieri. On this album, the track ‘Salaam-Peace-Hamba Kahle’ appears under the name of Dollar Brand on the album sleeve. The next appearance of this song is on the solo album *African Sketchbook* of 16 May 1969; this time under the name Dollar Brand-Xahuri. ‘Dollar Brand-Xahuri’ transforms on the next album titled *African Piano*, also featuring solo piano, into Dollar Brand ‘Xahuri – Dullah Brahmin’, recorded on 22 October 1969.

Name play is abandoned in the following five albums, which appear under the moniker ‘Dollar Brand’, although it is noteworthy that the next album titled *African Sun* (1970) features telling tracks like ‘Zikhr’ (an Islamic prayer), ‘Batavia’ (a Cape Malay traditional song hearkening to the place of origin of many of the historic Cape colony’s slaves, who are among the forbears of the ‘coloured’ community), ‘Khoisan’ (hearkening to an indigenous Cape ethnic group and the notion of African lineage); ‘Mamma’ (the ultimate metaphor of home, descent and belonging) and the by-now familiar cross-cultural track, ‘Salaam-Peace-Hamba Kahle’. Skip forward to 1973 to the album *Ancient Africa*, which is the first to appear under the name Abdullah Ibrahim. Featuring the songs ‘Batavia’ and ‘Zikhr’ along with traditional Cape carnival tunes in a suite called ‘Ancient Africa’, it does not, however, showcase ‘Peace – Salaam – Hamba Kahle’. But, recorded during the same session as *Ancient Africa* on 18 February 1973, though issued under a different album title, *Fats, Duke and the Monk*, ‘Salaam- Peace- Hamba Kahle’ has found a place in a suite titled ‘Salaam – Peace’, for which it serves as both an opening and closing track. This positioning of the song is reminiscent of the opening and closing of church services with prayer. Subsequent albums after *Ancient Africa* have appeared consistently



under the name Abdullah Ibrahim, which is indeed the name by which this artist is best known today.

## Salaam - Peace - Hamba Kahle

Abdullah Ibrahim

♩ = c. 50

Piano

5

Pno.

9

Pno.

13

1. 2.

Figure 6: 'Peace – Salaam – Hamba Kahle' by Dollar Brand/Abdullah Ibrahim. Transcribed by the author from the album *African Sketchbook*.<sup>421</sup>

There are clearly a number of threads running through this discographical exercise, which traces Abdullah Ibrahim's name change. Each reference may not be significant in itself but, combined with the other examples considered here, it forms a picture of an artistic imagination and identity in flux.

<sup>421</sup> Dollar Brand-Xahuri, *African Sketchbook*, (ENJA CD 2026-2, 1983 [1969]), recorded 16 May 1969.

## Theoretical and analytical directions

The title of this chapter, 'Departures and Returns' signal one of the fundamental ambivalences evident in Ibrahim's biography in the 1960s. Brand's first departure from South Africa is in 1962, and he returns in 1968. But then he departs from South Africa again in 1969, and returns to New York. Between these departures and returns, the notion of 'home' becomes ambivalent: is 'home' 'going back' to Cape Town, or New York? This simple mapping demonstrates how quickly notions of place and belonging become relativized, thus demonstrating one of the key characteristics of exile: its pluralizing tendencies, engendering the 'contrapuntal awareness' to which Edward Said refers.<sup>422</sup> It underscores Veit Erlmann's observation (cited in Chapter One) that the opposite of 'home' is indeed not 'away', but 'ambivalence', as well as my elaboration in arguing that 'home' in exile also becomes a space of ambivalence.

Ambivalence first becomes apparent in Dollar Brand's letters, in which longing for home and the resolve never to return alternate in quick succession. In Brand's articles, New York is similarly portrayed in ambivalent terms: on the one hand it is described as a place for meeting venerated figures in jazz like Duke Ellington, as a place of opportunities such as performances in Carnegie Hall or studying with Hall Overton; on the other as a place of hardship and struggle for mere survival. In South Africa, ambivalence to the point of contradiction in Brand/Ibrahim's relationship with audiences, on both his and their part, is patently evident. And finally, although it is not exactly an ambivalence but rather a transition or a transformation that takes place as Brand becomes Ibrahim, his sense of identity is spiritually, politically and musically resituated.

Let us consider the different strands that interact in the performance space that Ibrahim carved between Cape Town and New York primarily (via Zurich, Paris, Copenhagen and London). The first is an international and cosmopolitan strand forged through jazz. Jazz might have travelled to South Africa through conduits like ships and records from America, but it becomes the vessel (albeit an inflected one)

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<sup>422</sup> Said, 'Reflections on Exile', 186. Also see my reading of Said's counterpoint in relation to Avtar Brah's 'modalities' of diaspora experience in Chapter Two.

that enables Brand to find performance spaces in Zurich, Copenhagen, Paris and New York under this banner. The encounter with Ellington is a case in point: were it not for the common practice of jazz, this encounter would not have taken place. Then there are the different strands that inform the social space that apartheid grouped and designated as ‘coloured’ – referring to descendants of the Khoisan, Southeast Asian slaves brought to the Cape, those whose parents were racially classified differently – sonically manifesting in Islamic calls to prayer, Christian church hymns, and an array of vernacular practices such as those represented in *Kaapse Klopse*. Denis-Constant Martin explores ‘coloured’ identity through the notion of creolisation, which already suggests a significant unpacking of the multiple threads of a dynamic, composite whole and a theorisation of the resultant cultural entanglements.<sup>423</sup>

The dissonances between Brand/Ibrahim and his audience in Cape Town exhibit in further relief the currents that run through his work. Brand’s reception in the so-called coloured community in which he played his compositions, demonstrates that they found it difficult to relate to his music in 1968, and arguably did not recognise this supposed ‘common culture’ in the music at all: on the contrary, the audience’s response registers profound alienation. This could be ascribed to the ‘avant-garde’ impulse that shaped Brand’s work, but could also be ascribed to the fact that the South African influences marked in Brand’s music reach further than the sound constructs recognised as ‘coloured’ to embrace black indigenous cultural forms as well. As Mason writes, ‘[f]ew coloureds of any class would have responded to his [Brand’s] call to identify with Africans and African cultures [for] [m]ost were determined to maintain their social and physical distance from Africans.’<sup>424</sup>

Ibrahim’s music was therefore challenging to conceptions of ‘coloured’ cultural identity precisely because he was ‘inventing a radically innovative cultural identity, one that was coloured and inclusively South African at once’<sup>425</sup> – transcending the categories that apartheid increasingly enforced. He was looking back to history and forging history at once. One argument would be that the distance between exile and homeland meant that Brand might have escaped the reifying effects of the ‘racial’

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<sup>423</sup> Denis-Constant Martin, ‘Cape Town’s Musics: A Legacy of Creolisation’, in *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa* (Somerset West: African Minds, 2013), 53-100.

<sup>424</sup> Mason, “Mannenberg”, 11.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

and ‘cultural’ blinkers that apartheid imposed (bearing in mind the constructedness of these markers). This is not entirely convincing, however, because Brand had already performed extensively with African musicians before he left South Africa in 1962 – as his mentoring by Kippie Moeketsi suggests. This perhaps highlights the unique and anachronistic space jazz has afforded in South Africa even before the onset of grand apartheid, underscoring jazz as occupying a space that already, and controversially, transgressed boundaries between cultural communities, but also between South Africa and an international (predominantly American) space.

Finally, the letters between Dennis Duerden and Dollar Brand compel us to refine the notion of exile beyond the binaries of then and now, here and there, belonging and alienation, involuntary and voluntary states of displacement. Writers like Edward Said have characterised exile as a contrapuntal experience entailing an awareness of at least two homes, two cultures. This is patently true of Dollar Brand’s exile as revealed by his letters to Dennis Duerden between 1965 and 1969 and his articles in the *Cape Herald*, where ‘home’ fluctuates between New York and South Africa. But there is a risk of underemphasizing the dynamic, constantly developing nature of the relationship between the exile and the notion of home which surfaces in a diachronic reading of exile, as even the brief interval of the correspondence and articles I have discussed in this chapter suggests. ‘Counterpoint’ indeed also implies movement and changing relationships through time, an aspect that is not always unpacked in writings on exile. This chapter’s reading of Brand’s letters and articles confirms Amy Kaminsky’s argument that exile needs to be understood as ‘a process of movement and change, not only a displacement beyond a border (although it is also that).’<sup>426</sup>

Tied to this are questions about how distance changes the conception of home and produces the effect of seeing the familiar anew. Dollar Brand’s gaze home draws on memory, but in the act of folding it into the creative process, simultaneously surpasses it. The creative process, as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o avers (see the Introduction), is a process that is constantly on the move, creating anew. When concepts such as ‘home’ enter the artistic imagination, they do not stay as stable

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<sup>426</sup> Amy K. Kaminsky, *After Exile: Writing the Latin American Diaspora* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), xvi.

referents, but become part of the creative (and thus generative) process. This becomes one of the ways in which Ibrahim (re-) imagines home. It underscores one of the ways that home enters into exile, as discussed in Chapter One: the increasingly blurred boundaries between home and exile paradoxically has the effect of the symbolic heightening of the distinctions between these domains. In this we may read the way Ibrahim's music comes to construct and define notions of place: music is not only reflective of its context, but plays a constitutive role in creating it through discursive practice, as we will see in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5

### **Towards an Interpretive Framework: Musical Thought in the Writings of Dollar Brand**

In the previous chapter I traced how senses of place (and displacement) shaped Dollar Brand's development personally and musically; these were formative experiences whose far-reaching ramifications continue to reverberate in his adoption of a new name. I also paid attention to Brand/Ibrahim as raconteur and self-styled luminary through his writing. While Ibrahim is decidedly less prolific as a writer than as a musician – what little he published appeared mostly in the 1960s and '70s – his poetry nevertheless featured alongside that of renowned South African poets Keorapetse Kgogitsile and Dennis Brutus, and his articles appeared in *Drum* magazine as well as the *Cape Herald* newspaper, as we have seen. Dispersed across this body of writing, as well as in numerous interviews, radio programmes and two documentary portraits, are some of his most compelling views on music and its relation to culture and society. His is an organic, home-grown wisdom that contests the trope of the composer-performer as lacking imaginative or critical insight into his own musical and creative commitments. In what follows, my interest lies in the ways in which Ibrahim discursively constructs notions of place, and how these function in relation to Ibrahim's music practices at the time (considered in Chapter Six).

I accordingly begin the work of piecing together Ibrahim's musical thought by considering selected poems and the 'Talks on Jazz' produced for the Transcription Centre in the latter half of the 1960s, as well as two later documentary film portraits of Brand/Ibrahim himself. I will look at socially-embedded themes of time, geography, stories and reflection; themes that are focussed by discursive productions of Africa in Ibrahim's musical thought and practice: how 'Africa' is constructed, imaginatively elaborated, and inscribed through performance. In taking this approach I follow Veit Erlmann when he writes, concerning the role of music in the construction of a global imagination, that it is less concerned with separating fact

from fiction than examining the kinds of truths that are produced in colonial and postcolonial contexts.<sup>427</sup>

One of the recurrent themes in both journalistic and academic writing on Ibrahim centres on the eclectic range of influences audibly present in his music. Critics have taken divergent views on the localities sounded through his music. In the late 1960s (Brand's first years of settling in New York), reviewers have noted a distinctly 'African' sound in his playing,<sup>428</sup> yet audiences in Brand's native Cape Town in 1968 could hardly relate to the music at all for its remoteness from their aural frame of reference. During the period coinciding with the written correspondence between Brand and Dennis Duerden, that is between his arrival in New York and after returning from his first visit in South Africa (1965-1969), Brand's albums attest to a marked increase in compositional activity as well as a reorientation towards (South) Africa. Consider by way of example the programmatic significance given to (South) Africa in the succession of solo albums titled *Anatomy of a South African Village* (1965), *African Sketchbook* (1968), *African Piano* (1970, recorded 22 October 1969). These titles reverberate with a yearning for a country and a continent that would persist throughout Brand's career. This is not to exclude contributions by American jazz musicians: figures like Fats Waller, Ellington and Thelonious Monk are still eminently present in tracks like 'Honeysuckle Rose' and 'Mood Indigo' on the album *Reflections* (1965), or 'Smoke Gets In Your Eyes' on *Anatomy of a South African Village* (1965), and most conspicuously in the later album named after three of Brand's great inspirations, *Fats Duke and Monk* (1973). After these albums, however, their presence gradually fades out.

In thinking about constructions of place in Dollar Brand's music, I endeavour to go beyond the identification of musical influences, showing how Brand not only drew on the distinctive sounds of the Cape Town of his youth, but also how his writings and music are sites of invention and place-making un beholden to rigid boundaries

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<sup>427</sup> Veit Erlmann, *Music Modernity and the Global Imagination* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.

<sup>428</sup> For instance, Wilfred Mellers, 'Anatomy of a South African Village and Other Items by Dollar Brand', *The Musical Times*, 107:1479 (1966), 419; Dan Morgenstern, 'Caught in the Act: Dollar Brand', *DownBeat* (16 December 1965), 41; John S. Wilson, 'Caught in the Act: Dollar Brand', *DownBeat* (8 September 1966), 17.

separating fiction from memory and historical verifiability. My concern, then, is to read and listen with Abdullah Ibrahim the writer and ‘theorist’ to Abdullah Ibrahim the composer and performer in Chapter Six.

### **Towards an interpretive framework of exile**

Proceeding from the window that the correspondence between Brand and Duerden has opened on this initial period of exile in London and New York (discussed in Chapters Four and Five), this chapter delves further into the period between 1965 and 1969 through a close reading of some of Brand’s texts and works produced during this time. Four sources in particular inform the construction of an interpretive framework that will be outlined in this chapter. Two date from the period 1965 to 1969 and directly relate to the Transcription Centre: the series of four ‘Talks on Jazz’ that Brand authored and produced for the Transcription Centre (already briefly described in Chapter Four), and a poetry cycle ‘Africa, Music and Show Business: An Analytical Survey in Twelve Tones plus Finale’ that first appeared in the *Journal of New African Literature and the Arts* in 1966,<sup>429</sup> and was subsequently republished in Cosmo Pieterse’s *Seven South African Poets: Poems of Exile* in 1971.<sup>430</sup> One of the poems, ‘Rhythm Afrique’ also appears in the ‘Talks on Jazz’, indicating the origin of at least a part of the poetry cycle in Brand’s time at the Transcription Centre. Others, as I discuss below, evoke New York through images of places and events Brand would have encountered upon his arrival there.

The remaining two sources, documentary film portraits of Ibrahim released in 1987 and 2005 respectively, develop ideas already evident in the 1960s documents, showing the remarkable consistency and longevity of Ibrahim’s conceptions of

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<sup>429</sup> See Dollar Brand, ‘Africa, Music and Show Business: An Analytical Survey in Twelve Tones plus Finale’, *Journal for New African Literature and the Arts*, Vol. 2 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 53-7.

<sup>430</sup> It is this version of the poetry cycle that I refer to throughout the chapter: Dollar Brand, ‘Africa, Music and Show Business: An Analytical Survey in Twelve Tones plus Finale’, in *Seven South African Poets: Poems of Exile Collected and Selected by Cosmo Pieterse* (Ibadan and Nairobi: Heinemann, 1971), 1-11. It is worth noting that excerpts of the poetry cycle, sometimes modified, are at times braided into Brand’s articles in the *Cape Herald* (discussed in detail in Chapter 4); two poems, ‘VI: blues for district six’ and ‘VII’ also appears in Christine Lucia (ed.), *The World of South African Music: A Reader* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005), 60-61.



music. *A Brother with Perfect Timing* (1987) and *A Struggle for Love* (2005) are similar in that they sketch a portrait of Abdullah Ibrahim as an artist, offering a view of his performance and rehearsal practices, glimpses of his personal life, and, through off-screen and unheard interview questions, prompting memories and his ruminations on his music.<sup>431</sup> Both are set against the backdrop of New York and Cape Town, the two places with which Brand has the most lasting connections as his adopted home and birthplace respectively. In *A Brother with Perfect Timing*, filmed in the 1980s, Ibrahim is tellingly absent from the scenes shot in South Africa, bearing testament to his exile. As a corrective, and in the spirit of the ‘return’ narrative so often adopted in documentaries of formerly exiled musicians in the 1990s,<sup>432</sup> *A Struggle for Love* includes scenes of Ibrahim in the community he grew up, as well as his ostensible first time on Table Mountain – the well-rehearsed symbol of Cape Town. The latter serves to underscore the pervasiveness of Cape Town in Brand’s music and, indirectly, heightens his paradoxical absence from this referent. This reinforces the binary of ‘home’ and ‘exile’ that characterises most accounts of Ibrahim’s life and career, which has been problematized in Chapter Four where exile was discussed as a mode of becoming, in other words always in flux. Harkening back to the 1960s, however, when Brand was coming to terms with his absence from South Africa and the gradually dawning impossibility of return, how did he discursively construct this spatial divide in his music? As examples of place-making, Brand’s discursive practices reveal the mechanisms through which music connotes senses of place. Such discursive practices often rely on idealisation, in other words memory that cast events in rosier hues than they probably justify, but yet clearly demonstrate the amplified significance that everyday activities in South Africa assume in exile. In this idealisation, I will show, the imaginative relationship with home (as elaborated in Chapter One) is at work.

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<sup>431</sup> *A Brother with Perfect Timing*, dir. Chris Austin (Africa Film Library, 1987) [DVD]; *A Struggle for Love*, dir. Ciro Cappellari (Cine +, 2004) [DVD]. My thanks to Ciro Cappellari for kindly sending me a copy of this film, which is not distributed commercially.

<sup>432</sup> The documentaries *Arthouse: Songs from the Golden City*, about the South African close-harmony singing group the Manhattan Brothers’ return to South Africa in the 1990s, and *Miriam Makeba Live at the Southbank Centre* are two examples of the return narrative. Both films are available at the British Library, London, United Kingdom: *Songs from the Golden City*, Shelfmark: V4092/3; *Miriam Makeba Live at the Southbank Centre*, Shelfmark: V3429/2.

Brand disputes the perception that African musicians simply play music, as opposed to theorise. In *A Brother with Perfect Timing* he refers to musicians as ‘sound scientists’ with the capacity (and propensity) to analyse their own music, structurally as well as in terms of reception, a view he opposes to ‘the idea ... that in Africa we just pick up a saxophone and play’.<sup>433</sup> It is interesting that Brand casts this as an *African* problem, for it was also a concern for jazz musicians in general. The description of the jazz musician as a ‘sound scientist’ indeed echoes Anthony Braxton, who also prefers this term over ‘jazz musician’.<sup>434</sup> Abdullah Ibrahim therefore takes a broader jazz concern and particularises it to the African context. Anthony Braxton’s *Tri-Axium Writings* or Ornette Coleman’s ‘harmolodics’ come to mind as written accounts of musicians’ highly individual philosophies (or systems of thought) on their music practices – but this is no doubt a wide-spread practice among jazz musicians which often takes oral rather than written form.<sup>435</sup>

Analysis, here understood as the formulation of idiosyncratic theories of music through a self-reflexive practice, is a frequent feature of Brand’s writings and interviews. Even more, his conception of music’s functioning – his theory of music – is remarkably consistent over the course of several decades of his career. This chapter deliberately reads along the grain of Brand’s views on music, taking Brand’s claims at face value as the discursive practices of a musician who actively cultivates his own ethos of music. It serves as a mapping exercise for selected aspects of Ibrahim’s notions of musical structure, organisation and signification. The music analyses that follow in Chapter Six consider how these conceptions might serve as an interpretive framework in reading the notion of exile in Brand’s music, and also problematize these conceptions.

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<sup>433</sup> Abdullah Ibrahim, *A Brother with Perfect Timing*, 12:00-14:00. It reads as another way of distancing himself from the club musician (referred to in Chapter Five). Taken together with the development of a different aesthetic Brand notes in his music (see Chapter 5), Brand’s conception of the musician indeed indicates a marked shift from the role of entertainer.

<sup>434</sup> Ronald Radano, ‘Critical Alchemy: Anthony Braxton and the Imagined Tradition’, in *Jazz Among the Discourses*, ed. Krin Gabbard (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 194 and 196.

<sup>435</sup> Anthony Braxton, *Tri-Axium Writings*, 3 Vols. ([San Francisco?]: Synthesis Music, 1985); Ornette Coleman, ‘Harmolodics’, *DownBeat* (July 1983), 54-5. The production of knowledge systems or alternative epistemologies resonates with recent discussions in South Africa on the status of indigenous knowledge systems and debates about ‘decolonizing African minds’, to paraphrase one of Ngūgĩ’s book titles. Tracing the ways that South African musicians theorise their music practices in relation to these discourses would be an interesting study to undertake in future.

One of the difficulties with constructing the interpretive framework is the scattered nature of the material sources informing such a process: Ibrahim's reflections on music do not exist in a treatise that explores his ideas comprehensively or systematically. Instead, fragments and impressions proliferate in array of interviews, reviews, album sleeve notes, journal, newspaper or magazine articles, the extent of which is reflected in the bibliography compiled by Rasmussen in his excellent discography on Dollar Brand's music.<sup>436</sup> The sources reflect the international scope of Ibrahim's career and the wide dissemination of his music: sources in Danish, Japanese, French, German and English, among other languages, scattered in magazines, newspapers, journals and books (academic and non-academic) across several continents, contribute to this extensive list. Ibrahim's conception of music therefore has to be gathered from disparate sources. In what follows, I group together key themes that emerge from his writings: geography, time, memories of social practice associated with particular places, and the division/connection binary. These are themes, as I will show, that play a significant role in spatializing Brand's sonic practice.

### **The geography of the text**

The fact that Ibrahim's poetry appears in a poetry collection subtitled 'Poems of Exile' already presents place in the plural, and anticipates the bifurcation (or multifurcation) of exile as the central, binding concern. It indicates reflections on the poets' absence from South Africa. We may infer that Brand wrote the cycle, or at least part of it, during the time he transitioned from London to New York in 1965: one of the poems in Brand's cycle, 'rhythm afrique', had already featured in the 'Talks on Jazz' he recorded for the Transcription Centre in London in 1965, and New York is signalled by references to 'towering grey buildings murmur[ing] grim subway rumblings in their roots' or the veiled allusion to Nat Nakasa's suicide by casting himself from a building on 14 July 1965, shortly after Brand arrived in this city (see poem XII 'the harmonica'). These references allow the (informed) reader to situate the poems within the context of Brand's biography and pinpoint events or

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<sup>436</sup> Lars Rasmussen, *Abdullah Ibrahim: A Discography*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Copenhagen: The Booktrader, 2000).

places that may be identified in the poems. Yet, there is a play between biographical specificity and poetic opacity that, at once, allows the poems to be construed as the personal experiences of Ibrahim, but also as an articulation of a broader colonial discourse that has wider purview than the politics of District Six and Cape Town where he hailed from, or the politics of apartheid in South Africa or even exile in New York.

As its title intimates, the poetry cycle is structured in twelve parts – each poem is numbered with a Roman numeral indicating its position in the cycle, and in most cases the poems are furnished with individual titles – followed by a ‘Finale’ titled ‘life in a national park/or take five’. Several themes recur throughout the cycle, even as the individual poems range from a cryptic two lines (as in ‘rhythm afrique’) to several strophes (‘blues for district six’ or the untitled seventh poem, for instance). Music is significant not so much as a topic that is contemplated than as imagery through which various themes are represented. So, for instance, imagery of instruments, sounds or songs is used to suggest memory: ‘rhythm afrique’ is the title of the fifth poem in the cycle; in the sixth suggestively titled ‘blues for district six’ the southeaster wind (another hallmark of Cape Town) elicits sounds from cellos, guitars, banjos and tambourines as it blows through ‘the sixth sensed district’ (District Six). The harmonica, in the twelfth poem, signifies both mastery and demise in the hands of the player who picked it up from the gutter;<sup>437</sup> and time signatures, rhythm and metre are used as expressions of time and social structures that denote the exilic condition.

Important, too, are the senses of geography that permeate throughout the twelve poems and the finale. References to ‘hemispheres’, points of the compass, and urban landscapes serve as geographical markers. It is indeed through imagery of geography – Lion’s Head (flanking Table Mountain on its left, District Six couched at its foot), the Southern Cross (the constellation through which due south is calculated) – rather than in name itself that Africa is suggested in the poetry. Its counterpart, the north, is suggested through references to ‘skyscrapers’ or ‘the northern city’, or ‘subway rumblings’ rendering it synonymous with urban spaces, or with an industrialised

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<sup>437</sup> Brand, ‘XII: the harmonica’, in ‘Africa, Music and Show Business’, 9.

world. The two worlds, north and south, are constantly juxtaposed and contrasted, as is perhaps most clearly seen in the poetic parable in the eighth poem, ‘ballet for tired sons and lovers’.<sup>438</sup> In this poem, the ‘magical beadwork’ of the son of a suburban African chieftain is replaced with ‘synthetic ornaments’ and the ‘fashion magazine’ world when he elopes with a ‘fast-travelling-northbound-salesgirl’ to escape a sense of disempowerment in his African origins. The critique of the northerly world is consummated when the African chieftain’s son finally ‘stifles and loses his voice’, and in an act of ‘final desperation strangles himself and dies’,<sup>439</sup> thus asserting the unwholesome effects of the industrialised world on the displaced African.

This critique resounds throughout the cycle. The northern, industrialised urban space is unflinchingly portrayed as inimical to the African, a place where he is eternally displaced and that eventually leads to his demise. Even more, the ‘cold steel northern city’<sup>440</sup> prohibits – even oppresses – the state of flow Ibrahim regards as essential to the process of composition. Musicians, Ibrahim avers in the documentary *A Brother with Perfect Timing*, find it very difficult to deal with a society of steel.<sup>441</sup> Exile, by implication, locks the African into this creatively stifling world. If composition derives, as Ibrahim explains in *A Brother with Perfect Timing*, from a state of composure,<sup>442</sup> it follows that exile as the loss of composure, rootedness and stability afforded by a secure sense of one’s place in the world, renders the state of the musician creatively arid and untenable. This dim view of the displaced and creatively stunted musician is joined with its shadow: the intangible, elusive memory of the south. Significantly, the harrowing memories of the south only become accessible ephemerally: through alcohol intoxication, songs, stories, or the wind blowing from the south.<sup>443</sup> As the opposite of the industrial north, the south is portrayed as an Edenic landscape unviolated by Western colonialism, and typically rural in its setting.<sup>444</sup> As such, it reiterates the stereotypical dichotomy of the rural opposed to urban, summarised by Dafni Tragaki:

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<sup>438</sup> Brand, ‘VII Ballet for Tired Sons and Lovers’, in ‘Africa, Music and Show Business’, 7.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid.

<sup>440</sup> Brand, ‘IX Wind Up’, in ‘Africa, Music and Show Business’, 7.

<sup>441</sup> *A Brother with Perfect Timing*.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid.

<sup>443</sup> See especially poems VII and IX, in ‘Africa, Music and Show Business’, 6 and 7.

<sup>444</sup> The rural village in this conception has certainly not met with missionary influence.

The ‘urban’ was seen as a synonym of modernity, the ‘rural’ of tradition; the ‘urban’ as a condition driving change and mobility, the ‘rural’ as one associated with constancy and stability; the ‘urban’ as a *topos* of estrangement and isolation, the ‘rural’ as one of collectivity and coherence. Moreover, the urban condition was seen as the realm of reason and discipline where progress was taking place, in contrast to the backward tendencies of the emotional and impulsive qualities of rural culture. In turn, rural became a symbol of a primitive and pristine state of being, opposed to the cultured and corrupted nature of urban existence.<sup>445</sup>

These tropes of the rural and the urban had already emerged in earlier discussions of the ways rural ‘home’ and urban workplace were constructed in discourses of South African labour migration. The way Brand deploys these same dichotomies to denote home (the south) and exile (the north) demonstrates the way that exile echoes labour migration in its analogous use of the same tropes – one of the models of how exile is superimposed onto earlier discourses of labour migration as parallel experience (as suggested in Chapter One). The middle term in Ibrahim’s writing is the figure of the musician and the artist, who is the bridge between the two ostensibly separate worlds. Exile, between the constructs of the rural (south) and the urban (north) in the binary terms of Ibrahim’s writing, is in fact the product of its author who traverses (and transcends) these binaries.

## **Time**

Time is one of the most prominent, sustained sites of discourse in Ibrahim’s pronouncements and musical understanding. Both documentaries, *A Brother with Perfect Timing* and *A Struggle for Love* open with statements about time, and the poem ‘slave bell’, the first of several poems concerned with time in the poetry cycle ‘Africa, Music and Show Business’, is second only to the opening poem which contemplates geography. These two themes, geography and time, represent the fundamental bifurcation of the notion of exile. ‘They took away time and gave us a clock’, Ibrahim says at the very outset of *A Brother with Perfect Timing*.<sup>446</sup> The

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<sup>445</sup> Dafni Tragaki, ‘Urban Ethnomusicology “at Home”’, in *Rebetiko Worlds* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 149.

<sup>446</sup> Dollar Brand, *A Brother with Perfect Timing*.

differentiation between ‘time’ and the ‘clock’, as indicated in this statement, is an important yet subtle one. Notions of time in Brand’s writing are in themselves neither positive nor negative, but entirely contingent on context and the specific work these notions perform. As the title of the 1987 documentary suggests, timing demands acuity and sensory perceptivity in an environment to which the musician responds. While timing has a quotidian application and relevance, it is also a quality particularly germane to musicianship.

This is illustrated in the story Brand tells to explain his notion of ‘perfect timing’.<sup>447</sup> As Brand recounts, two friends are walking, in step, down the road while smoking marijuana. They become aware of a child playing in the path of an approaching car. Just before the car hits the child, one of the walkers reaches out to pull the child out of harm’s way, picking her up and setting her down in a place of safety without breaking a step. In his narration, Brand stresses the rapid unfolding of these events, and the undisturbed measure of the walkers’ strides even as the imminent accident registers and is subverted.

In this anecdote, time, as represented by the two walkers’ casually walking in step, provides a steady pulse in which the narration unfolds. The walkers’ pace is neither rushed nor directed; there is ample opportunity to absorb the spatial and social dynamics of their surroundings. No end-destination is specified; the story and its protagonists wander free from the constraints of purpose, destination or a specified time of arrival. The marijuana serves as a device that suggests a state of mind outside of the norm. In the walkers’ awareness of their surroundings, they register a shift in the dynamics and become alerted to the possible accident. The perception of the change in dynamic leads to the staging of an intervention. The decision of a course of action and the enactment thereof is done nearly instantaneously, yet within the imperturbable pulse of the walkers’ step. From a musical point of view, the story could be taken as an allegory for the heightened awareness ensemble playing requires of the musician, an awareness all the more crucial to the temporal unfolding of improvisation. The space of music is an exceptional space: it obeys its own sense of timing outside of ordinary time. Music is (mostly) set within a consistent metre or

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<sup>447</sup> Ibid.

pulse, or it deliberately plays with the absence thereof. Both improvisors and ensemble players have to be attuned to the subtle shifts in the sound dynamics between the musicians as well as their performance surroundings.<sup>448</sup> It has no clear purpose or particular end except the contingencies of its internal structural organisation (however strictly or loosely defined). One may go as far as suggesting that musical time operates outside of a regulated, normal time, that it creates its own pulse and temporal awareness.

The clock, by contrast, is a regulating device closely associated with the notion of the West, or the master, that induces conformity and submission.<sup>449</sup> The second poem in 'Africa, Music and Show Business' titled 'slave bell', calls attention to the artificiality of time as signalled by a clock in contrast to the supposedly natural pulse of a stride regulated by bodies in the anecdote above:

slave  
master your bell  
your master  
like the cat  
was belled  
with time  
no clocks  
no clime  
stipulate  
late afternoon  
nor early mourning for the dead [...] <sup>450</sup>

The clock is an instrument in the service of violence, experienced as the disruption of a perceived natural order of things to which the musician is attuned in an optimal state of creativity. The onset of slavery, according to the poem, is associated with the imposition of time as signalled by the slave bell. The bell is metaphorically linked to clocks that regulate time, in contrast with time as a natural cycle as associated with the seasons or day and night, or as a function of the body. Associations with the bell

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<sup>448</sup> Frederic Rzewski characterises improvisation as a 'wrong note' or a 'first idea' that is the impetus for a subsequent 'recovery', which again becomes the next 'wrong note'. Improvisation is therefore a chain of ideas and recoveries. 'Little Bangs: A Nihilist Theory of Improvisation', *Current Musicology*, 67/68 (2002), 377-386.

<sup>449</sup> Also see Comaroff and Comaroff, 'The Madman and the Migrant', 195.

<sup>450</sup> Dollar Brand, 'II: slave bell', in 'Africa, Music and Show Business', 3.



are, however, more complex than connotations with the slave bell suggest: the aural 'image' is likewise associated with celebratory occasions such as weddings or religious festive days, or with funerals and death that signify the end of a natural life cycle, or untimely death as the words 'early mourning' suggest.

'slave/master your bell', Brand advises his readers in 'slave bell'. If *timing* – being attuned and responsive to shifting dynamics – is a quality to be honed and perfected, the *regulation of time* is a perversion to be resisted and overcome. This reclamation of time could indeed be considered an exercise in resistance through the counter-disruption of clocked or belled time, working towards a reinstatement of what is perceived as a natural, pre-colonial time. This reaching back towards time before the clock is indeed reminiscent of Zim Ngqawana's unmetred portrayal of the 'Homeland', the rural landscape untainted by Western influence, in the first part of the 'Migrant Workers' Suite' (discussed in Chapter One).

'Africa, Music and Show Business' shows a preoccupation with the onset of regulated time, which is consistently portrayed as a constraining device. It is mocked in the Finale of the poetry cycle, which is a parable about the discovery of time in the form of 'an ancient clock / ticking away in '1979¼/35½' – a preposterous time signature implying such complexity so as to be comical.<sup>451</sup> At the end of the twelfth poem titled 'the harmonica', this instrument that led to the popularity and ultimate demise of the protagonist in the poem, the harmonica player, 'rattled back into the gutter where it had fallen / with the inauguration of time'.<sup>452</sup> The master-slave narrative in 'slave bell' connects the notion of regulated time with colonisation. It symbolises a fundamental break with an earlier history of which few written traces exist. It is the very paucity of information that makes the pre-colonial space a fertile ground for the artistic imagination and the construction of a pre-colonial world. In many respects, it is indeed constructed as the antithesis of the colonial landscape.

This is evident in Brand's conception of time signatures as he explains in *A Struggle for Love*. The four walls of the urban city are, according to Brand, enforced

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<sup>451</sup> Dollar Brand, 'Finale: life in a national park/ or – take five', in 'Africa, Music and Show Business', 10-11.

<sup>452</sup> Dollar Brand, 'XII: the harmonica', in 'Africa, Music and Show Business', 9.

musically as the unyielding grid of 4/4 time.<sup>453</sup> He contrasts this to asymmetrical time signatures prevalent in African music, 3/4, 5/4 or 7/4, which bear resemblance to patterns found in nature, bodily movements and spiritual practices. For the purposes of this reading, I am less concerned with the accuracy of such statements (which is evidently problematic),<sup>454</sup> than to draw attention to their paradigmatic commitments. Brand seems to imply a holism in African music whereby music in an ‘unspoilt’ form – in Brand’s view not subject to Western (musical) structural organisation – is attuned to nature. Brand’s hypothesis implies that Western structures augured a fundamental rupture that estranges African musics (or by extension, African music practitioners) from their environment, spirituality and kinaesthetic harmony with the world.<sup>455</sup> This estrangement is indeed analogous to typical conceptions of exile as alienation, to the extent that Brand notes with regard to apartheid that whether in South Africa or abroad, ‘we were all exiled’.<sup>456</sup>

### **Stories and anecdotes, memory and sociality**

In Titlestad’s discussion of the ‘tale’ in relation to Ibrahim, he uses narrative as the means to trace representations about Ibrahim, reading tropes of pilgrimage in the way Ibrahim is portrayed in others’ writing about him.<sup>457</sup> This section takes a different tack: it rather focuses on stories told *by* Ibrahim (instead of literature about him). Stories and anecdotes, as we have already seen in the explanation of ‘perfect timing’, abound in Brand’s discursive practices: they function as conduits of ideas and sociality. Ibrahim ascribes his own learning to stories told by (or of) ‘the masters’ and claims to adopt the same mode of transmission in his mentorship of

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<sup>453</sup> Interestingly, the South African drummer Louis Moholo-Moholo, formerly the drummer of the Blue Notes, makes the same connection between 4/4 time and confining spatial devices like walls and grids. This is clearly an idea that must have been in circulation among South African musicians at the time. See Moholo-Moholo quoted in Titlestad, *Making the Changes*, 140.

<sup>454</sup> Brand seems to refer to asymmetrical timeline patterns prevalent in West African music practices (mostly absent from indigenous South African music practices) rather than time signatures.

<sup>455</sup> The kinaesthetic, it should be noted, is an important aspect of Abdullah Ibrahim’s worldview as a practitioner and teacher of the martial arts. See an anonymous interview with Abdullah Ibrahim, ‘Finding your Unique Voice: Interview with Abdullah Ibrahim’, *SGI Quarterly* [online magazine], available <<http://www.sgiquarterly.org/feature2010jan-6.html>>, accessed 28 May 2014.

<sup>456</sup> Brand [Ibrahim] in *A Struggle for Love*.

<sup>457</sup> Titlestad, *Making the Changes*, 231.

others.<sup>458</sup> In so doing, he demonstrates the centrality of the stories in discussions and interactions between jazz musicians, affirming the ‘deeply social nature’ of jazz and ‘its celebrated oral tradition’.<sup>459</sup> As rhetorical devices, anecdotes are frequently encountered in his reflections on his own musical practice, as is evident in the four sources that form the backbone of this chapter. This section explores his stories and anecdotes as manifestations of Ibrahim’s discursive practices, as conduits for his ideas that are often stated indirectly and shrouded in metaphor.<sup>460</sup> I also focus on the ways that they function as sites for reading of notions of place, one of exile’s central concerns.

In ‘Africa, Music and Show Business’, two poems (‘ballet for tired sons and lovers’ and the Finale titled ‘life in a national park/or – take five’) are parables. As we learn in the first of the ‘Talks on Jazz’, this is a device Brand also employs in his music. ‘Tintiyana’, the title of the last track on the album *African Piano* (1970) for instance, derives from seSotho mythology.<sup>461</sup> As Brand explains in his four ‘Talks on Jazz’, ‘Tintiyana’ is a small bird that wins a race to the sun by outwitting her fellow contenders. She flies unnoticed on the back of one of the most powerful birds until, right before the end of the race, she closes the final distance herself, fresh and rested. Tintiyana is a typical example of the trickster figure in African orature, for instance the Spider in West Africa, and Hare in East Africa, and the Signifying Monkey in African-American orature. As Ngũgĩ puts it, the trickster figure is ‘a symbol of the weak outsmarting the strong’.<sup>462</sup> In the guise of Tintiyana can be read the story of the underdog, giving assurance to those who are seemingly least likely to succeed that they may yet overcome by dint of shrewdness. In the context of exile, Tintiyana reads as a story of the underdog (or exile’s) overcoming. Yet, Tintiyana is also a story from ‘home’, told (and later performed) in exile – bringing home momentarily to the present of exile through the act of narration or performance.

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<sup>458</sup> Anonymous interview with Abdullah Ibrahim, ‘Finding your Unique Voice: Interview with Abdullah Ibrahim’.

<sup>459</sup> Tony Whyton, ‘Listening to the Jazz Anecdote’, in *Jazz Icons: Heroes, Myths and the Jazz Tradition* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 107.

<sup>460</sup> ‘Indirect’ statement is one of the characteristics Henry Louis Gates Jr. attributes to Signifying; in other words, speaking through implication rather than direct statement. See Gates, ‘The “Blackness of Blackness”’, 689.

<sup>461</sup> Rasmussen, *Abdullah Ibrahim: A Discography*, 224.

<sup>462</sup> See Ngũgĩ, *Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams*, 26; Gates, ‘The “Blackness of Blackness”’, 687.

Another example may be found in the enigmatic poem, 'Rhythm Afrique'. This poem, fifth in the cycle 'Africa, Music and Show Business', consists of only two lines: 'Joey had the biggest feet / so he played tenor'. Although the poem evidently references music, the relationship between large feet and playing tenor (which instrument?) is not self-evident. The poem's title – connoting the notion of an African rhythm – and its puzzlingly unrhythmic content is explained by Brand in the first of his four-part radio series, 'Talks on Jazz', recorded for the Transcription Centre:

I was born and raised in Cape Town, South Africa, and in the summer the hot sun burned so radiantly that the tar on the road became soft... We [the children] would take the metal tops of cold drink bottles, fill them with the soft tar, stick them on the soles of our bare feet, and beat out rhythms as we danced and sang, tapping feet, clapping hands; tapping feet, clapping hands; tapping feet. Joey was much bigger than all of us and he had enormous feet, so he could get on more bottle tops, and when he clamped down that foot it really sounded. Joey had the biggest feet, so he played tenor.<sup>463</sup>

Dollar Brand's narration of childhood memories unlocks the significance of this otherwise obscure poem. This poem suggests an integral understanding of music as something that derives materially from the environment and physically from the body, and socially from the friendships and community. Brand's description of the origins of 'Rhythm Afrique' suggests that this is something that would be unfamiliar to his audience, and that music's close relationship with the environment is absent in the place he tells the story – in this case, the Transcription Centre in London, 1965. The inference of the absence of a music that is directly derived from the space of its production – the materials to be found therein and the relationships that forge a sense of place – is reinforced by his exclamation elsewhere: 'Ja Africa, man! That's the only place where music is still social. People live music.'<sup>464</sup> In this exclamation, 'home' is tinged with the idealisation of an exile's nostalgia, but it is also, significantly, constructed as the northern hemisphere's other. It is doubtful whether

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<sup>463</sup> Dollar Brand, 'Talks on Jazz', transcripts are available as 'Africa, Lectures on Jazz 1965' compiled by Dennis Duerden, Chicago: Centre for Research Libraries, 2012 Record no. b2849221 OCLC number 814278144. Although it appears from the library record that Dennis Duerden is the author of the 'Talks on Jazz', it is evident from the transcripts themselves that Dollar Brand was indeed the author, as my discussion will illustrate.

<sup>464</sup> Ibrahim quoted in Charles Fox, liner notes of Dollar Brand, *Anatomy of a South African Village*, (Black Lion, BLCD 760172, 1992 [1967]).

Brand would have been alert to the sociality of the South African performance environment had he not also experienced different social relations as an effect of exile. To paraphrase Svetlana Boym, the particularity of home only becomes evident away from home.<sup>465</sup> Here we can clearly see how a memory from home becomes a construction of home through discursive practice. The narration of this anecdote is also engaged in the construction of 'Africa' as it is filtered and focussed through the current experiences of exile: Africa is what the 'north' is not. 'Africa' is thus re-created in narration as the West's negative (though not in a pejorative sense).

Stories and anecdotes blur senses of time in two important ways. First, in their telling and retelling anecdotes generate a history of ideas that infuses memory with present elaborations. As much as memories could be understood as recollections of stories or lived experiences, they are also the canvases onto which current concerns are projected through the act of narration. As such, they are constructions as well as reconstructions of history, place and time, dependent on a social context that conditions their significance. Secondly, Tony Whyton notes that while 'anecdotal accounts are almost always constructed in retrospect, [...] their narrative is capable of giving the recipient the sense of experiencing an event in the present. In this sense, an event that happened fifty years ago can be recounted as if it just happened yesterday.' Thus, anecdotes '[confuse] the relationship between past and present.'<sup>466</sup> In other words, the anecdote conflates the past and present through infusing the past with present interests and concerns, and bringing the past closer to the (narrated) present so as to elide the temporal distance between then and now. Whereas Brand's discursive constructions of Africa through the figure of the bird and the close ties between music and social practice amplify the difference between the place of home and the place of exile, the narrative act of the anecdote simultaneously renders them, paradoxically, less remote.

In Chapter One we have already seen, through Veit Erlmann, how the loss of clear distinctions between home and the present (urban) abode for the migrant paradoxically manifests in the symbolic heightening of the distinction between the

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<sup>465</sup> Svetlana Boym makes the point that '[w]hen we are at home, we don't need talk about it. [...] When we start speaking of home and homeland, we experience the first failure of homecoming.' Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 251.

<sup>466</sup> Whyton, 'Witnessing the Jazz Anecdote', 108-9.

two spaces. Here, we see the same process at work. The anecdote functions as a process of sense-making in exile, through which the symbolic heightening in the constructions of attributes of home as opposed to exile is reflexive of the way both domains are constantly present in the exile himself, embodying the memory as well as the lived experience of the present. The anecdote is a very clear manifestation of this: through the anecdote, memory is made present in the narrative or performative act, but is simultaneously engaged in the symbolic division of that which is already bridged through the figure of the exile.

Brand's untitled seventh poem in 'Music, Africa and Show Business' captures this porosity of times and spaces embroiled in processes of remembering more vividly:

the night my soul had herringed red  
through raucous songs of childhood:  
and friends and comic stories long forgotten  
were whiskied out of memories dim  
to function as narcotic  
and silence cruel reality as it screamed  
it's neither here nor there<sup>467</sup>

This poem conveys the painfulness of the presence of home in exile. The performance of songs of childhood elicits memories of people and stories, making them present in the performed moment and blurring the boundaries between past and present. The reality of lived experiences of exile – that 'it's neither here nor there' but both at once – reveals the way that the distinctions between these domains can only be drawn in discursive practice.

Memory and remembrance serve another important function in Brand's exile. Overt political references in Ibrahim's music emerge not so much from articulations of protest (as it does, for instance, in Miriam Makeba's song lyrics such as 'Oppas Verwoerd')<sup>468</sup> as through musical rituals mourning lost places and communities – through memory and remembrance. In this sense, memory could be understood as a form of protest – an obstinate refusal or incapability to forget. Perhaps remembering

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<sup>467</sup> Dollar Brand, untitled seventh poem, in 'Africa, Music and Show Business', 6.

<sup>468</sup> Translated as 'Beware Verwoerd!', referring to South Africa's former-Prime Minister, also widely known as the architect of apartheid. Verwoerd was assassinated in the South African House of Assembly on 6 September 1966.

is more involuntary than the deliberateness that protest connotes, but certainly the effect of Ibrahim’s music, drawing on and triggering in turn memory of soundscapes in South Africa held as ideal – particularly those of District Six – served as a soundtrack to resistance against apartheid.<sup>469</sup>

Interestingly, apartheid is seldom invoked by name in Brand’s musical, spoken or written discourse. The dominant discourse against which it protests is moreover that of colonialism and less specifically apartheid. Apartheid, however, could be regarded as part of the trajectory of colonialism that Brand musically includes in its fold. One of the forms of violence that colonialism (including apartheid) wrought was the alienation of peoples from their histories. It manifests, amongst other means, in favouring written histories over oral histories, as Ngũgĩ powerfully argues.<sup>470</sup> More locally in South Africa, amnesia is read in the assimilationism Mohamed Adhikari considers one of the central impulses of ‘coloured identity’, that looked especially to the dominant (read: white) society in its aspirations for acceptance.<sup>471</sup> Nothing could therefore be more subversive than the refusal to forget through a conscious research and re-imagination of obscured histories. Against this background, the assertion of pride in memory and an active interest in history emerge as acts of activism. Music is a particularly potent tool in uncovering the history, as is suggested in this anecdote Ibrahim tells in *A Brother with Perfect Timing*:

When we came to the States, it must have been in ’65 or ’66; someone gave us an album of Khoi music. Khoisan music, recorded on this Library of Congress folk music series, right. And this was recorded on location in the Kalahari. And there, on one of the tracks, they play a *ramkiekie* [a three-stringed lute] and rattles or shakers. There was [Brand starts singing same tune as the *moppie* (a traditional folk song strongly identified with the ‘coloured’ people from the Cape – to use apartheid’s troubled moniker) he remembers from childhood, ‘Gooi die pannekoek in die pan/ Daar kom Galiema aan’]. And there was exactly the same song. So there are these layers and layers of colonialism. Of colonial darkness and ignorance. Ignorance that has taken us away from the reality and the truth of the music.

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<sup>469</sup> Mason, “Mannenbergh”, 26; Lucia, ‘Abdullah Ibrahim and the Uses of Memory’, 128-9.

<sup>470</sup> Ngũgĩ, *Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams*, 108.

<sup>471</sup> Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough*, vii. Recall, also, Adhikari’s explanation of the dynamics that underpin ‘coloured as a social identity’ in quoted in Chapter 4.

And of our history. And it is absolutely [through] music that it is beginning to be unveiled.<sup>472</sup>

Music, in this quote, functions as an archeological site through which an unwritten past can be excavated. Music enables these ties to be picked up in a way that the spoken word and written record does not, seems to be the implication of references to ‘colonial ignorance’. But it also makes possible a creative elaboration, making the story one’s own, an imaginative treatment of this history, embroidering it into a range of influences and a personal style of playing. It is therefore through music that a hidden history can be excavated, salvaged from the obscurity into which the Khoisan heritage had evidently lapsed for Ibrahim (and probably many others in the Cape ‘coloured’ community), and it is in this remembrance – bringing history into the present – that music’s restorative nature lies and its power to shape the future. This process, according to Brand, fixes the ‘broken timeline’ between past, present and future.

### **The division and bridging of worlds**

Several binaries may already be noted in Brand’s conceptions of music thus far: ‘Africa’ and the ‘West’, pre-colonial time and colonial time, symmetrical regulated metre and asymmetrical metre, the natural world of the village and the manufactured, industrial world of the city. These include spaces that inhibit the ‘flow’ needed for composers to achieve a sense of composure, or spaces that inspire creativity; places where music is embedded in the social fabric, or places where it is a lonely, melancholic endeavour. Yet Brand does not suggest that these worlds are exclusionary, as he posits in the very first poem, ‘geography’ of ‘Africa, Music and Show Business’:

so many theories of east and west abound  
one thing is certain though  
this earth is round<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> *A Brother with Perfect Timing*, 47:00.

<sup>473</sup> ‘geography’, in ‘Africa Music and Show Business’, 3.



This poem could be read as an allegory of division and unity. Although difference is recognised, it is not exclusionary, nor something to be effaced. The poem rather suggests the encapsulation of difference within a holistic worldview.

Brand's juxtaposition of division and unity finds expression more fully in the second programme of the series of 'Talks on Jazz' produced for the Transcription Centre. The programme opens with a narrative in poetic form, a tale of origin of racial differentiation. According to this narrative, the different peoples of the world originate from the sun, and owe their different skin colour to the position of the sun over their part of the world at a particular time of day – a reprise, thus, of the link between time and place. As the sun rose in the East, it 'dripped ... yellow ... drops ... people'; it 'dripped red in the west' as the sun set; at noon as it shone over Africa the sun dripped 'big, glistening drops of black ... men'; and in the north 'it was white ... with cold' producing 'white' people.<sup>474</sup> Although this tale of origin is no doubt meant to be poetically suggestive rather than theoretically persuasive, it is problematic on a number of counts, including oversimplification and stereotyping. What I wish to consider in this section, however, is the schema it presents for envisioning notions of difference (in this instance racial difference) in relation to the holistic.

On the one hand, this tale of origin seems to suggest the arbitrariness of colour in the face of a single, ordinary source – the sun. Yet there is sufficient attention to differentiate between the times of day and the situation of the sun, which does not negate differences, but rather serves to explain them. The colonial spin-out to follow in the narrative, describing the invasion of 'the cold' to the east, west and south, and the enslavement and diaspora of black people, comes across as ironic, given the single origin of all peoples. Singing, Brand suggests, derives from the distress of enslavement, and similarly kindles and maintains the hope of emancipation and returning home. Notably, the aspirations the songs sung in slavery convey in Brand's narrative are not for the eradication of racial difference, but rather an expression of the hope of return – an exit from displacement and the recovery of home. In the radio programme, this longing is musically illustrated with Dudu Pukwana's 'Coming

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<sup>474</sup> Dollar Brand, 'Talks on Jazz'. The ellipses visually represent the drops of the poem's narrative.

Home’, performed by the Blue Notes – the group having just arrived at the Transcription Centre before Brand’s departure for the United States.

What seems to be implied is not the effacing the differences, but an unresolved dialectic relationship between the suggested poles of difference within single works, within a single artistic identity that encompasses and bridges these binaries. The whole of the holistic is therefore imbued not with a singularity of vision and orientation, but with a plurality that co-exists. The figure of the exile, of Brand himself, as belonging and not belonging in both ‘worlds’, ‘north’ (e.g. New York) and ‘south’ (Cape Town), confirms the idea that divisions or senses of home are always fickle. As Ibrahim expressed it, he was exiled from a ‘homeless home’<sup>475</sup> in Cape Town to places where he felt equally foreign. Having lived through the forced removals from District Six to the outskirts of Cape Town as a result of the Group Areas Act that declared District Six a white neighbourhood from which non-white inhabitants were expelled, and living on the streets of Cape Town in dire economic straits before leaving for Zurich, the Cape Town Brand left was hardly a ‘homely’ place. The description of a ‘homeless home’ underlines my argument in Chapters One and Two that ‘home’ in South African exile is itself a referent to displacement. Avtar Brah’s notion of a ‘homing desire’, this desire deprived of a fixed home, captures this longing for no-place, the persistence of the notion of a home that no longer exists – for a utopia.

### **Imagining home**

This chapter has considered how space and time act as metaphors and nodes of interpretation in Brand’s writings. It recalls De Certeau’s notion of narrative and metaphor (Chapter One) in which he argues that telling *about* place is a means of *constructing* place. As much as ‘home’ as a narrated place is informed by memory, it is also further supplemented by discovery (e.g. listening to the Khoisan field recordings) and imaginatively elaborated – or more accurately, re-created. Some of the constitutive tropes I have discussed include regulation/non-regulation of time as

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<sup>475</sup> Abdullah Ibrahim in *A Struggle for Love*.

metaphors for place (the West vs. Africa), and colonisation (pre-colonial African music as unregulated by 4/4 metre – in Brand’s view – vs. regulated metre). It is worth remembering that Brand develops these conceptions in exile (London and New York). Paradoxically, he mainly uses Western representations of Africa in imagining ‘Africa’ as home. These conceptions of place through musical metaphors are therefore, problematically constituted through imagining ‘Africa’ as the ‘other’ of the industrialised, urban West.

Even though this ‘imagination’ of home is constructed through binaries, the act of narrating the home is a performative mode of crossing these binaries, occupying both spaces. The exile, the migrant, *amagoduka*, operates in both worlds, and therefore is the embodiment of the transcendence of the borders that separate, as I suggested in Chapter One. The narrative serves as the bridge between two places; and Brand’s writing about place, I argue, could be understood in this way: as a means of constructing ‘Africa’ *and* forging connections with home (anew).

Another aspect of this ‘imagined home’ is that it is an idealised space – confirming my argument in Chapter One that for the exile, ‘home’ in an unproblematic sense is only available as a fictionalised or imagined home. This is clearest, perhaps, in Brand’s conception of differences that can co-exist as an unresolved dialectic in his holistic worldview. Benedict Anderson writes that ‘[a]ll profound changes in consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias. Out of such oblivions, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives.’<sup>476</sup> We may read in the trauma of exile such a shift in consciousness, and it is conceivable that Brand’s constructions of Africa in his musical thought and poetry have at least as much to do with what memory has elided as what it recalls. As Salman Rushdie remarked on emigrants or exiles writing about their native country,

...we must also do so in the knowledge...that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not

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<sup>476</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 204.

actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind'.<sup>477</sup>

In this narration, or recreation, of the past, the very partiality of memory, its elisions, serves the creative act: 'The shards of memory acquired greater status, greater resonance, because they were *remains*; fragmentation made trivial things seem like symbols, and the mundane acquired numinous qualities.'<sup>478</sup> This is abundantly apparent in Brand's recollections of small details, such as using bottle caps to emulate tap dancing.

Even though this 'imagination' of home is constructed through binaries, the act of narrating the home is a performative mode of crossing these binaries, a way of occupying both spaces. Exiles, migrants, *amagoduka*, operate in both worlds, and are therefore the embodiments of the transcendence of the borders that ostensibly separate them. In this, the narrative serves as the bridge between two places, connecting them. Brand's writing about place, I argue, could be understood both as a means of constructing 'Africa' *and* forging connections with home (anew). If we understand music to be the performative space in which these connections are made, we may think of it in terms of the third set of relations that Ngũgĩ envisages in his taxonomy of performance spaces: that where the performance space (music) stands in relationship with time and history.<sup>479</sup> In the next chapter these conceptions of space and place will inform readings of two of Ibrahim's compositions in which the bifurcation of his exile become apparent: one looking towards his 'adopted home' in the United States, and the other to 'home' in South Africa.

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<sup>477</sup> Salman Rushdie, 'Imaginary Homelands', in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London and New York: Granta and Penguin, 1992), 10.

<sup>478</sup> Rushdie, 'Imaginary Homelands', 12.

<sup>479</sup> Ngũgĩ, *Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams*, 41.

## Chapter 6

### **Musical Configurations of Place: Dollar Brand's 'Honeysuckle Rose' and 'Anatomy of a South African Village'**

In this chapter, I analyse two pieces from albums recorded in the period framed by Brand's writings in the previous chapters – that is, between 1965 and 1969 – as examples of the bifurcated views towards adopted home and home from exile conceived as the middle ground between these two constructs. Through these analyses, I explore how exile might be heard in or as sonic expression. In dialogue with the interpretive framework of Brand's music practices that was drawn from his writings in Chapter Five, I consider Brand's rendition of 'Honeysuckle Rose' (recorded in London on 16 March 1965, released years later on the album *Reflections*),<sup>480</sup> and the suite 'Anatomy of a South African Village' from the eponymous album, recorded at Jazzhus Montmartre in Copenhagen and released in 1965. These pieces suggest a musical gaze towards the United States and South Africa respectively, and thus serve as examples of Brand's engagements with the notions of adopted home and home respectively. As such, they put into play several of Brand's musical conceptions that are closely connected with his own relationships and perceptions of place. Ultimately, I will consider how place as a contrapuntal experience – as a space of both longing and belonging, loss and inspiration, of home and ambivalence – could be read (or rather heard) in music.

One of the recurring preoccupations in writing on Brand and his music has been a concern with tracing the influences heard in Brand's music. John Edwin Mason situates one of Brand's most famous tracks, 'Mannenberg', within the social circumstances and musical collaborations Brand encountered in South Africa in the early '70s that shaped this piece.<sup>481</sup> In two articles, Christine Lucia traces the South African musical impulses audible in Ibrahim's music. A wide array of music traditions including hymnody, Dutch-Malay folksong, European parlour music,

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<sup>480</sup> Dollar Brand, *Reflections* (Black Lion, BLCD 877622-2, 2002 [1965]). Nine of the tracks on *Reflections* were also released on the album titled *This is Dollar Brand*. 'Honeysuckle Rose', however, is one of the tracks that does not feature on *This is Dollar Brand*.

<sup>481</sup> Mason, "'Mannenberg'", 25-46.

African traditional music, gospel and church music, *marabi*<sup>482</sup> and Sufi music count among the influences that Ibrahim draws on from within South Africa.<sup>483</sup> However, no attention has been given to the analysis of Brand's music with a particular focus on how it engages with music practices from further afield than South Africa. The risk is that Brand's music emerges as thoroughly local through these writings; these responses do not allow for the international context, where Brand's music circulated and was to a large extent created (bearing in mind that he has lived outside South Africa's borders for most of his career), to permeate sufficiently. This is an important perspective that this chapter contributes, especially considering that Brand has spent most of his career in exile and continues to mostly live abroad.

The argument here is not intended to diminish the enormous influence South Africa has had on Ibrahim's music – a survey of his album and track titles already indicates the music's saturation with references to South Africa and the notion of 'Africa'. I rather suggest a recalibration that places it more conspicuously within the international context in which Brand has mostly performed. I suggest that the focus on identifying 'South Africa' or 'Cape Town' in Brand's music may obscure particular questions about Ibrahim's work: what is the South Africa that is available to the musical imaginary from the distance of exile, and what qualities might characterise this gaze? How does distance (as opposed to proximity) influence notions of 'place' in music (i.e. 'South Africa' in Dollar Brand/Abdullah Ibrahim's music)?

It is notable that the gaze towards America apparent in the early bebop style Brand, along with fellow band members Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwangwa and Kippie Moeketsi adopted in the Jazz Epistles' *Verse 1* (1960), the last album before these musicians left South African shores, was later reversed as a gaze towards South Africa as these exiled musicians developed their musical voices abroad. Much as we may argue for the 'reversed gaze', however, it should be borne in mind that the

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<sup>482</sup> An early form of South African jazz, based on the repeating four-bar cycle following the chord progression I-IV (or ii<sub>6</sub>)-I<sub>6/4</sub>-V. Notably Ballantine argues that *marabi* is a form of neo-traditional black South African music. See Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, 26.

<sup>483</sup> See Christine Lucia, 'Abdullah Ibrahim and "African Pianism" in South Africa', in *African Pianism: Keyboard Music of Africa and the Diaspora*, Vol. 1, ed. Cynthia Tse Kimberlin and Akin Euba (Port Richmond: MRI Press, 2005), 53-65.

music practices were involved in more complex transactions between American and local idioms that did not always configure neatly into ‘music from South Africa’ or ‘music from America’ (or elsewhere). The analyses of ‘Honeysuckle Rose’ and ‘Anatomy of a South African Village’ demonstrate this argument.

### **The triangulated gaze towards America: ‘Honeysuckle Rose’**

The immense influence of American jazz on the South African development of jazz through record collection and emulation has been well-documented by authors like Christopher Ballantine, Rob Nixon and Carol Muller, as I discussed in Chapter Two.<sup>484</sup> Yet a closer reading of the nuances of this engagement in explicitly musical analytical terms has enjoyed less attention. This analysis steps into this gap and sketches some of the ways in which Dollar Brand engages with the American jazz tradition in his rendition of Fats Waller’s ‘Honeysuckle Rose’ via the example set by Thelonious Monk.<sup>485</sup> Brand’s engagement with these venerable figures in the American jazz pantheon is a revealing site for reading Brand’s musical engagement with his new place of abode (New York) in 1965. Whereas a sense of alienation is palpable through Brand’s poetry, discussed in the previous chapter, his musical engagements with the American jazz tradition, as I will suggest through the example of ‘Honeysuckle Rose’, suggest a musical connection. Indeed, this confirms that exile is not a singular, blanket experience of being in (or out of) place, but is informed by various smaller connections, disconnections, assimilations and appropriations put to use in different discursive terms through the range of activities and interactions that constitute everyday life.

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<sup>484</sup> Discussed in Chapter Two. See Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, esp. 13-17; Muller and Benjamin, *Musical Echoes*; for a broader perspective on the relationship between South African culture and sports and America, see Rob Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood*.

<sup>485</sup> This analysis refers to Fats Waller’s version of ‘Honeysuckle Rose’ as heard on the 1934 recording, with a stride accompaniment. The track has since been included in numerous album configurations, one of which is *The Best of Fats Waller* (RCA 88697301292, 2008 [1934]), available on Youtube: <[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-F6n\\_12c9bo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-F6n_12c9bo)>, accessed 15 September 2015. Another version, as heard on 1941 solo recording (available: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8JswBt4ItI>, accessed 15 September 2015), has a freer approach to tempo and more liberal use of rubato, with the left hand accompaniment moving in scales in contrary motion to the melody. Brand’s rendition, in my opinion, makes strongest reference to the 1934 version through the overt use of stride accompaniment.

Jazz as medium serves as an important facilitator of Brand's transition to his new home: as a common practice, it enables him to perform internationally (and with very little preamble, as the Duke Ellington encounter shows) with the likes of Elvin Jones and Duke Ellington. Brand's performance of 'Honeysuckle Rose' provides a revealing site through which this musical relationship may be studied. While Brand's 'Honeysuckle Rose' might not stand in for a generalised account of South African musicians' appropriation of American jazz, nor as a blueprint for how Brand engages with American jazz even within his own oeuvre, it does offer one process of highly individualistic engagement and appropriation as an example of how we may think through the significance of the relationship in explicitly musical terms. I will first describe how Brand's 'Honeysuckle Rose' innovates on Waller's original version, before turning to a comparison between Brand and Monk's approaches to performing Waller.

Brand's rendition of 'Honeysuckle Rose', like Waller's, is furnished with an introduction or 'lead-in section' preceding the chorus or the 'head'. Brand's introduction, however, differs markedly from Waller's. Whereas Waller's introduction is a melodic arpeggiation of the chord progression over a stride accompaniment that flows seamlessly into chorus (or A section), Brand's introduction, by contrast, is a rhythmic and dissonant sequence of chord clusters pounded out over a tonic pedal point. Two dramatic pauses on chords I and V/ii precede the start of the chorus.

The main section of the 'Honeysuckle Rose' is, typical of jazz standards from the 1930s, in thirty-two bar AABA form, where A represents the eight-bar chorus, and B the eight-bar bridge creating harmonic and melodic variation before returning to the A-section. Brand remains faithful to the structure of the main section as well as to jazz conventions of elaborating or improvising on standards, repeating the harmonic structure of the AABA form and improvising the melodic line (or right hand), before concluding with a postlude or coda. The most striking aspects of Brand's 'Honeysuckle Rose', however, are the jarring distortions of rhythm and metre, the harsh timbre of Brand's playing, and a much freer tonal conception.



Listening to Waller's and Brand's renditions of 'Honeysuckle Rose' in succession throws into sharp relief the percussive attack and harsher timbre of Brand's pianism in comparison with the genteel, supple flourish of Waller's touch. Making this contrast even more pronounced is the uneven, irregular sense of metre in Brand's 'Honeysuckle Rose', as opposed to the seeming effortlessness of Waller's swung quadruple metre.

The stride accompaniment of Waller's left hand keeps consistent 4/4 time, supported by a similarly consistent, equidistant underlying pulse. Indeed, the stride as accompanying figure, of which Waller's playing is exemplary, typifies the conventions of quadruple metre: the pulse is outlined in the single bass note on beats one (usually the root of the chord, bearing the most emphasis) and three (usually the fifth of the chord, with lesser emphasis). The chords that fill out the harmony on beats two and four complete the harmonies suggested through the 'bass' notes on beats one and three. The chords on beats two and four would typically be played at a softer dynamic level than the bass notes on beats one and three, giving a clear sense of a downbeat and upbeat, elegantly but steadily regularising the metre.

If the stride as an accompaniment figure plays the role of timekeeper in Waller's rendition, the sense of a regular time is disrupted in Brand's version. While Brand's playing has a strong, albeit not always even, sense of pulse – especially in the A sections – it is devoid of the accented and unaccented beats that typically outline metre, not least in the strongly articulated 4/4 metre of stride piano accompaniment. As an analytical exercise, to achieve a better understanding of how Brand's 'Honeysuckle Rose' deviates from Fats Waller's version, I have transcribed the first six bars (or the equivalent, in Brand's case) of the A section of each recording (see Figures 7 and 8). It is intended to be illustrative and schematic rather than an accurate reflection of the performances, and indeed the difficulty of transcribing Brand's version – in which I could at best achieve a rough approximation of the timing – confirms the way especially the right hand falls outside of clear senses of metre (as well as the limitations of staff notation in presenting sound). What this process does make visually apparent is where Brand converges and diverges from Waller's version, and how he does so.

(Swing; ♩ = 152)

Figure 7: Fats Waller, 'Honeysuckle Rose', 1934 recording (00:06-00:15).  
 Transcription by the author.

Figure 8: Dollar Brand, 'Honeysuckle Rose' (00:29-00:38).  
 Transcription by the author, as an analytical exercise.

Brand thwarts a clear sense of metre in several ways: the start of the melody in the right hand comes slightly after the left hand's bass note, giving the impression that the two hands are not entirely synchronised. This sense is further exacerbated when the bass note C2 is repeated, breaking the usual pattern of the stride (i.e. bass note, chord, bass note, chord, etc.). The repeated C2 starts a section where the right hand and left hand move seemingly independently – as if obeying different senses of time or time signatures. (From this point, the shortcomings in my transcription are most apparent. I aimed to show where the right hand falls before, on or after the 'beat' suggested in the left hand, failing in my ability to capture the timing of the right hand in relation to subdivisions of the 'pulse' in the left hand accurately.) The effect of

these displacements is that there is no clear sense of a regular downbeat, and thus, senses of metre become vague and irregular. The metre becomes skewed, breaking the stride's steady progression. Over the left hand's irregular accompaniment, the right hand's melody tugs and pulls, as if obeying a different sense of time, rushing forward or holding back in an unruly rubato, rather than coinciding consistently with a steady succession of beats (let alone effortlessly fitting in flourishes and embellishments as Waller's version does).

For all Brand's apparent innovation in his rendition of Waller's 'Honeysuckle Rose', Brand's take on 'Honeysuckle Rose' bears a striking resemblance to Thelonious Monk's track 'Lulu's Back in Town' from the 1964 album *It's Monk's Time* – itself a rendition of the original 'Lulu' by Fats Waller.<sup>486</sup> Monk's album preceded the recording of Brand's *Reflections* by a year. Brand's attack is similar to the angularity of Monk's, which contrasts with the seemingly effortless elegance of Waller's playing; as does Brand's use of an expanded harmonic palette, greater dissonance and chord clusters.

Brand's introduction to 'Honeysuckle Rose' is clearly modelled on Monk's 'Lulu' (especially the piano sections thereof), which also opens with a rhythmic display of second intervals in the right hand (characteristic of Monk)<sup>487</sup> over a strongly-articulated tonic pedal in the left hand (compare 00:00-00:09 of Monk's 'Lulu' with 00:00-00:30 of Brand's 'Honeysuckle Rose').

Monk's stride in the chorus section, also rendered with a harsher attack and greater dissonance than Waller's, is comparable with Brand's chorus section, although Brand's is even jauntier. Whereas Monk maintains the bass-chord pattern of the stride consistently, Brand unsettles this regularity when he repeats notes (for instance the C2 already mentioned), which break the bass-chord pattern. Overall, Brand's pulse is articulated less consistently than Monk's, resulting in a more laboured and unsettled stride than Monk's 'Lulu' demonstrates. A simple, yet telling exercise of tapping the pulse whilst listening to Brand's 'Honeysuckle Rose' shows where a

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<sup>486</sup> Thelonious Monk, 'Lulu's Back in Town', *It's Monk's Time* (Columbia, CS 8984, 1964). This is the version of 'Lulu' that I will refer to throughout this chapter.

<sup>487</sup> See Tom Perchard, *After Django: Making Jazz in Postwar France* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015), 97.

sense of a consistent pulse falters, for instance at 00:33-00:36, 00:57-01:03, 01:13-01:14 and 1:24-27. While Monk's 'Lulu' retains a clear 4/4 feel, by comparison Brand's 'Honeysuckle Rose' lacks the sure-footedness of Monk's stride in its inconsistent articulation of pulse and, to a greater extent, metre.

In both 'Lulu' and 'Honeysuckle Rose' the right hand moves fairly freely over the left hand's stride gesture both harmonically, resulting in far greater harmonic dissonance than Waller's originals, and rhythmically. In Brand's 'Honeysuckle Rose', the independence between the two hands is, however, more pronounced. If we compare the sections where independence of movement between the hands is especially noticeable (01:02-01:16 in 'Lulu'; 01:10-01:17 in 'Honeysuckle Rose'), subtle differences become apparent. In Monk's 'Lulu', the right hand drifts but eventually evens out into hemiolas at 01:11. In 'Honeysuckle Rose', one gets the impression that Brand works hard to avoid any such regularity.

But these are relatively small differences against overwhelming resemblance. The similarities even extend to the comparable incorporation of slower, *ad libitum* sections towards the end of the tracks (compare 08:27-09:45 in 'Lulu' with 03:00-03:19 in 'Honeysuckle Rose'),<sup>488</sup> and the trills (in Brand's case, a double trill) with which the pieces end (09:46-09:53 in 'Lulu'; 03:38-03:56 in 'Honeysuckle Rose').

What do we make of these similarities between Brand and Monk's renditions of Waller's songs, and, more particularly, what can they tell us about Brand's relationship with the American jazz tradition (as signified by Waller), accessed through a contemporary (Monk)? First, my analyses show the influence of two venerated figures of American jazz on Brand, which forms part of an on-going conversation between South Africa and United States, as I discussed in Chapter Two. The particular figures of Waller and Monk in this musical conversation are significant: Fats Waller, as a figure closely connected with the Harlem Renaissance and Thelonious Monk, as a representative of what was perceived as jazz modernity (albeit not unproblematically so) and hailed as one of the most innovative pianists of

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<sup>488</sup> Brand, unlike Monk, however, incorporates a brief faster section recapitulating the chorus (03:19-03:35) before ending on the double trill.

the 1960s post-bebop scene, represent significant moments in African-American tradition and the reinvention thereof.

One of the themes Brand's 'Honeysuckle Rose' foregrounds is the relationship with the notion of a musical past or lineage. While Monk is frequently cast as a music innovator at the forefront of modernity, Tom Perchard argues that the presence of the jazz lineage in which he was educated, as for instance manifest in the stride (he studied with a teacher who honed his craft alongside the celebrated stride pianists James P. Johnson and Willie 'the Lion' Smith) is often overlooked in such appraisals.<sup>489</sup> Since 1959, these older practices became increasingly noticeable in his output.<sup>490</sup> Monk's use of 'blocks of material' that simulates improvisation rather than being improvised on the spot, for instance, is a practice that draws on similar approaches to 'improvisation' evident in the practices of Waller, Johnson and Smith, where well-practiced patterns and fragments are strung together in the 'improvised' elaborations of the chorus. It was this very 'antiquity', as Perchard describes it, that troubled the narratives of modernity that critics constructed around the figure of Monk. This is evident in the problematic reception of Monk among the French critics in the mid-1960s.<sup>491</sup> If anything, the French reception of Monk framed through the notions of history and innovation, alerts us to the way in which these can be mutually constitutive rather than diametrically opposed. Engaging with the past, to paraphrase Stuart Hall's quote in Chapter Two, is a creative act of imagining and constructing the past – a point to which I will return in a moment.

In following the example of Monk, Brand clearly draws on Monkian techniques and devices to access Waller. It is as though Brand appropriates a more distal musical lineage through the closer figure of Monk. Some readings might cast Brand's rendition of 'Honeysuckle Rose' as a pale imitation of Monk, yet it is in the 'deviations' from Monk's example that we may read another lineage, most conspicuously seen in Brand's notions of African music attributes.

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<sup>489</sup> Tom Perchard, *After Django*, 102. Perchard gives an incisive discussion of debates and constructions of jazz modernity revolving around the figure of Thelonious Monk in French jazz criticism – notably through critics like Michel-Claude Jalard and André Hodeir. See esp. pp. 84-105.

<sup>490</sup> Perchard, *After Django*, 101-2.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.*

The deviations from Monk acquire special significance when they are read alongside Brand's writings of the same time. One of the most telling differences between Monk and Brand's renditions of Waller is Brand's displacement of the stride's downbeats (for instance through the repeated bass note in the left hand, or the way the main motif follows in quicker succession in what would have been bar 2 of Waller), which in turn displaces a sense of metre. While a sense of 4/4 metre is not consistently thwarted, it is seemingly deliberately destabilised at several points, and is otherwise never as sure-footed and steady as Monk's stride. In other words, in Brand's 'Honeysuckle Rose', conformation to an unambiguous, unproblematic 4/4 time is disrupted.

Significantly, time signatures, metre and timing act as spatial metaphors in Brand's discursive practices. As we have seen in Chapter Five, Brand associates 4/4 metre with the walled city, stultified creativity and the West as a cultural construct (albeit one that is, problematically, over-generalised). If 4/4 metre suggests a regularisation of time and subjection to Western structure, Brand problematizes this regularisation by destabilizing it in his playing. One may go as far to suggest that he problematizes his relationship with the timing construct (and by extension the West as a cultural construct) by placing himself at odds with it in the same move.

But then, several attributes also noticeable in Monk's playing, such as the marked increase of dissonance and harsh, percussive attack, serve to reinforce the jarring effect of rhythmic displacement. And although he does not thwart a sense of metre altogether, he does not stick to it unambiguously either. If one continues with the spatial metaphor, Brand's practice, as opposed to his discourse, rather suggests the space between the two that is, yet, neither of the two unambiguously.

Whereas Brand's discursive constructions of notions of Africa make the separation of these two domains, 'Africa' and the 'north' possible, his praxis problematizes the possibility of such distinctions. For one, it belies the 'north' as a homogenous zone, for in the figures of Waller and Monk Brand finds much to emulate, and above all a common ground through music practice. In other words, the 'African' notions of music which Brand idealises in his discursive practices, are heightened symbolic markers of distinctions that are not so clear in musical practice. Music shows exactly

these ambiguities, the fluidity in these interactions, and the impossibility of prying practices apart. It is only in discourse that essentialisms can be upheld; in practice it is always more fluid. Brand's music practice shows how his notion of Africa is already engaged in conversation with a much wider world. It bespeaks the inevitable hybridity, the in-between position from before exile, but intensified in exile.

In the next section, we see Brand's concern with another space, Africa, in which he puts recognisably Monkian musical devices he assimilated into his musical practice, in the service of articulating music distinctly linked to 'Africa'.

### **In search of the South African Village: The social construction of space in 'Anatomy of a South African Village'**

In Dollar Brand's suite 'Anatomy of a South African Village', also recorded in 1965, Brand's musical gaze is turned towards South Africa. This suite offers a counterpoint to 'Honeysuckle Rose' in exploring Brand's engagements with 'home' and 'adopted home' in his music practice. In his authoritative discography of Abdullah Ibrahim's recordings, Rasmussen notes that the track 'Anatomy of a South African Village' on the album with the same title is an 'incomplete' version of the work Brand orchestrated for an earlier transcription recording by the Danish State Radio's Big Band.<sup>492</sup> It is the case that the piano trio rendition of 'Anatomy' on the album *Anatomy of a South African Village* had been truncated: it includes only three of the pieces originally in the Danish Radio version, namely 'Portrait of a Bushman', 'Resolution' and 'Heyt Mazurki', omitting the compositions 'To Work', 'Spring Morning' and 'Which Way'. The piece 'Mamma' does not feature as a section of 'Anatomy of a South African Village' on the eponymous album (whereas it does in the Danish State Radio's Big Band arrangement), but separately as the third track of the album *Anatomy of a South African Village*.

Yet describing the suite on the trio album *Anatomy of a South African Village* as 'incomplete' suggests that a stable notion of a 'complete' version exists. Brand's live

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<sup>492</sup> See Rasmussen, *Abdullah Ibrahim: A Discography*; Charles Fox, liner notes to Dollar Brand, *Anatomy of a South African Village* (Black Lion, BLCD 670172, 1992 [1967]).

performances (such as the session from which *Anatomy of a South African Village* was culled) and studio recordings suggest that Brand weaves together songs in a unique way in each performance – almost like a musical stream of consciousness. What remains stable is the conception of a song as a composition rather than the configuration or sequence of songs in which it is performed as a ‘suite’ – which is highly variable. Similar to the musical ‘blocks’ that Monk (like his stride pianist predecessors) incorporated in improvisations, Brand’s improvisation often inheres in the sequence in which pieces are performed and the passages that connect them to seamlessly flow into each other, rather than in the structure, progressions, tempi and rhythms of the pieces themselves. This section therefore analyses ‘Anatomy of a South African Village’ at face value as one construction of this ‘suite’ among many possibilities. The reification of this particular version owing to recording technology and the status of the jazz album allows us to refer to it, even precariously and provisionally, as a conception of a musical ‘work’.

There is something in the very provisional nature of the suite, the idea of one rendition of a variety of possible other constructions or renditions, the malleability of its shape and flightiness of its form, that is particularly apposite as an ‘anatomy’ of place. Place is never stable; it is subject to change over time, and this is especially true of an exile’s evolving relationships with place. Yet the notion of ‘home’ in South Africa, too, was far from a stable referent. As noted in the discussion of notions of ‘home’ in Chapter One, dwellings for those designated as ‘coloured’ or ‘black’ in the South Africa of the 1950s and 1960s, were especially precarious. Subjected to forced relocations – as was captured by Hugh Masekela in ‘Stimela’ – ‘home’ is at best improvised according to the availability of space and material in the moment, and is imminently interruptible (subject to apartheid’s policies).

Brand, of course, had not grown up in the rural, traditional African dwellings that the notion of a South African village connotes. Even in the 1940s Cape Town was a thoroughly urban space, and the close-knit, cosmopolitan community of District Six, where Brand had grown up and to which he refers in his poetry, cannot be mistaken for a traditional African village. In fact, Brand’s invocation of the ‘African village’ as a place of belonging would have jarred with many among the so-called



‘coloured’<sup>493</sup> community in which Brand grew up, as I have argued in the previous chapter.<sup>494</sup> Even in Brand’s travels to Johannesburg and Mozambique, his experiences were firmly rooted in the urban landscape, even as it transgressed racially-bounded categories. So why a village? There must be something in the imaginary of the village that has no concrete foothold in the experiences of Brand’s past, but that is introduced when remembered, imagined, and musically explored from afar.

Even beyond the implausibility that references to the village are rooted in Brand’s lived experience before exile, the descriptor ‘South African village’ implies a generality among South African ‘villages’ that could not exist in practice, given the deep divides engendered by the apartheid state, reinforcing of notions of difference between ethnic groups.<sup>495</sup> The unity it seems to imply can only be conceived of from a distance, for a view situated in South Africa is too firmly entrenched in the particularities of a place, bordered through notions of (state-imposed) difference. An anatomy of this notional village thus seems to be an anatomy of an imagination of, even an aspiration for, South Africa rather than a memory grounded in lived experience.

The suite itself comprises three of Dollar Brand’s compositions that appear independently or in a suite configuration elsewhere. An introduction à la Monk is followed by the sections ‘Portrait of a Bushman’, ‘Resolution’<sup>496</sup> and finally ‘Heyt

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<sup>493</sup> It bears emphasis that the word ‘coloured’ had a different meaning in the South African context than in its pejorative connotations in the United States. As one of the categories used by the South Africa apartheid system, it refers to a heterogenous group of people who were neither of African (understood as black) or European (white) descent, among whom also counted the descendents of the Khoi and San, as well as slaves from Southeast Asia. As I pointed out in Chapter Four, Mohamed Adhikari’s uses the term to refer to a social identity, although the term’s use remains widely contested.

<sup>494</sup> The relative material and political benefits the ‘coloured’ community enjoyed in comparison with African groups (who had even less political representation, earned lower wages and were subject to pass-laws under apartheid) often brought about active distancing from associations with Africanness in order to maintain relative political privilege. Mohamed Adhikari, *Burdened by Race: Coloured Identities in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2009), xiv.

<sup>495</sup> The notion of ‘apartheid’ was carried through among black ethnic groups as well, attempting to create separations and antinomies between black ethnic groups. As a political strategy, this inhibited senses of unity that would challenge the apartheid regime.

<sup>496</sup> In Rasmussen’s discography, the title of this part of the suite is given as ‘Resolution and Independence’, but the same composition is simply titled ‘Resolution’ on the cover of the album *Reflections*. There are no individual titles provided for the constituent pieces of ‘Anatomy of a South African Village’ on the album, *Anatomy of a South African Village*. See Rasmussen, *Abdullah*

Mazurki'. The title 'Portrait of a Bushman' is suggestive in itself, and reflects on the people (today more appropriately known as the San) whose music Brand 'discovered' through the Library of Congress's recordings in the United States (discussed in Chapter Five) and through which he constructed a musical sense of lineage.<sup>497</sup> The titles 'Resolution' and 'Heyt Mazurki', however, are less self-explanatory. 'Resolution' is a double play on the determination to follow a certain course of action, pathway or conviction, or in musical terms it may refer to harmonic movement, typically from greater dissonance to consonance. The title 'Heyt Mazurki' derives from South African colloquialisms: 'Heyt' is an informal greeting, and 'Mazurki' is the nickname of the South African journalist and contemporary of Brand, Mike Phahlane, to whom the song 'Bra Timing from Phomolong' is also dedicated.<sup>498</sup> A surface glance already reveals that South Africa is referenced through several relationships: in the case of 'Portrait of a Bushman' it is that of lineage, 'Resolution' plays with harmonic relationships and a system of musical organisation (hymnody, as I explain below) closely associated with the missionary and the West; while 'Heyt Mazurki' refers to the more immediate past and a more personal relationship.

The suite<sup>499</sup> is furnished with an introduction of three minutes – a substantial structural component considering the total length of this rendition of the suite is just under fifteen minutes. The introduction is an atonal composition, a moderate, measured section replete with repeated themes and motives. Three minutes into the track, a rhythmically driving 'Portrait of a Bushman' begins, accompanied by the Makaya Ntshoko on the drums, and Johnny Gertze on bass. The main characteristic of this section is the ostinato left hand accompaniment of the piano, which alternates between E-flat and D-flat in open fifths and octaves (see Figure 9).

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*Ibrahim: A Discography*, 23 and 30; and Dollar Brand, *Reflections* (Black Lion LC02940, 2002 [1965]).

<sup>497</sup> As the reader will recall, Brand refers to the music of the Khoisan (or Khoi people) as part of 'our [his] history' as he discovers field recordings made after arriving in New York (Chapter 4). Elsewhere, it is widely held that the KhoiKhoi's descendants became assimilated into what was under apartheid deemed the so-called 'coloured' population. See for instance David K. Rycroft, 'Khoikhoi music', *Grove Online*, available <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>>, accessed 29 April 2014.

<sup>498</sup> See references to Mike Phahlane in Rasmussen, *Abdullah Ibrahim: A Discography*, 220 and 217.

<sup>499</sup> My analysis refers to the track 'Anatomy of a South African Village' featuring Dollar Brand (piano), Johnny Gertze (bass) and Makaya Ntshoko (drums) on the album *Anatomy of a South African Village* (Black Lion, BLCD 760172, 1992 [1965]). Also available on Youtube: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPYbrUnLfXc&feature=kp>>, accessed 15 September 2015.

(♩ = c. 168-176)

Piano  
left hand

Figure 9: Dollar Brand, 'Portrait of a Bushman' from 'Anatomy of a South African Village', left hand ostinato (03:07 onwards).  
Transcription by the author.

The right hand improvises freely over the ostinato, while the drum and bass add texture to the left hand's ostinato; the cymbals contributing most conspicuously to the persistent drive of the rhythm. At 05:15 into the track, the tempo eases into a ritardando, the bass and drum accompaniment gradually dissipates, so that by 05:32 the piano, solo by this time, recapitulates sections from the introduction in a slightly varied form. At 07:05, the main section of 'Portrait of a Bushman' reprises, although the ostinato is now inverted, at a higher pitch oscillating between F and G in a similar octave and fifth chords, and rhythmically slightly varied (see Figure 10).

Piano  
left hand

Figure 10: Dollar Brand, 'Portrait of a Bushman' from 'Anatomy of a South African Village', left hand ostinato variation (07:06 onwards).  
Transcription by the author.

The right-hand and percussion and bass function as they did in the first section of 'Portrait', improvising over the ostinato and texturing the ostinato until a ritardando (07:58-08:19) again hails a transition: this time not from one section of 'Portrait of a Bushman' to another, but segueing into the next composition, 'Resolution', played by Brand in piano solo.

'Resolution' has a similar hymn-like quality to that which Lucia notes in 'Mamma', although it features a much-expanded tonality and a freer approach to its simple quadruple metre. As Lucia also observes about the different renditions of 'Mamma', the rendition of 'Resolution' given in this performance of 'Anatomy of a South African Village' is remarkably consistent with the version of 'Resolution' on the

album *Reflections*.<sup>500</sup> This supports my argument that the variable element in the suite ‘Anatomy of a South African Village’ is less its constituent component pieces, ‘Portrait of a Bushman’, ‘Resolution’ and ‘Heyt Mazurki’ than the particular configuration of these pieces into a suite, and the bridge passages that connect them.

If ‘Resolution’ is reminiscent of a hymn, there are also sufficient deviation to distinguish it from the mould of the typical hymn: it has a much freer tonal structure that only resolves at the end of the third phrase, and does so provisionally before continuing its expanded tonal harmony. In its loose adherence to the quadruple metre, the motion is not that of a steady pulse driven by a functional harmonic progression. It is rather a meditation or contemplation that is little rushed with time, and moves experimentally through different dissonant and more consonant sonorities before resolving, somewhat surprisingly, upon the D flat major seventh chord – the closest to consonant harmony and tonal resolution the ‘hymn’ comes. A tremolando on the final D-flat major seventh chord shifts stepwise to a C major chord, keeping the F in the right hand (the third of the D-flat major chord) suspended, suggesting the new C major tonality of the last and final composition in the suite, ‘Heyt Mazurki’ starting 10:55 into the suite.

At the outset of ‘Heyt Mazurki’, the bass and drums enter again, articulating the moderate swing beat that sustains throughout the composition. ‘Heyt Mazurki’ is a simple piece that consists only of a chorus (or ‘head’, in jazz-speak) stated twice in its original form, after which the piano improvises over the chord structure – typical of the jazz practice of improvising over ‘standards’. In fact, ‘Heyt Mazurki’ is in several respects reminiscent of standard twelve-bar blues form: it consists of twelve bars, subdivided into three four-bar phrases (see the transcription of ‘Heyt Mazurki’ in Figure 11). Harmonically, however, there are subtle yet telling differences. These differences are best elucidated through another recording of this piece that Brand made with Buddy Tate and an all-American line-up of drummer Roy Brooks and bassist Cecil McBee in 1977.<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>500</sup> Lucia notes the consistency in different renditions of ‘Mamma’ as well. See Lucia, ‘Abdullah Ibrahim and the Uses of Memory’, 132.

<sup>501</sup> Buddy Tate and Abdullah Ibrahim, *Buddy Tate Meets Abdullah Ibrahim*, (Chiaroscuro: CRD 165, 1996 [1977]).

(♩ = c. 132)

Figure 11: Dollar Brand, 'Heyt Mazurki' from 'Anatomy of a South African Village'.  
Transcription by the author.

The first statement (or chorus) of 'Heyt Mazurki' on the Buddy Tate recording is played as on the 'Anatomy of a South African Village' recording, save for a slight melodic variation in Buddy Tate's statement of the chorus and a syncopated rather than swung rhythm in the bass and drum accompaniment. Once the first cycle of improvisation starts at 00:40 – *without* Dollar Brand accompanying on piano – the American musicians slip into a twelve-bar blues, instead of maintaining the slightly different harmonic structure of 'Heyt Mazurki'. At the same time, the rhythm section changes into a swing beat and walking bass.

By the time Brand enters to improvise (at 04:36), he improvises on the twelve-bar blues, as the American musicians did before him. When Brand returns to the chorus in its original form in the last statement of the head (at 05:45), however, there is an awkward cycle of the chorus exhibiting a harmonic mismatch between the bass line and the piano, playing up exactly the differences between 'Heyt Mazurki' and the blues. During this cycle, the drummer gradually readjusts from the swing accompaniment of the blues back to the syncopated rhythm that initially

accompanied the first statements of 'Heyt Mazurki'. By the time Buddy Tate enters for the final recapitulation of the chorus, the initial rendition of 'Heyt Mazurki', as heard at the beginning of the track, has been restored.

### Three referents of 'home'

In 'Anatomy of a South African Village', the constituent pieces performed in this rendition of the suite act as three referents of 'home'. First, 'Portrait of a Bushman' engages notions of lineage, significantly with an indigenous people whose cultural contributions have been under-emphasised in constructions of 'coloured' identity. This is a lineage principally forged through musical points of reference. Musically, the notion of an African indigenous heritage referenced in 'Portrait' is conveyed through the use of short-cycles – non-strophic forms that Kubik avers are fundamental to African music practices.<sup>502</sup> Over this, Brand improvises the right hand. The considerable autonomy that he accords the right hand over the rhythmically driving left hand recalls Brand's observation about the way his music is developing, outlined in one of the *Cape Herald* articles quoted in Chapter Five (worth reiterating here):

A lot of the forms I had been working with in South Africa had become restrictive. I moulded new pieces which allowed me unfettered freedom an[d] improvisation and I employed lots of rhythmic patterns using the pulse – at least the feeling of the pulse as the foundation.<sup>503</sup>

This is a musical development happening in exile, and yet, it is put to use as a signifier of 'home' through 'Portrait of a Bushman'.

The second referent to 'home' is 'Resolution'. It recalls, in many respects, the voice leading and harmonies of a hymn, as his mother and grandmother would have played at the African Methodist Episcopal church where they were pianists. Its tonal conception is considerably expanded beyond a simple major/minor tonality, although

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<sup>502</sup> Gerhard Kubik, *Theory of African Music*, Vol. 2 (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2010), 41; also see Gerhard Kubik, 'South African Contributions to Jazz History', in *Generations of Jazz Exhibition Catalogue*, ed. Diane Thram (Grahamstown: International Library of African Music, 2013), 10-6.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.

there are moments where the dissonant harmonies seem to ‘resolve’ (for instance 08:32-08:58 and 08:29-08:30). Here we can clearly hear how Brand bases a composition on a musical referent of home – the hymn – but simultaneously expands it, in this case tonally.

The third and final referent in ‘Heyt Mazurki’ is the figure of Mazurki himself – that is Mike Phahlane – in the title. This intimates the musical presence of a sense of sociality that Brand writes about when he portrays ‘home’ to audiences abroad in his first ‘Talk on Jazz’, also through the poem ‘Rhythm Afrique’ or comments such as the one in his liner notes which observes that music is ‘social’ in South Africa. Looking further to the musical construction, the twelve-bar form of ‘Heyt Mazurki’ could be considered an interesting hybrid between twelve-bar blues and ‘short cycles’ that serve as signifiers of an ‘African’ approach to musical construction (see Figure 12 for a comparison of the two forms).

Form of ‘Heyt Mazurki’ / Blues Form:

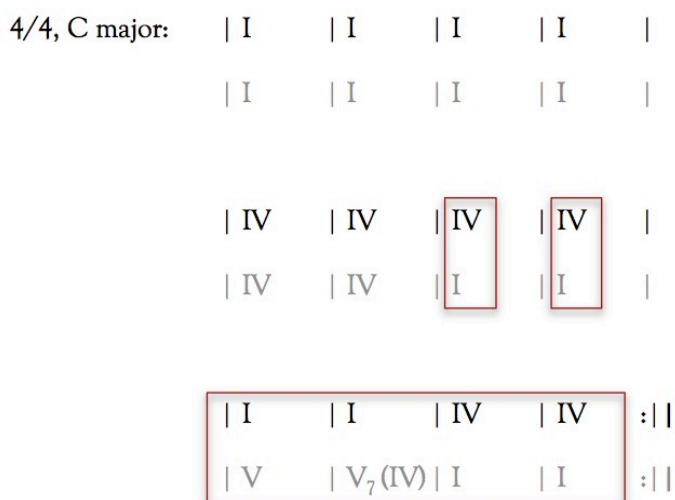


Figure 12: Schematic representation of ‘Heyt Mazurki’'s form (in black font) and twelve-bar blues form (in grey font). The boxes around the harmonic figurations indicate the differences between the two forms.

The difference between the two twelve-bar patterns is in the cycles they represent. Brand’s harmonic pattern presents an oscillation of the C and F chords in a longer and more truncated pattern: 4+4 | 2+2 :|| (see the diagrammatic comparison of the

harmonic and phrase structure of twelve-bar blues and Brand's 'Heyt Mazurki' in Figure 13 below).

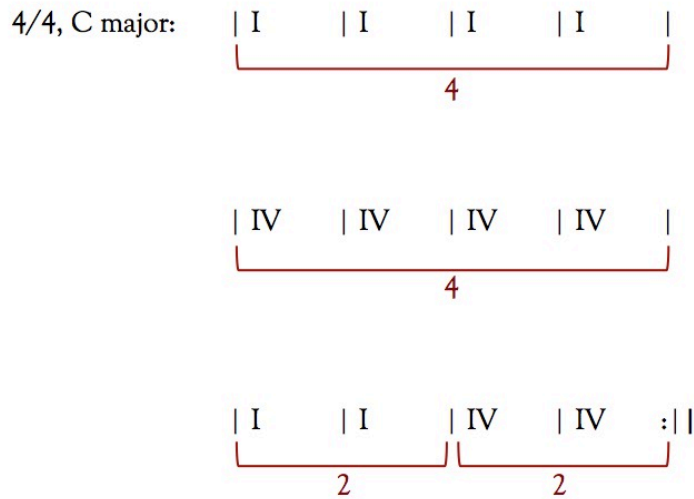


Figure 13: Patterns in 'Heyt Mazurki'

It may take an attentive listener to pick up on this shift, but it is nevertheless significant. For one, it exhibits the specificity of Brand's composition that approaches the blues, but is not quite twelve-bar blues form. If cyclicity is implied in the conception of standard jazz practices – in which a chorus or 'head' of a piece could be repeated any number of times, the cycle being completed upon returning to the 'top' of the piece and starting a repetition of the harmonic structure; the cyclicity of 'Heyt Mazurki' (and indeed 'Portrait of a Bushman') could be understood as happening on an even smaller, intensified scale, as is typical of the short-cycle Kubik identifies as germane to African music.<sup>504</sup>

What can these differences tell us, and how may they aid to think of the significance of 'Anatomy of a South African Village'? First, from this slippage we may read the melding of an American jazz genre into an African-informed musical syntax. 'Heyt Mazurki' serves as an example to show the convergence of African notions of

<sup>504</sup> My analysis of 'Heyt Mazurki' and the blues is indeed reminiscent of Kubik's analysis of the similarities between twelve-bar blues form and *marabi*, the South African jazz form that serves as the foundation of genres like *kwela* and *mbaqanga*. Kubik sees *marabi* as one of the derivatives, or a reinterpretation, of American jazz and blues. See Gerhard Kubik, 'The 12-Bar Blues Form in South African *Kwela* and its Reinterpretation', in *Africa and the Blues* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), 161-185.



cyclicality and that of the blues, even if these only approach each other asymptotically. If the notion of 'Africa' is read in this way, we appreciate the way Africa acts as a referent in Brand's music: it is not only implied in titles, but also structurally conceived in his compositions. Although we may see links with other musical traditions, such as hymnody, avant-garde atonality or twelve-bar blues, they have also been recast through a highly personal musical imaginary of a sonic 'Africa', developed in Brand's conceptions of music in relation to place. This is a non-essentialised Africa that is not hermetically sealed off from other influences, but thoroughly engages them and subjects them to its own terms.

This supports the idea of holism in Brand's conceptions of music as difference: not as something to negate, but as positions in a continual dialogue relationship with each other. Indeed, this constant exchange blurs the boundaries of 'belonging' to a particular tradition. 'Appropriation' (as in the 'appropriation' of the blues) connotes a sense of ownership that these examples problematize. What is rather suggested by the music is a process of engagement, of creatively fusing different impulses, fragments or practices picked up from here or there. The 'Africa' in Ibrahim's discourse offers a conception of 'African practice' that is much more clearly differentiated and dichotomised than the much more fluid processes of engagement in his music. Creativity and sonic expression obey a different logic than that of verbal or written rhetoric: they show the immense capacity for absorbing and creating from the whole range of human experiences.

## **Conclusion**

I propose that 'Honeysuckle Rose' and 'Anatomy of a South African Village' are texts through which we may read relationships with America and South Africa respectively. In the first two chapters of the thesis, I have explored exile's relationship with notions of 'home' through migration, and America, through diaspora. The relationships that these pieces analysed signify should therefore be understood within the complex dynamics that inform Brand's relationship with both these spaces.

The relationships with place that ‘Honeysuckle Rose’ and ‘Anatomy of a South African Village’ represent, are informed by the long history of exchange with America and the medium that jazz presents in facilitating moves between South Africa and America – as a common syntax – and in the case of ‘Anatomy of a South African Village’ a gaze ‘home’ from the vantage point of exile. The latter unfolds through several of the discourses we read in Dollar Brand’s conceptions of music: through invoking sociality and memory, through notions of time and timing. In ‘Honeysuckle Rose’ – and as ‘Heyt Mazurki’ also suggests – glances towards ‘South Africa’ are always deeply entangled with devices drawing on both worlds, yet not belonging unambiguously to any one.

From this observation, I would argue that the clear binaries that Ibrahim constructs around notions of ‘Africa’ and ‘Europe’ exist only rhetorically. Music shows that these are not hermetically sealed, but rather play out in interesting ways that traverse the whole trajectory of markers that connect the poles signifying (or symbolizing) ‘Africa’ or ‘the West’. As such, we could argue that in rhetoric binaries that inform exile are constructed in terms that are much more simplified than those of lived experience. This has already been hinted at in the case of Dorothy Masuku in my discussion of the Transcription Centre in Chapter Four.

Where does this leave music then? Music, if we follow De Certeau (referring back to Chapter One), operates as a metaphor – as a carrier – that traverses senses of ‘place’: of ‘here’ and ‘there’. It becomes the narrative device that operates by virtue of the ambiguity of sonic referencing. Thinking about the ways that the cycle functions as a musical trope makes it possible to think about how music may be understood as a site of discourse. In the two analyses I have presented in the thesis, the cycle functioned as a signifier of the train, and by extension the train as metaphor for migration and the transversal of space (Chapter One); and as a signifier of African music practice, and by extension as a metaphor for an ‘African’-informed musical sensibility in the case of Dollar Brand (Chapter Six). What the cycle as signifier in two different ways demonstrates is that although musical tropes assume *significance*, that is, they come to carry meanings as symbols, these meanings they carry are not

stable, but are conditioned by the musical and discursive contexts in which they are used. However, music as a medium through which sonic signification takes place, comes to be a site of discursive practices – not in and of itself, but in circulation with the contexts and environments that shape them *and* perceive them as meaningful.

Finally, I wish to reflect on music as a metaphorical space, a space for symbolic practice. It is a space in which the distal – a figure like Waller or a South African notion of lineage (San) – can be made familiar. Music serves as a device that brings place and time together, that in effect bridges the two. The ‘logic of ambiguity’ makes the distance in time and place the things that are musically traversed, even only momentarily in the act of performance, and with various degrees or intensities through performance – and, above all, never unambiguously. It is the site where multiple fields can be present at once, or in varying degrees at various points in time. As such, music in exile acts as a site for metaphor, understood as the transfer of ideas, for the transgression of the divisions of space and time, and for (re)creating, through these ambiguities, the vision of home.

## Retrospectives

This thesis considered exile as a claim, following Rogers Brubaker's approach to analysing diaspora. Taking this approach as a starting point drew attention to the ways exile is constructed through discursive practice. While exile is undeniably rooted in lived experience, and it is imperative to take into account the everyday realities musicians faced (as I have argued in Chapter Three), senses of place (or displacement) are also shaped by the stories and narratives told about place. While he cautions against extending the role of discourse indefinitely, Stuart Hall nevertheless stresses that discourse does more than only reflect experience of place: it also constitutes the experience of place, as De Certeau has similarly argued. I have used anecdotes, letters, creative writing, archival material and music to reflect on these discursive constructions of lived experience in South African musicians' exile.

This thesis advanced the premise of exile as a state of connection and relation, rather than disconnection or severance. If exile itself is defined as the differential between two (or multiple) terms, predominantly configured through the notions of place and time, the question arises how the relationship between the two terms is construed. For this reason this thesis has been concerned with relationality: with theories of relationality (as articulated by Michel de Certeau, Samuel Floyd, Edward Said and Avtar Brah); with discourses that exile developed in relation to (South African migration and the African diaspora in particular); as well as exile itself as an experience of relationality between two or more places (this came to the fore particularly in the case study of Dollar Brand/Abdullah Ibrahim).

The notion of exile, I argued, did not develop in a vacuum: musicians in exile also drew on several other discourses in understanding and articulating their experiences. The first chapter showed how South African exile was conditioned by the South African history of migration that preceded it. I showed how exiled musicians drew on these earlier experiences of displacement: how repertoires from earlier urban migration were performed in exile and articulated an analogous experience of being away from home; how earlier migrations formed part of an already-fractured referent of 'home' in exile; and how migration remains a perpetual state of the migrant and exile, how the sense of a whole, unfractured home is irrecoverable. This untroubled

notion of home becomes a marker of home that has sublimated to the exilic imagination.

The second chapter considered the relationship between exile and another experience of displacement, diaspora, in which jazz and Civil Rights discourses in particular served as points of connection between South African exile and communities in the United States. Although exile was undeniably how South African musicians saw themselves and the word they used to describe their absence from home, South African exiles referred surprisingly seldom to another, analogous paradigm of exile that loomed in historically close proximity: that of Jewish exile under Nazi Germany. Instead, musicians identified strongly with African-American diaspora based on histories of cultural exchange (albeit asymmetrically tipped towards the South African assimilation of American culture); shared concerns with Africa (both as a notion and as an actual place) and the politics of liberation and civil rights. Based on musicians' experiences and on these discursive overlaps, I argued that theories of diaspora complement and enrich theoretical understandings of South African exile. Whilst each notion of displacement (diaspora and exile) retains its own definition and should not be conflated (as Muller's use of the term 'diaspora' risks doing), there are certain areas where they productively intersect. Perhaps, what diaspora theories articulate best is the persistent sense of connection with another place and culture – which this thesis considers germane to the notion of exile.

Avtar Brah's argument that diaspora identities (and by extension, exile identities) take shape along axes such as race, class, or gender, introduces the idea that exile (or diaspora) is indeed a composite of smaller relationships that tie exiles to both adopted home and home, sometimes in ways that are not neat or devoid of contradiction. In this way, Said's notion of exile as a contrapuntal experience is further nuanced through Brah's notion of diaspora, theorized as further textured by the (not always unidirectional) sets of relationships forged between musician and place (for instance, Abdullah Ibrahim's ambivalent relationship with South Africa and New York), musician and other musicians (for instance, Abdullah Ibrahim and Duke Ellington, as opposed to Abdullah Ibrahim's disillusionment with the New York jazz scene), musician within his/her community at home and in exile (for

instance with a jazz community as opposed to society at large), and so forth. These markers, I have stressed through the case study of Abdullah Ibrahim's identity in transformation in Chapter Four, are never stable, but rather continuously formed and performed.

In the third chapter, I broadened the political coordinates of South African exile beyond only the history of South African apartheid to also consider the broader post-colonial context of the Cold War that stimulated the circulation of ideas and debate around the notions of Africa and liberation in the 1960s. As the case study of South African musicians at the Transcription Centre in London demonstrated, South African exile was not only subject to the politics of apartheid at 'home' (as is the usual focus in the literature), but also unfolded against the backdrop (and indeed amidst the currents) of Cold War politics. I have shown that this impacted musicians' lives through institutions such as the Transcription Centre that lent its support to exiled musicians. Drawing on Ngũgĩ's notion of the relationalities that shape performance space, I unpacked the various dynamics that shaped (or proscribed) performance spaces of exile at the Transcription Centre. The quotidian struggles to secure work, visas, and work permits, formed the material circumstances that conditioned musical practice. However, musicians and their benefactors often found innovative ways to navigate organisational structures for their own purposes – which I explored through De Certeau's notion of tactics.

How do these articulations of exile as a *connection* (rather than disconnection) shift perspectives on exile? It opens up the question of the middle ground between the two (or more) terms implied by exile. To elaborate on Said's analogy of counterpoint, it asks where are the consonances and dissonances, and what textures are produced by this counterpoint. It brings into focus the irresolvable dialectics of exile, its paradoxes and tensions.

The case study of Dollar Brand/Abdullah Ibrahim presented in the last three chapters considered exile as an experience of the ambivalence that Veit Erlmann argued is the opposite of 'home'. The fourth chapter sought to nuance the notion of exile as a condition that does not always have clearly defined parameters of onset or end.

Instead, it crept in through a series of regulations, and mounting difficulties to the prospect of a return. This has prompted me to consider exile as a condition and experience that is always in flux. The notion of 'home' as a place where one is understood, is problematized through the reception of Ibrahim's music upon his return to South Africa. The discrepancy between Abdullah Ibrahim's imaginary of South Africa and the notion of home that develops during his time in the United States and the reality that he encounters in South Africa upon his first return in 1968 provides some indication of what 'home' becomes in exile. As it is projected in his discourse and through writing (considered in Chapter Five), home is a distinct place imbued with the qualities that do not inhere in exile: it is painted as the opposite of the alienation and isolation that the exile encounters in his new place of abode. And yet, as Chapter Six showed, it is only in discursive practice that such dichotomies can be upheld. In practice, distinct notions of lineage, belonging, place and musical practices meld into a richly composite, plural space that reflects on practices and constructions of both home and adopted home. Music is a medium that encapsulates these ambiguities: the very non-specificity of the sonic signification points to neither sense of place unequivocally.

If exile, as I have argued, is understood as a fundamental sense of ambiguity, I have foregrounded the sites where this plurality could be heard and read. The figure of *amagoduka*, migrant workers, embody this plurality: those who go home are those who are away from home. This is a suitable metaphor for exile too, for those who can tell about both here and there are those who have traversed the border between the these places, to paraphrase De Certeau's notion of the logic of ambiguity. Brand's discourses on music (highlighted especially in Chapter Five), in which home and exile are described in dichotomous terms, demonstrated Veit Erlmann's contention that the blurred boundaries between home and the unhomely results in the symbolic heightening of this divide in poetic practice.<sup>505</sup> Yet in Brand's letters to Duerden (discussed in Chapter Four) his ambivalence towards South Africa was more marked. A simple dichotomy between home as place of belonging and exile as place of alienation was furthermore dispelled in Brand's reception when he performs in South Africa upon his first return in 1968. The Capetonian audience he had

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<sup>505</sup> Erlmann, *Nightsong*, 160.

praised in his *Cape Herald* articles, and the community he described in such familiar and nostalgic terms in his 'Four Talks on Jazz', were at odds with the musician and music that confronted them at Brand's performance after six years' absence. Yet this was a disconnect already felt by Brand when he left in 1962. This disjuncture is telling, for it demonstrates the way that 'home' as an uncomplicated space of belonging is a product of the distance, and thus the exilic imagination, rather than proximity. As Salman Rushdie wrote, home for the exile becomes a fiction: it becomes an imaginary homeland (rather than referring to actual cities or villages).<sup>506</sup>

If home and exile are spaces that can be discursively separated as characterised by indisputable belonging and absolute alienation, these separations are evidently untenable in everyday life, and also in musical practice. Music manifests the inextricability of these domains: as the analyses in Chapter Six showed, neither 'Honeysuckle Rose' nor 'Anatomy of a South African Village' are unambiguous examples of the exile's gaze towards an adopted home or home respectively. Indeed, they more accurately demonstrate the middle ground of exile between these two constructs. If anything, 'home' has become a space of desire rather than the actual place itself. In this way, the diasporic notion of 'homing desire' instead of 'home' that Avtar Brah writes about, resonates with exile too. If home is a place of desire, it is a place of creative elaboration onto which the exile's desires are projected.

What does a musical perspective contribute to the study of exile? Music brings into focus the highly individual nature of exile, in counterpoint to the broader political narratives of exile<sup>507</sup> or biographies of exile in which an individual figure such as Thabo Mbeki is embedded within the collective political party's history.<sup>508</sup> Musicians often focussed on sound, timbre, forging new ways of creative expression. It is worth remembering that it was also in the ways that exile curtailed space of artistic expression that apartheid disrupted musicians' lives and livelihoods. Chapter Four showed Dollar Brand/Abdullah Ibrahim's focus on developing his sound; but it also

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<sup>506</sup> Salman Rushdie, 'Imaginary Homelands', 10.

<sup>507</sup> As apparent, for example, in Tom Lodge's chapter on exile, 'Revolutionary Exile Politics, 1960-1975', in *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983), 295-320.

<sup>508</sup> See, for instance, Chapter 14 of Mark Gevisser's biography of Mbeki, 'Swinging London: Old Left, New Left', in *A Legacy of Liberation: Thabo Mbeki and the Future of the South African Dream* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 106-116.



showed how an occupation with place becomes part of this artistic concern. Music manifests the symbolic heightening of qualities ascribed to place, expressed through musical elements such as idiom, musical structure, form and musical time (or timing).

This thought returns us to question of how exile becomes musically manifest, to which several answers have emerged throughout the thesis. Music serves as a mnemonic of home, or a medium through which memory is accessed. This is evident from songs from home that are performed in exile, such as Miriam Makeba's performance of 'Mbombela', or Abdullah Ibrahim's references to figures from home such as Mike Phahlane in 'Heyt Mazurki'. Music also serves as a metaphorical space through which notions of home and away are articulated: Ibrahim used music as imagery through which 'Africa' as opposed to 'the north' were represented. So, for instance, music with a cyclical structural organisation connotes senses of 'home' or 'Africa', as opposed to music using 4/4 metre, which connotes 'the north', or the West. These discursive constructions may be problematic to identify unequivocally in musical practice, yet they are symbolically significant as tokens of the discursive constructions in orbit around place in exile. In practice, however, it is impossible to distil or disentangle these various notions of place in the sounds themselves. Although certain strands or constructions may be clearer or more prevalent, music is never unambiguously only one thing, but rather the meeting point of several influences that finds expression through an individual musicians' practice. Yet it is precisely the sonic ambiguity of music that renders it evocative and meaningful in different contexts – as the significance train songs like 'Mbombela' assumed when it was performed in exile, demonstrated.

As such, music is a space of imaginative elaboration that exceeds what is rooted in lived experience or memory. Ibrahim's 'Anatomy of a South African Village' is a case in point: while it is not rooted in Abdullah Ibrahim's lived experience or memory of lived place, it embroiders on various ideas of what South Africa is. Music is a means through which lost notions of lineage or heritage is rediscovered in 'Portrait of a Bushman', it is a space for interrogating memories of home (the hymn in 'Resolution') that are simultaneously tonally expanded in its musical conception;

and through which place becomes understood as a set of social relations instead of merely a physical location (as in 'Heyt Mazurki'). Indeed, this latter notion of music as a form of sociality is especially apparent through Brand's conceptions of how music is done 'at home', where music is 'everywhere' and it 'is still social', as evident in his recollection of children using bottle caps to perform tap routines on street corners, or music as a linchpin to social gatherings such as the dancehalls he described in the 'Talks on Jazz' (Chapter Three).

This thesis has contributed several new perspectives to the study of South African exile. It introduced new theories to the discussion of exile: from diaspora studies, I have borrowed Brubaker's notion of diaspora or exile as a claim, and Avtar Brah's conception of the complex relationality between diaspora discourses has furthermore helped to think about the ways that theories of exile and diaspora discourses intersect in South African exile. Considering Said's classic essay alongside Brah's comparative model of diasporas, facilitated a better understanding of how discourses of exile interacted with, but also differed from diaspora discourses in circulation between South African exiled musicians and their colleagues in the United States and London (as meeting points of the African diaspora). This offered an alternative model to the one that Carol Muller proposes. Ngũgĩ's theorization of performance spaces has furthermore enriched the understanding of the territoriality of exile as contestation over performance space, and ultimately exiled artists' exclusion from the nation state as performance space. My discussion of the Transcription Centre has offered a more detailed and nuanced reading of the archive material as it relates to South African exile, adding to Carol Muller's account of this institution's role in South African musicians' exile.

I have furthermore examined a period in Dollar Brand/Abdullah Ibrahim's life in exile that has received little attention in the surprisingly scant scholarship devoted to this prominent figure in South African music. These early years in exile are significant because they show the first strides Ibrahim takes towards the musical idiom he becomes best known for as a solo pianist merging African and American musical influences in what increasingly becomes a highly individual style. It furthermore illuminates the period in which Brand/Ibrahim's identity is in transition,

a process that is marked by personal and creative discovery, for which his name change from Dollar Brand to Abdullah Ibrahim is a metonym. While not all exiles may exhibit the transformation that exile brings about in such an overt manner, Brand/Ibrahim's name calls attention to exile as a process of transition and transformation; something that is never stable and fixed.

This thesis contributes to an understanding of exile in several ways. 'In exile', I proposed, was, in many cases (and certainly most cases for musicians), a gradual realization after several years abroad, rather than a *fait accompli* upon leaving South Africa. I understand 'exile' as a discursive construct, a nomenclature adopted by those who identified with a state of alienation and an inability to return to home at will. I understand 'in exile' as a state of becoming, a dawning realization that applied variously to the ways musicians conducted their everyday lives. Being unable to return home for her mother's funeral, as Miriam Makeba describes it in her autobiography, is a different realization of being 'in exile' than conducting everyday business or performing, for instance.

Exile, I therefore argue, is not a constant, all-pervasive presence, felt at each point of a musician's life abroad. Perhaps a latent presence, it makes itself especially felt in moments where someone is reminded that they are 'out of place'. 'Exile' is felt, for instance, when musicians have to get paperwork from the British Ministry of Labour in order to work and earn money in England. 'Exile' is felt when unions like 'Equity' prevent musicians from developing their careers following the same club performances routes available to British musicians. Exile manifests in the dictates of marketability in a foreign country that casts an activist and songwriter like Dorothy Masuku as a folk singer in the likeness of her more famous counterpart, Miriam Makeba; or calls a genre like *mbaqanga* by a term more familiar to audiences in Britain, *kwela*. Exile makes itself felt when performance tours in South Africa have to be cancelled because legislation segregating audiences makes concerts economically unviable, when albums are banned or when political conditions render it too risky to return home. It is important to ground exile in these everyday realities in order to avoid romanticising exile. These material circumstances function as gate-keeping mechanisms that ring-fence various performance spaces in exile.

Methodologically, this thesis presented a historical study that was concerned with source material and its interpretation. While many musicians' lives have not been documented in academic literature, it does not mean that their lives went undocumented at all. Without detracting from the value and need to continue recording exiled musicians' lives and work – especially that of an aging generation of musicians who were in exile in the 1960s – this study also alerts us to the value in locating and studying the existent sources, captured in archives, magazines, newspapers and so forth. These sources are valuable for the way they reveal the moment in which exile unfolded, and capture the ways that exile was perceived and described at the time.

Finding and assembling the documented histories of musicians in exile is one way of recuperating a history that apartheid has fractured and scattered. Writing about archives that are geographically dispersed – mirroring the geographical dispersion of South African musicians' exile – makes location-specific sources available to scholars based elsewhere. This thesis presents one contribution to this process of assembling archival sources, and focussed on one artist through whom we might reach a closer understanding of what exile meant in artists' livelihoods and how it shaped their musical thought and practices in the early years of their absence from South Africa. Yet many questions remain: how did the nature and tenor of exile and exile discourse change in the decades following the 1960s, when the notion of exile was more established? How did the discourses surrounding the musicians discussed in this thesis continue to evolve in response to their growing or diminishing public visibility, their longer absences from South Africa and within an increasingly radical political climate? And how did a younger generation of musicians experience and express exile? It is my hope that this thesis aids further inquiries in these directions.

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# Appendix 1

## Schematic Comparison of Two Recordings of Zim Ngqawana's 'Migrant Worker Suite'

(The top row and bottom row of boxes indicate the sections of each recording, with the relevant recordings' titles furnished at the top and below. The arrows in the middle indicate the corresponding sections of each recording.)

### Zim Ngqawana, 'Migrant Worker Suite' (live performance recording), *Zimology in Concert* (Sheer Sound SSCD 136, 2008)

Featuring Zim Ngqawana (saxophones, flutes and harmonica), Donald Brown (piano), Mark Boling (guitar), Keith Brown (drums), and Rusty Holloway (double bass).

<p><b>Homeland</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F tonal centre, modal</li> <li>• No metre</li> <li>• Quiet mood, freely improvised</li> <li>• Duration 04:46</li> </ul>	<p>(no equivalent section)</p>	<p><b>Migration to Johannesburg</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F major</li> <li>• 4/4 metre</li> <li>• Based on cyclical, <i>marabi</i> riff (see Fig. 3)</li> <li>• Three short contrasting swing sections at 02:57-03:20, 04:19-04:42 and 09:37-09:57</li> <li>• Duration 09:57</li> </ul>	<p><b>Migration to America</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F major</li> <li>• Based on cyclical, <i>marabi</i></li> <li>• Solo section, improvised on 'Migration to Jo'burg'</li> <li>• Improvisations by guitar, bass and drums (in this order)</li> <li>• Duration 07:05</li> </ul>	<p><b>Donald's Offering</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C pedal point</li> <li>• No metre</li> <li>• Recalls modal improvisations in 'Homeland' section</li> <li>• Duration 02:54</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reprise: Amagoduka (Migrant Workers)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F major</li> <li>• Based on cyclical, <i>marabi</i> riff</li> <li>• Recapitulation of 'Migration to Johannesburg'</li> <li>• Lead instrument is harmonica instead of saxophone</li> <li>• Closes with a cadenza-like harmonic solo that simulates a fade-out</li> <li>• Duration 01:42</li> </ul>
<p><b>Part 1: Migrant worker in his homeland</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F tonal centre, modal</li> <li>• No metre</li> <li>• Quiet mood, freely improvised</li> <li>• Duration 04:12</li> </ul>	<p><b>Part 2: Migrant worker on a train to the mines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hymn-like section in F major, parallel harmonising reminiscent of black choral harmonisation</li> <li>• Segues into transition passage repeating the progression VII-I-II-I</li> <li>• Stronger sense of pulse, but no clear metre yet.</li> <li>• Picks up tempo and pulse as section transitions into Part 3.</li> <li>• Duration 05:23</li> </ul>	<p><b>Part 3: Migrant worker in Johannesburg</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F major</li> <li>• 4/4 metre</li> <li>• Based on cyclical riff (see Fig. 3)</li> <li>• Two short contrasting swing sections at 11:49-12:16 and 16:16-16:40.</li> <li>• Track fades out towards the end</li> <li>• Duration 07:57</li> </ul>	<p>(no equivalent section)</p>		

### Zim Ngqawana, 'Migrant Workers', *San Song* (NOR CD 9720, 1996) (section titles taken from the suite's description in the liner notes)

Featuring Zim Ngqawana (saxophones), Andlie Yenana (piano), Bjørn Ole Solberg (saxophone), Paal Nilssen-Love (drums) and Ingebrigt Haker Flaten (bass).