

**Jazz as discourse: A contextualised account of contemporary jazz in post-apartheid Durban and Johannesburg**

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this dissertation, unless otherwise indicated in the text, is my own original work. This research has also not previously been submitted to any other institution for degree purposes.

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## Abstract

This study offers an ethnographically contextualised close reading of the music played by three 'jazz' groups in eight concerts held in Durban and Johannesburg between June 1994 and December 2003. These performances were videotaped and then analysed with reference to 1) the compositional and improvisational techniques employed in the creation of the performances; 2) the stage behaviour of the musicians; 3) audience behaviour, and 4) the physical contexts in which the performances occurred. The performances constitute the primary texts on which this study is based. Secondary texts, in the form of discourse produced because of the concerts, are also examined. These take the form of open-ended interviews with thirteen participant musicians and twelve audience members. The primary and secondary texts are then compared with each other and situated within their broader musical and social contexts. This exploration of the ways in which social processes inhere in musical processes draws on a notion of expressive discourse as 1) a multifaceted practice in which textuality, subjectivity, place, history, and power function as interdependent parts of a complex social ecology and 2) a dialogically-constituted system of utterances. The study then argues that musical details articulate social meanings – and thus function as utterances – because of their dual existence within 1) systems of intra- and intertextual relationships and 2) processes of dialectical interaction between texts and socio-historical contexts.

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# 1. Introduction

What does it mean when this performance (of this work) takes place at this time, in this place, with these participants? (Christopher Small, 1998: 10)

You can't help but smile to yourself – and I think the audience does – and you say, "This is South Africa. This is Durban." Yah, you hear all those things. You have this *mbaqanga* groove backed with *tablas*. To me, that's really great because it's not in its exact social setting. Then, you have the musicians like us Indian guys trying to play *mbaqanga* and sound African. On all those levels, [there's this] crossover. (Durban guitarist, Mageshen Naidoo)

This present study stems from my need to locate myself, theoretically, as a performer and composer of jazz within the academic debate on music and its social meanings. This problem has preoccupied me since 1991 when I participated in an undergraduate seminar which posed the question, "Are we [musicians in a rapidly changing South Africa] fiddling while Rome burns?" During the course of the seminar, I came to realise that there is little value in studying music without engaging the social contexts that surround and subtend its existence. Alerted to the ways "social structures crystallize in musical structures" (Ballantine 1984: xvi), I began to understand how different western musics function as social texts that variously critique and/or rationalise an unequal and exploitative social order. Although I started seeing Bach, Abdullah Ibrahim, and much Top 40 music in a new light, I still couldn't understand *my* place as a student composer and performer of jazz within this debate. I worried that like Nero, I was "fiddling while Rome burned".

In a chapter entitled "Music and society: The forgotten relationship", Christopher Ballantine (1984: 17) emphasizes that "if we see music in isolation from society, we shall not only distort its meaning, but what we say will be subject to serious factual error." While wholly agreeing with Ballantine, I believe that music scholarship should, moreover, move beyond abstract notions of "society" and work towards ethnographically-grounded analyses that address music's deep interconnectedness with the flux of everyday life. To write meaningfully about music, I think, is to focus closely on the experiences of the individuals who

produce and consume it. With this in mind, I settled on the postgraduate research topic "Jazz as discourse: A contextualised account of contemporary jazz in Durban and Johannesburg". In the present chapter, I clarify the scope of the study as well as my research methodology.

This dissertation offers an ethnographically-contextualised close reading of the music composed and performed by three South African jazz groups in eight concerts, held in Durban and Johannesburg between June 1994 and December 2003. Extending Small's question (cited above) to all eight concerts, this "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of locally-composed contemporary jazz<sup>1</sup> comprises two basic parts: 1) a fieldwork component involving the recording of ethnographic data, and 2) an analysis which offers a socially contextualised reading (or *hearing*) of the music examined.

The present chapter outlines the theoretical premises that have informed my ethnographic research and which underlie my analytical account of local jazz. It is in four parts. First, I situate this present study in relation to recent scholarship that analyses popular musics and their social contexts. Second, drawing on Robert Walser's arguments (1993: 26-51), I note that the analytical notion of discourse facilitates an investigation of the ways social processes inhere in musical processes. Third, I explain the theoretical premises that underlie the fieldwork component of this study. Drawing on Richard Leppert's (1994) discussion, I note the value of video data as a means of exploring the contextual role played by the visual-performative dimensions of musical experiences in the production of meaning. Then, drawing on Steven Feld's (1984) work, I argue that interview data (or speech about music) is a valuable source of information and concepts about music's social meanings. Finally, I explain the framework within which my contextualised account of local jazz unfolds, and outline the themes explored in chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6.

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase, "locally-composed, contemporary jazz" is ungainly and from here on, I shall use the glosses "local jazz" or "the music examined" whenever I refer to the music played by the three groups considered.

## (Re)Current themes in popular music analysis

According to Walser (1993: 34-35), most musical analysis occurs within the context of a “disabling methodological split between aesthetic and sociological analysis.” Similarly, Ingrid Monson (1996: 3) notes that “discussions of musical structures and cultural issues in music have generally proceeded along parallel – decidedly nonintersecting – lines.” However, particularly since 1990, a small but rapidly growing body of work exploring contextualised approaches to musical analysis has emerged. United in the recognition that “the familiar humanist separation of art and life … no longer holds” (Hutcheon, 1988: 7), these writings emphasize that “music cannot be other than something that is constructed by and in, and that constructs, social activity” (Middleton, 2003: 11-12).

Within this body of work, I have found Richard Middleton’s *Studying popular music* (1990), John Shepherd’s *Music as social text* (1991), Walser’s *Running with the devil: Power, gender, and madness in heavy metal music* (1993), and Monson’s *Saying something: Jazz improvisation and interaction* (1996) particularly useful<sup>2</sup>. My analytical approach has been drawn from these writers and like Monson, I operate from the premise that the “close readings of musical works can proceed from the constant intersection of sound, structure, and social meaning” (1996: 3).

Shepherd (1991: 12) argues as follows for the existence of an intimate relationship between musical and social structures:

Because people create music, they reproduce in the basic qualities of

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<sup>2</sup>Ingrid Byerly (1998: 8) notes that there is a significant body of South African music scholarship that explores the links between musical and sociocultural processes: “While some works still focus on the intricacies of particular forms and instrumentations … others discuss music as a reflection of social history (Ballantine 1989; James 1991) or the larger politics and aesthetics of music and the entertainment industry (Anderson 1981; Coplan 1985; Erlmann 1991).” Other works Byerly cites include Ballantine (1991a and 1991b), Allen (1993), Rörich (1989), Muller (1994) and van Schalkwyk (1994). However, I draw primarily on Middleton’s (1990), Shepherd’s (1991) Monson’s (1996) and Walser’s (1993) works because they are more immediately relevant to my analytical project in that they are concerned with theorising the *links* between musical and social processes.

their music, the basic qualities of their own thought processes. If it is accepted that people's thought processes are socially mediated, then it could be said that the basic qualities of different styles of music are likewise socially mediated and so socially significant.<sup>3</sup>

From this premise, Shepherd argues convincingly that there are strong links in terms of the way post-renaissance music and post-renaissance society have been organised. He argues, for example, that "many genres of popular music may be understood as the sites in which struggles relative to the acceptance or rejection of many features of capitalist social structures and ideologies have been played out" (*Ibid*: 128).

Similarly Middleton (1990: 95) posits a close relationship between the 'social' and the 'musical'. He writes, "Musical meaning is generated within a *field*, not a discrete musical work, and the non-autonomous aspects of this field lead one to think in terms of a complex system of socio-musical *ecology*." Middleton's ecological metaphor is a useful one because it suggests that this socio-musical system is a *living* and dynamic system or web, deeply interconnected with other domains of human activity and comprising within itself, a rich and dense network of complexly organised relationships.

Further, Middleton argues that "what is at issue for any 'critical musicology' is the exact nature of the relationship between particular musical problematics and the wider cultural, social and ideological forces" (*Ibid*: 126). Likewise, Feld (1984: 3) argues that an understanding of the ways in which social processes inhere in musical processes requires "socially situated investigation". In a similar vein, Monson (1996: 3) notes the need for "a more cultural music theory and a more musical cultural theory." Walser (1993: 31) voices this idea more forcefully:

There is no essential, foundational way to ground musical meaning beyond the flux of social existence. Ultimately musical analysis can be considered credible only if it helps explain the significance of musical activities in particular contexts.

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<sup>3</sup>Shepherd's argument correlates with Bourdieu's (1984: 468) observation that "the cognitive structures which social agents implement in their practical knowledge of the social world are internalized, 'embodied' social structures."

In formulating an analytical framework in keeping with these arguments, I have been especially influenced by Walser's (1993) and Monson's (1996) writings. Monson's thesis is that the musical interaction that occurs during jazz performance is simultaneously a social and musical phenomenon:

The groove ... is established by the interactive relationships among members of the rhythm section. The groove is therefore one sort of interactional text within the ensemble that is dynamically related to an additional interactional text established between the rhythm section and soloist. To these interactional layers ... must be added intermusical relationships (aural references in the literary sense), which may index something as specific as another composition or performance or as general as a cultural sensibility. (*Ibid*: 189)

Like Walser, Monson argues that musical analyses must recognise and address the inevitable location of music-making activities within networks of human interaction. She constantly stresses that in a jazz context, "interacting musical roles are simultaneously interacting human personalities" (*Ibid*: 7) "[and] not merely [interacting] instruments or pitches or rhythms" (*Ibid*: 26). Jazz, she insists, "is music composed through face-to-face interaction" (*Ibid*: 80). Focussing on the processes of rhythm-section interaction that transpire during jazz improvisation, Monson asserts the relevance of (and lays the groundwork for) a socially contextualised approach to the analysis of jazz.

Monson's study may be described as a social poetics of the jazz performance process, and it includes detailed musical analyses as well as in-depth interviews with jazz musicians on the topic of musical interaction. Situating her findings within the broader context of African American culture, she argues for the equivalence of musical and social forms of interaction, thereby presenting a theoretical model within which the social meanings of jazz improvisation may be deciphered. However, while Monson's performance-focused model convincingly accounts for the social meanings of performances of mainstream North American jazz to knowledgeable listeners in that social context, her framework is less applicable to the more problematic instance of contemporary jazz in Durban and Johannesburg, which features compositions that synthesize aspects of jazz with various world musics as well as listeners with diverse levels

of familiarity with the genre.

Walser's interest is in "the analysis of the specific musical choices embodied in individual songs and organised by genres" (1993: xiv), and even though he discusses heavy metal rather than jazz, the analytical model he offers is more salient to my project than Monson's because of its stronger focus on compositional content than on performance processes. According to Walser:

The danger of musical analysis is always that social meanings and power struggles become the forest that is lost for the trees of notes and chords. The necessity of musical analysis is that those notes and chords represent the differences that make some songs seem highly meaningful and powerful and others boring, inept, or irrelevant. (Ibid: 30)

Thus in his analysis of heavy metal, Walser shows how specific musical details such as timbre, texture, volume and so on function as meaningful musical *and* social entities:

We might say that a C major chord has no intrinsic meaning; rather, it can signify in different ways in different discourses, where it is contextualised by other signifiers, its own history as a signifier, and the social activities in which the discourse participates. (Ibid: 27)

The term "discourse" is central to Walser's understanding of music and social meaning, and in the following paragraphs, I explore the applicability of his notion of "heavy metal as a discursive practice ... a coherent, though always changing, universe of significant sonic options" (Ibid: xiv) to local jazz.

## **Discourse**

Walser (1993: 28) points out that "the analytical notion of discourse enables us to pursue an integrated investigation of musical and social aspects of popular music." He explains that although the term discourse has traditionally been used in the context of linguistics, where discourse analysis involves the study of 'utterances' (actual instances of really-occurring, contextualised language use) as opposed to 'sentences' (which are idealised theoretical abstractions of utterances), "recent usage has opened up the concept of discourse to refer to

any socially produced way of thinking or communicating" (Ibid: 28-29). "For music," Walser argues, "this implies that any formal or syntactical patterns that an analyst may recognise must be interpreted as abstractions from utterances or speech acts that can only be said to have meaning in particular, socially grounded ways" (Ibid: 29).

Intuitively, Walser's notion of music as a "way of communicating" rings true, but because the term communication is problematic, it warrants closer inspection. In 'commonsense' terms, communication is typified by everyday language, and it denotes the neutral transmission of propositional meaning from one interlocutor to another. On this view, a non-denotative practice like music, that lacks propositional 'substance', can never 'really' communicate. Rejecting such everyday notions of language and communication, sociolinguists like Jaworski and Coupland (1999: 47), Tannen and Wallat (1999: 347; 349), and Fairclough (1999: 204) emphasize instead that language's meanings are heavily context-reliant. According to Fairclough,

language is widely misperceived as transparent, so that the social and ideological 'work' that language does in producing, reproducing or transforming social structures, relations and identities is routinely 'overlooked'. Social analysts not uncommonly share the misperception of language as transparent, not recognizing that social analysis of discourse entails going beyond this natural attitude towards language in order to reveal the precise mechanisms and modalities of the social and ideological work of language. (Ibid)

Such conceptions of language as social and political action stress that 'what I say is not necessarily what you get', and in this regard, music and language are less radically different than common sense would have us believe. However, a long academic tradition of looking at musical works as reified, 'geometries-in-sound' necessitates further exploration of the fact that music, like language, can be, and indeed *is* an always-politicised communicative practice that addresses, and is addressed by, questions of identity, place, history, and power.

Shepherd (1991) and Feld (1984) tackle the question of music as communication from two very different (though complementary) perspectives. Feld focuses on the nature of communication, while Shepherd considers the

nature of sound itself – the physical phenomenon that music depends on for its existence.

Shepherd (1991: 159) draws important conclusions regarding the fundamentally integrative nature of sound which constantly provokes interpretive engagement:

Vision, smooth and silent, stresses separation at a distance. It is the sense that allows us to interject ourselves into the world over time and space, rather than simply having the world come in on us circumambiently and circumjacently. Touch is the sense basic not only to activating an awareness of ourselves, but also to making the fundamental distinction between us and not us. Sound, by contrast to both vision and touch stresses the integrative and the relational. It tells us that there is a world of depth surrounding us, approaching us simultaneously from all directions, totally fluid in its evanescence, a world which is active and constantly prodding us for a reaction.

Ray Pratt and Jason Toynbee describe sound in similar terms:

Sound is dynamic and symptomatic of energy. It does not occur in the absence of activity. Because humans are programmed to respond immediately to it, it 'takes over' any physical space in which it is heard. (Pratt, 1990: 22)

Consisting as it does in changes of pressure in a body of air all sound tends to take on the characteristics of an environment – it surrounds us. (Toynbee, 2000: 72)

Implicit in the arguments above are two significant propositions. First, since sound "stresses the integrative and relational" dimensions of our participation in the world, the potential to engender community is inherent in sound as a medium. Second, since sound activates in us an awareness that we are immersed in "a world which is ... constantly prodding us for a reaction", the potential for communication is also inherent in sound media. (As an aside, this may explain the importance of music at all kinds of social occasions, like weddings, funerals, dating/mating rituals and so on. It might also explain why language, our most prevalent means of communication, occurs primarily through the medium of sound.)

In his article "Music, Communication and Speech about Music", Steven Feld

(1984) discusses the nature and conditions of communication. He then defines communication as a "socially interactive and intersubjective process of reality construction through message production and interpretation", thereby expanding the descriptive scope of the term to include, in addition to language, other expressive forms such as music. I quote Feld at length because the depth and subtlety of his discussion is lost in paraphrase:

Being fundamentally relational, communication is process and our concern with it should be a concern with the operation of social determination-in-process. The focus is always on a relationship, not on a thing or an entity. In the case of human expressive modalities, it is a relationship between the origin and action of sensations and the character of interpretations and consequences. Communication in this sense is no longer reified to a transmission or force; it can only exist relationally, in-between, at unions and intersections. ... Communication then is not located in the content communicated nor in the information transferred. At the same time, it is not just the form of the content nor the stream of its conveyance. It is interactive; it resides in dialectic relations between: form and content, stream and information, code and message, culture and behavior, production and reception, construction and interpretation. Communication is neither the idea nor the action but the process of intersection where objects and events are rendered as meaningful or not through the work of social actors ... [for whom] engagement in the processes shape, define, maintain and bring forth tacit and/or explicit subjective realities. (1984: 2-3)

Feld articulates four propositions that are important to my argument regarding the relevance of discourse as an analytical model. First, communication is fundamentally relational and a process. Second, communication processes are not linear, but interactive. Third, communication processes always involve social/inter-subjective interaction. Finally, engagement in communication processes results in the affirmation and/or transformation of the (subjective) realities of the interacting subjects. In short, Feld's notion of communication as a socially contextualised, inter-subjective process of message production and interpretation is remarkably close to the concept of utterances as used by language analysts. As such, his discussion provides valuable underpinning for the theoretical possibility of 'musical utterances', and therefore, for the proposition that music, like language, may be understood to engender dialectical communication processes.

This notion of dialectical interaction is a crucial aspect of discursive formations

for it implies that in addition to always occurring within a social context, the utterances that collectively constitute a particular discourse themselves play a mutually defining role in the construction of context. Writing about language, Fairclough (1992: 3) explains that "discourses are formed, maintained, and transformed through dialogue." Invoking a similar idea – this time with specific regard to music – Walser (*ibid*: 33) points out that "music is not just a symbolic register for what really happens elsewhere; it is itself a material, social practice, wherein subject positions are constructed and negotiated, social relations are enacted and transgressed, and ideologies are developed and interrogated."

Complementarily, Monson (1996: 186) proposes that "the formal features of musical texts are just one aspect – a subset, so to speak – of a broader sense of the musical, which also includes the contextual and cultural. Rather than being conceived as foundational or separable from context, structure is taken to have as one of its central functions the *construction of social context*."

Thus, in trying to show how specific musical details function as utterances, I do not try to answer questions such as "what does a C major chord mean?" as if meaning 'resides' in the musical text and can be 'prised out' in the context of analysis. Rather, I hope to show how specific musical details function as musical utterances and express meaning by virtue of their dual occurrence within 1) systems of intra- and inter-textual relationships and 2) processes of dialectical interaction between texts and socio-historical contexts. Furthermore, I intend to explore the mutually defining relationships between these musical utterances and the social contexts in which they occur.<sup>4</sup> I will argue that the music examined occurs within, and itself contributes to, a polyphonic, social arena of overlapping, mutually interacting contextual forces that operate in concert and/or in competition with one other. Further, I argue that this

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<sup>4</sup>Although text and context exist in a mutually defining relationship to one another, their defining power relative to one another is not necessarily equal. Therefore, in some instances the text may constitute the stronger defining force, thus effecting a visible change to the context in which it occurs and at other times, the context may constitute the stronger defining force, in which case, context plays a strong role in terms of remaking the text. When the relationship between text and context is a consonant, cooperative one, a centripetal effect, engendering a sense of social cohesion, is achieved. At other times, when text and context operate in conflict with one another, the result is a socially centrifugal effect.

polyphonic encounter consists of moments of varying degrees of social consonance and/or dissonance resulting from the combined centripetal and/or centrifugal effect of the contextual forces at play.<sup>5</sup>

In conjunction with these linguistics-based notions of discourse as a system of utterances, my exploration of text-context interactions draws on a conception of discourse that various scholars have described as Foucauldian, since it views text, subject-formation, and power as interdependent parts of a coherent social system. In his work on English poetry as discourse, Anthony Easthope (1983: 47) observes:

Discourse ... is cohesive and determined simultaneously in three respects: materially, ideologically, subjectively. English poetic discourse is materially determined, having a certain consistent shaping of the signifier inscribed in it. By the same token it is ideologically determined, being a product of history, a relatively autonomous tradition, a bourgeois form of discourse. It is also subjectively determined and is a product of the reader.

Offering a more practice-focused account of discourse Chris Weedon (1987: 108) writes:

Discourses in Foucault's work, are ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and the relations between them.

Likewise, in their explanation of post-colonial conceptualisations of discourse, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2000: 70-72) note:

For Foucault, a discourse is a strongly bounded area of knowledge, a system of statements within which the world can be known ... [whereby] speakers and hearers, writers and readers come to an understanding about themselves, their relationship to each other and their place in the world (the construction of subjectivity) ... Discourse ... joins power and knowledge together. Those who have power have control over what is known and the way it is known, and those who have such knowledge have power over those who do not.

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<sup>5</sup>Figure 1-1 on page 21 presents a visual account of the forces at play in the text/context encounter.

Terry Eagleton's comments below are premised on a similar conjoining of text (or knowledge), subject-formation, and power:

Discourses, sign-systems and signifying practices of all kinds, from film and television to fiction and the languages of natural science, produce effects, shape forms of consciousness and un-consciousness, which are closely related to the maintenance or transforming of our existing systems of power. (1983: 210)

Cued by these writers, I propose that the 'socio-musical ecosystem' represented by local jazz functions as discourse because it exists as an intersubjectively-constituted, power-laden network of texts and social practices. By way of a close analysis of local jazz's textual, subjective, and political landscapes, I consider how the meanings ascribed to the music examined emerge and evolve in relation to the immediate and larger social contexts that the interviewed performers and listeners inhabit. My exploration of local jazz as meaningful praxis is thus ethnographically grounded, and in the discussion that follows, I explain the theoretical premises that subtend the fieldwork component of this study. This includes an explanation of why I use audiovisual data and then a discussion of the importance of interview data.

## **Fieldwork**

Performances featuring locally-based musicians playing their own material at concerts in venues in Durban and Johannesburg were videotaped and then analysed as texts. I specifically decided to focus on live music and to record the concerts on video so as not to privilege musical description and analysis at the expense of the visual dimensions of the performances. Addressing this issue of live musical performance as an aural *and* visual experience, Richard Leppert (1994: 70) argues that "despite its phenomenological sonoric ethereality, [live music] is an embodied practice, like dance and theatre [and as] such, its visual-performative aspect is no less central to its meanings than are the visual components of these other performing arts." He points out that whereas hearing "focuses on the abstract sonorities produced by the body's actions when

making music, vision focuses attention on the physicality of music making" (Ibid: 69). In other words, within a live musical encounter, "[music's] meanings and affects are, in part, dependent upon the sense of sight to help the auditor render the experience concrete and meaningful. The sight of music's performance ... locates sound in relation to the larger community of shared experiences from which people both produce and draw their perceptions of reality" (Ibid). Consequently, "the musical event is perceived (received) by listeners as a socialized activity" (Ibid: 71).

Thus in addition to an analysis of the musical techniques employed in the creation of the performances, my reading focuses on the stage behaviour of the musicians, audience behaviour, and the physical contexts in which the performances occurred. The performances (thus understood as instances of musical *and* social activity) constitute the 'primary texts'.

In addition to the primary texts, 'secondary texts' (linguistic discourse produced as a result of the concerts) are examined. These take the form of (transcribed) open-ended interviews with the musicians involved in the performances as well audience members. This analytical focus on secondary textual material or language about music

is predicated on the fact that ... music interacts with naturally occurring verbal discourse, not only in song texts, verbal art, and the prosodic musical structuring of speech, but also in the interpretive, theoretical and evaluative discourses surrounding musical experiences" (Feld and Fox, 1994: 32).

According to Feld (1984: 13-14), these discourses – which may comprise a range of paramusical practices from academic writing on music, to music journalism to informal speech about music – inevitably "involve lexical and discourse metaphor." Feld defines metaphor as "the human achievement of instantaneous recognition that things are simultaneously alike and unlike" (Ibid), and points out that "when most people talk about music, like and unlike is what they talk about" (Ibid: 14). This applies as much to formal/academic discourses about music as it does to everyday talk about music. As Marion Guck (1994: 2)

shows, “even the legitimate technical vocabulary of Western music is rooted in metaphor, and the metaphoric roots are often still in evidence” in for example our notions of pitch sequences as musical ‘lines’, or our characterisation of musical timbres as ‘dark’ or ‘bright’, ‘heavy’ or ‘light’.

Feld argues that “because metaphors operate on meaning over form, they generalize in ways no taxonomy might, while specifying in ways descriptions rarely achieve” (*Ibid*: 13). Hence, the pervasiveness of metaphor in linguistic discourses that surround musical experiences “is at once a recognition of the non-translatability of musical and verbal modes, and perhaps a recognition of ... [the] simultaneous multiplicity and generality” of what music communicates (*Ibid*: 14). As such, speech about music constitutes an important source of information “about ways we attempt to construct metaphoric discourse in order to signify our awareness of the more fundamental metaphoric discourse that music communicates in its own right” (*Ibid*: 13-14).

Regrettably, Feld does not develop the notion of “the fundamental metaphoric discourse that music communicates in its own right” and the proposition occurs in passing. Still, I think the idea of music as *metaphoric* discourse represents a powerful means of understanding not only *how* musical discourses communicate meaning, but also *what* meanings they communicate<sup>6</sup>. As such, the notion of metaphor, as it pertains to the interpretation of musical meaning, requires closer examination.

Drawing on Mark Johnson’s work in *The Body in the Mind* (1987), Walser explains that “metaphor is a crucial process for generating meaning whereby we come to understand one area of experience in terms of another” (1993: 32). Walser observes that “attempts to explain ‘music as metaphor’ have appeared with some regularity” but cautions that “metaphorical interpretations” are vulnerable to criticisms of being arbitrary and exhibiting an “anything goes”

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Turino (1999) argues that Peircian semiotics offers a fine-grained way of explaining how musical details reference extra-musical realities. In practice, however Peirce’s model can be cumbersome to work with, and when I experimented with applying Peirce’s ideas (as described by Turino) to my interview data, I felt that they complicated, rather than clarified, my discussion of local jazz as social text.

relativism." He notes that processes of intuiting metaphoric relationships are themselves discursively constituted and so he argues that it is not possible to "ground meaning 'below' the level of discourse" (*Ibid*).

While I fully agree with Walser's argument, I still feel (especially on the basis of my interview data) that an understanding of musical meaning entails an understanding of the ways in which music is metaphorically expressive of other experience. To my mind, the two approaches to understanding musical meaning (i.e. music as discourse and music as metaphor) need not be mutually exclusive. Rather, I would argue that while the processes of unravelling meaning are always discursively circumscribed, the ascription of meanings to particular musical sounds inevitably involves discerning metaphoric relationships between musical and extra-musical experience. Importantly, as Feld (1984: 5-11) shows in his in-depth examination of the music communication process, this is not an arbitrary process, but an intelligible one that entails the discursive operation of interpretive procedures whereby listeners intuit various relationships of likeness and unlikeness (in other words metaphoric relationships) between sound patterns on the one hand and facets of individual experience on the other. Feld explains that these interpretive procedures (which he further defines in terms of various kinds of "interpretive moves") are "deeply linked to, but not synonymous with, the structure of concatenated sound events" (*Ibid*: 6). Furthermore, this "deep linking" is not just a physiological or psychological phenomenon but a profoundly social one too. Feld's celebration of the essential role played by social processes in music communication processes is elegant and bears repeating:

Rather than posit only psychological constants as the deep source enabling music to express emotions<sup>7</sup>, we must posit also the centrality and complementarity of social experience, background, skill, desire and necessity as the constructs which shape perceptual sensations into conceptual realities. (*Ibid*)

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<sup>7</sup>Because this passage occurs within the context of a critique of Leonard Meyer's theories of meaning in music as developed in his *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (1956) and *Explaining Music* (1973), I read "emotion" as also referring to "meaning".

Because the meanings we ‘produce’ when we listen to music are socially ‘written’, they are never simply arbitrary. Rather, they pertain to the sound patterns we perceive in ways that are subtle and fluid, but always coherent, socially shared, and therefore, communicable. This communicability exists not just in the “*“feelingful”* (*Ibid*: 16), here-and-now of the musical experience, but also in the context of speech about music – as “metaphorical expression [reflecting] secondary interpretive awareness, recognition, or engagement” (*Ibid*). As such, because speech about music acts as a “window out to metaphoric processes” (*Ibid*: 13), it represents a potentially valuable resource for any study concerned with music as a meaningful social phenomenon.<sup>8</sup>

To summarise the main ideas presented thus far: in this thesis, I investigate local jazz as a socio-cultural and aesthetic phenomenon. Echoing Walser (1993: 28), I argue that the analytical notion of discourse enables the pursuit of such an investigation. Further, drawing on Leppert’s (1994) work, I recognize the value of video data as a means of exploring the contextual role played by the visual-performative dimensions of musical experiences in the production of meaning. Finally, drawing on Feld’s (1984) work, I argue that the ‘feeling’ of meaning – which entails the intuition of metaphoric coherences between musical and extra-musical experience – is indexed (via lexical and discourse metaphor) in speech about music. As such, speech about music constitutes a valuable source of information and concepts about how social processes inhere in musical processes. I now turn to an explanation of the framework within which my ethnographically contextualised analytical account of local jazz unfolds, and outline the themes that are explored in chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6.

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<sup>8</sup>In this regard, writers such as Monson (1996), Walser (1993), Shepherd (1991) and McClary (1991) who analyse music as an acoustic as well as social phenomenon, use (or at the very least express their indebtedness to) information derived from interview or ‘talk-about-music’ resources.

## Overview of thesis<sup>9</sup>

One of the difficulties I encountered in formulating this framework was the problem of incorporating my primary and secondary textual material within an academic argument on musical meaning. As explained, the primary texts are audiovisual and incorporate musical performance as well as other forms of social performance. As such, the primary texts convey meanings that are largely ‘feelingful’ – connotative rather than denotative – and consequently difficult to integrate within the linear framework of academic argument. Just a few minutes of music can communicate countless different messages about identity, place, history, society, and so on. Likewise, in their informal speech about music, people constantly shift from one concept to the next, making meaning difficult to pin down.

Still, to the extent that the primary and secondary texts occupy a distinct discursive universe – or “sociomusical ecology” (Middleton, 1990: 95) – they are related in coherent ways. But, how do I show this? How do I describe the webs of meaning that comprise this ‘discursive ecosystem’ without sacrificing a sense of its rich complexity? One possibility I considered but discarded as unfruitful was a concert-by-concert or tune-by-tune analysis. Another approach might have been to focus separately on the primary and secondary texts, but that also led to a dead end.

I eventually realised that I needed to analyse local jazz as a coherent musical and socio-cultural whole by searching for recurring themes around which to unify my discussion; it became apparent that this was the most appropriate approach when I transcribed the interviews. Even though I conducted unstructured interviews, four key ideas consistently emerged in each interview. These centred around 1) notions of music as an aesthetic construction; 2) notions of music and identity; 3) notions of music and place, and 4) notions of music and power. I therefore structure my argument around these four themes and use them as a point of departure in my discussion of local jazz’s social

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<sup>9</sup>Figure 1-1 on page 21 presents a visual account of the discussion which follows.

meanings.

Ultimately, thick description dissolves distinctions between (musical) ‘texts’ and ‘contexts’. However, for the purposes of argument, the musical texts may be seen *schematically* as being ‘embedded’ within a cumulative succession of contextual layers, each of which references a particular discursive theme. A unifying argument is that each theme signals co-defining, dialectical relationships between music and particular aspects of context. In each case, I explore the defining power of text and context in relation to each other. Thereafter, I search for relationships of conflict and/or cooperation between text and context, which I then describe in terms of relative social consonance and/or dissonance.

My exploration of the first theme, local jazz as an aesthetic and textual phenomenon, is presented in chapter 3 (“Local jazz as musical discourse”). In my musical analysis I ask the following questions: How does the music examined represent a “coherent … universe of significant sonic options” (Walser 1993: xiv). What are its recurring musical features? Which features are specific to local jazz and which features characterize jazz in general?

The second theme centres on notions of subject formation and identity, and is addressed in chapter 4 (“Local jazz as idiocultural<sup>10</sup> discourse”). Here I pose the following questions: Who are the musicians, the individuals who ‘created’ the music examined? How does the music they produce register the unique aesthetic, biographical and socio-cultural contexts they inevitably bring to the processes of improvisation and composition? Who are their audiences, the individuals who attended the concerts? To what extent do their readings of the music reference the unique agendas that *they* bring to the reception process? In short, how are local jazz’s meanings subjectively defined?

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<sup>10</sup> Feld and Fox (1994) use the term “idiocultural”, but do not explain it. As I understand it, the word is analogous to the term “idiolect”, which in linguistics, refers to the “unique characteristics of the language of an individual speaker” (Fromkin and Rodman, 1988: 253). As such, ‘the idiocultural’ refers to those dimensions of taste and identity preferences that are peculiar to specific individuals who may be described as unique nexuses of psychological, social, cultural,

This contextual layer thus comprises the people who performed and listened to the music examined. Focusing on the dialogic processes of text creation (music composition and performance), I show how the material organisation of specific pieces sonically references the distinctive biographies and agendas that individual musicians bring to the music-making process. Concentrating on the processes of reception (listening to and making interpretive sense of the music as an audience member), I then explore how the meanings ascribed to specific texts emerge and evolve in relation to the subjective realities of individual listeners. In short, I describe how the social meanings of the music examined are shaped by a mosaic of idiocultural dynamics collectively constituted by local jazz's musicians and listeners.

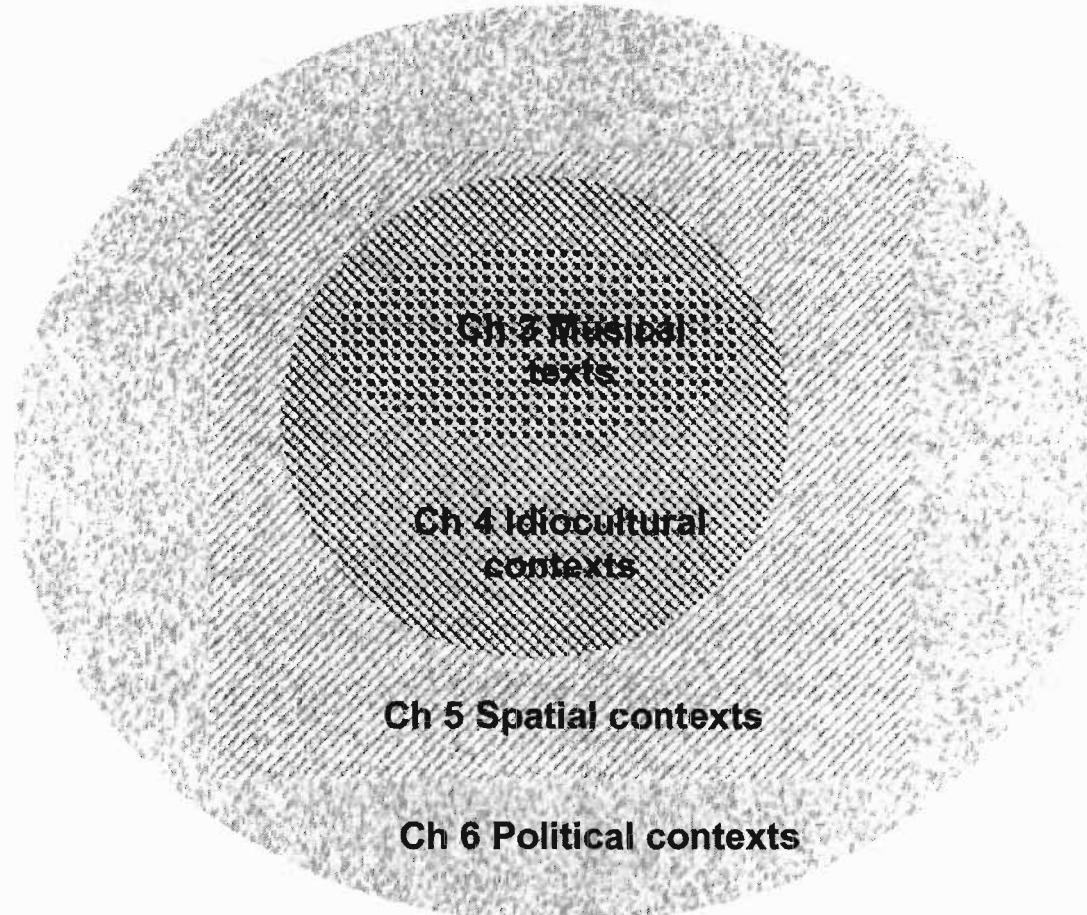
The third theme references notions of time and place, and is addressed in chapter 5 ("Local jazz as spatiotemporal discourse"). Defining place in terms of architectural space and geographic space, I ask the following questions: Where is the music heard? How are the meanings ascribed to local jazz affected by the venues in which it is performed? To what extent do environmental, demographic, political, and economic factors peculiar to Johannesburg and Durban find expression in the textual landscapes of the music examined?

This layer of contextual forces comprises, firstly, the architectural spaces that housed the performances examined, and secondly, the locales (or geographic spaces) that local jazz's musicians and listeners inhabit. I argue that, like local jazz's idiocultural contexts, these spatial dynamics impact on the meanings ascribed to the music examined, and sometimes even find expression in the sonic organisation of certain pieces. I also observe that place operates in a framework of discursive engagement with the text *and* the participants in the musical experience.

Power is the fourth unifying theme around which I structure my argument and it is discussed in chapter 6 ("Local jazz as political discourse"). Drawing on Foucauldian notions of power as a pervasive presence, this chapter rereads the

preceding analyses of text/context interaction by describing how the musical texts, the musicians and listeners, and the spatial contexts (discussed in chapters 3, 4, and 5, respectively) occupy larger social contexts characterised by unequal distributions of power. In this final chapter, I show how music performs power, and argue that ultimately ‘the musical’ is political.

However, before I begin this analysis, I need to acquaint the reader with the fieldwork which contextualises the ensuing arguments. This includes an overview of the concerts considered and the reasons (in the light of the preceding arguments) for selecting them, as well as an overview of the secondary texts. Thereafter, I present a ‘diary-like’ description of each concert. This has entailed selectively describing each gig in terms of a similar set of categories to facilitate comparison. In ‘reformatting’ live musical and social performance in writing, I inevitably lose many meanings whilst unintentionally inscribing others that may be misleading. This is regrettably unavoidable. For pragmatic reasons, it is essential to (re)present what actually occurred in writing since it is analysed via that medium. Those details which are crucial to the ensuing arguments are highlighted while those which I (rightly or wrongly) felt to be of less importance to my discussion have been considered peripherally or left out entirely. For this reason, aspects of context or even certain tunes are sometimes described in great detail while at other times they are glossed over in a line or two.



1-1: Overview of thesis

## 2. Fieldwork

The present chapter acquaints the reader with the fieldwork that prefigures the arguments presented in chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6. First, I briefly explain my decisions regarding the groups considered. Second, I introduce the reader to local jazz's musical and social landscapes by constructing relatively 'thin' descriptions of the eight concerts examined<sup>1</sup>. Third, I introduce the participant musicians and audience-members interviewed.

### Groups considered

Because 'context' is central to my theorisation of local jazz as a system of musical utterances, I chose to research a field that would include, and afford me ready access to, all the key musical role-players (composers; performers; listeners). Consequently, I examine *live* performances at which *local* bands played their own '*original*'<sup>2</sup> music. As such, the study does not consider groups that play jazz standards, since a properly contextualised account of such performances would need to consider various versions recorded by numerous artists working in many different places at different times. This would then make it difficult to limit the study to a particular geographical and historical location, and expose the broad range of contextual dynamics operating within that socio-musical ecology. For similar reasons, I do not discuss commercial recordings by local musicians, as these additionally involve record producers, studio technicians, marketing, media, and retail personnel, as key players. Likewise, I focus on bands based in Durban in the mid-1990s and in Johannesburg in 2003, because I lived in those places at those times, and so have an embodied sense of some of the spatiotemporal dynamics that frame/d their music-making.

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<sup>1</sup> Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 present progressively 'thicker' descriptions of local jazz, and as a whole, the thesis constructs a thick description of the music played by the three groups considered.

<sup>2</sup> For jazz musicians and listeners, the term 'original composition' usually refers to music written by one of the performing musicians present in the here-and-now of the live musical event.

I conducted my first round of fieldwork in Durban between June 1994 and December 1995. Although there were several jazz groups in the city that played some 'original' music at the time, there were only two bands that played their own material exclusively. They were Counterculture and Mosaic. Other groups were typically 'pickup bands' (temporarily brought together to play a specific engagement) that performed a combination of standards, 'township jazz', and some of their own music.

Counterculture was formed in 1991 by Chris Merz, an American saxophonist and composer who had moved to Durban to take up a lectureship in jazz at the University of Natal<sup>3</sup>. Comprising four other nationally-respected players (trumpeter, Feya Faku; pianist, Melvin Peters; double-bassist, Lex Futshane, and drummer, Vince Pavitt), Counterculture was recognised as one of the most accomplished jazz outfits in the city. The group featured a repertoire of sophisticated post-bebop compositions, mostly by Merz, and virtuosic improvisation from all its members. In addition to their performance activities, Counterculture's members also taught at the University of Natal's and University of Durban-Westville's music departments. Even though Counterculture had been in existence for just over three years at the time of the performances discussed here, the group were praised for having "enriched the local music scene" (*Daily News "Tonight"*, 1 June 1994).

Founded by Stacey van Schalkwyk and myself in 1991, Mosaic consisted of students at the University of Natal's and the University of Durban-Westville's music departments. At the time of the performances described here, the members were Stacey van Schalkwyk (flute); Mageshen Naidoo (guitar); Bongani Sokhela (bass guitar); Bhisham Bridglall, and, later, Magandiren Moodley (*tabla*); I was the group's pianist. Because of its unusual instrumentation, Mosaic's composite sound was atypical for jazz, and often featured rather light, transparent sonorities. For this

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<sup>3</sup> In 2004, the University of Natal (NU) and University of Durban-Westville (UDW) merged to form the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

reason, Mosaic was quite popular with classical music audiences, who tended to hear the group as a chamber ensemble. Drawing on aspects of jazz, township jazz, western classical, and Indian classical musics, Mosaic played a self-described 'Indo-Afro-jazz' style which dovetailed conveniently with the prevailing politics of multiculturalism and the "Rainbow Nation". For this reason, the group received a fair bit of media coverage, mostly by local print media but, also, occasionally, national coverage on radio and television.

Because of their links via the city's two university music departments, there was a close relationship between Counterculture and Mosaic. For example, all Mosaic's members, except Bridglall and Moodley, had taken courses taught by Merz. Further, Counterculture members, Futshane and Faku, had often played with Mosaic in various concerts, and Faku featured as a guest performer with Mosaic in one of the concerts examined. These close associations proved valuable as they helped me access information that the performers might have been unwilling to share had they not known me as a musician.

I wrote about Counterculture and Mosaic in a Masters thesis that my examiners recommended I expand into a doctoral study. For the present PhD thesis, I therefore decided to extend the geographical scope of my study by exploring original jazz performance in another South African city. I began this second round of fieldwork in April 2003, when I moved to Johannesburg to take up a lectureship in jazz at the University of the Witwatersrand.

The centre of South Africa's music industry, Johannesburg is home to the majority of the country's professional jazz musicians. Nevertheless, as in other parts of the country, there are very few 'original jazz' ensembles that have (relatively) stable and consistent memberships (along the lines of Mosaic and Counterculture). Where such bands do exist, they perform live concerts only sporadically.

In 2003, however, a notable exception was The Prisoners of Strange, which

comprises composer, electric bassist, and leader, Carlo Mombelli; trumpeter, Marcus Wyatt; saxophonist Sidney Mnisi; trombonist/vocalist, Siya Makuzeni, and drummer, Lloyd Martin. Occupying an intriguing, ever-shifting aesthetic space between free jazz, Brazilian music, and *musique concrète*, the Prisoners' music involves a baffling blend of unpredictable forms, alien textures and timbres, intense lyricism, meticulous composition, and daring improvisation, that, in Mombelli's words, skirts "the edge of wrong", and resists categorisation. Apart from the fact that I find Mombelli's music interesting, I decided to research the Prisoners because they performed regularly, usually the first Sunday of every month at the Bassline in Melville. Further, I had often accompanied Siya Makuzeni (who had been a music student at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, where I taught from 1999 to early 2003) and wanted to study another band that, like Mosaic, included a woman instrumentalist. While in Grahamstown, I also played once with Wyatt (in 2001) and Mombelli (in 2002). Moreover, Mombelli was enrolled for a Masters in composition at the University of the Witwatersrand, and I hoped that, as in Durban, these musical associations and shared institutional affiliations would facilitate my fieldwork.

## **Concerts**

As explained in chapter 1, the concerts examined are conceptualised as instances of musical and social performance, and constitute the 'primary texts' of the present study. (The 'secondary texts' are the interviews produced as a result of the concerts.) Altogether, I discuss eight concerts: two by Counterculture in June 1994, three by Mosaic between March and December 1995, and three by the Prisoners of Strange between August and December 2003. My descriptions of the concerts are, of necessity, highly selective, as they aim to draw the reader's attention to aspects of music and context that are relevant to arguments developed in subsequent chapters.

To facilitate comparison, I discuss each concert under two subheadings. In the “Venue and vibe” subsections, I briefly portray each venue in terms of its surrounding locale, its musical history, and its physical layout; thereafter, I describe the behaviour of the audiences and musicians. In the “Repertoire” subsections, I try to take the reader into the distinctive sound-world of each band by providing fairly detailed descriptions of the initial few pieces played by each group at their ‘first’ concerts<sup>4</sup>. I write these musical synopses in the present tense to try and evoke a sense of the concerts’ musical and temporal unfolding.

### **Counterculture: Howard College Theatre (Friday, 3 June 1994)**

#### **Venue and vibe**

Bordered by the historically-white<sup>5</sup>, middle-class suburbs of Glenwood, Manor Gardens, and Carrington Heights, the University of KwaZulu-Natal’s Howard College campus occupies a prominent hilltop, about five kilometres from downtown Durban, that commands spectacular views of the CBD and the Indian Ocean to the northeast, Durban harbour to the east, and the city’s hilly hinterland to the west. The ‘main’ concert venue on campus, Howard College Theatre is a smallish hall that seats about 250 people on two levels in stepped rows facing a raised stage. The venue falls under the supervision of the music department, and it houses two grand pianos, a harpsichord, and a clavichord. As can be expected from this description, the venue has been most successful as a space for the performance of chamber and solo music. The acoustics are lively and not very flattering to amplified musics. However, as part of its long-running, Monday lunch-hour concert series, the music department has presented a range of musics, from western classical to Indian classical, to jazz and *maskanda*, at the venue.

For the Counterculture concert, the sound was carefully set up: two mikes for the

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<sup>4</sup>To avoid repetition, I try to describe the subsequent pieces they play as briefly as possible.

<sup>5</sup> During apartheid, these suburbs would have been reserved for whites only.

Steinway concert grand, mikes for trumpet, sax, and drums, an 'announce mike' doubling as a flute microphone, and monitors for the musicians. Tickets for the concert were available through Computicket<sup>6</sup> or at the door and cost R10 (or R5 for students). Mostly casually dressed, the audience were an eclectic mix of male and female, young and old, black, white, and Indian. Most were in some way associated with the University.

Despite the formal layout of the venue and the 'academic vibe', the audience were audibly appreciative of the music, with some of them shouting "Yeah!" when they particularly 'dug' something. During quieter moments in the pieces, and when announcements were being made, listeners were respectfully subdued and attentive. Many listeners were clearly known to the band, and musicians in the audience were quick to signal to the performers on stage when Peters could not be clearly heard because one of the piano mikes had cut out.

The musicians projected a confident presence, and the sets proceeded smoothly with a minimum of fiddling and retuning of instruments between pieces. Verbal communication between the musicians was minimal, and the set order had obviously been discussed in advance, and was clear to all the musicians. With the exception of drummer Pavitt, all the musicians played from music. All five members were smartly dressed, in formal jackets, in the case of Peters and Merz, and smart shirts, in the case of the other three.

Although there were programme notes, Merz announced each tune. His manner was formal, yet cordial, and, at times, very funny. For example, after they played the first tune, Merz moved over to the announce mike (which was also doubling as a flute mike, and therefore set *above* the level of Merz's lips), and began his announcement:

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<sup>6</sup> Computicket is a nation-wide agency, with outlets at most major shopping centres, that sells and issues tickets for a range of sporting and cultural events.

Thank you all for coming. The reason this is way [up] over here like this is because I need it way over here like this; so just bear with me for a couple of tunes, and you'll see the reason why. Thank you all for com – Oh this is ridiculous [appreciative roar of laughter from the audience as he swiftly adjusts the mike stand to a more comfortable level] – all for coming out. The only thing I can think to say [gestures out to full house] is where were you all three years ago? [More appreciative laughter]

His other announcements continued in this confident and familiar manner.

The concert was being recorded for radio broadcast as part of the “Southern Crossover” concert series, a joint venture between the city’s two music departments and the former English Service of SABC radio, designed to showcase live, local, intercultural musics. In keeping with the series’ ‘multicultural’ theme, Counterculture chose to play pieces that exhibited the influence of various musics including Hebrew, Japanese, African, and Indian.

### *Repertoire*

The group open the concert with a piece by bassist Futshane entitled “Ngu Makazi<sup>7</sup>”. It begins with a soft low-register tremolo figure, played by piano, bass, and drums. Trumpeter, Faku enters with the opening Xhosa ‘folk’ melody:

*Very Free*

2-1: “Ngu Makazi” opening melody

He is accompanied by Merz, who plays countermelodies on the tenor sax. There is a gradual crescendo. Drummer Pavitt and pianist Peters provide a surging backdrop of restless tom rolls and cascading arpeggios. Futshane’s and Peters’ rumbling bass is the gravitational force that holds the music together. The energy

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<sup>7</sup> Please refer to the accompanying CD for a recording of the performance described.

peaks, and then quickly subsides into almost nothing. Futshane steps in with the bass ostinato:



## 2-2: “Ngu Makazi” bass ostinato

There is a smattering of applause. Faku restates the melody. Merz’s counter-melodies become bolder and the two horn-players break into an intense duet, buoyed by Pavitt’s powerful drumming. The duet peaks; the audience applauds; then, gradually, the music peters out. You can almost hear the audience listening as the music fades to a pianissimo dynamic, and the rhythm disintegrates into a series of long, quiet notes from the two horns. A half-second’s silence: then approving whistles and applause.

Merz makes his opening announcement (quoted above); he then explains that their performance of the next piece represents a break with tradition in that it was not composed by one of Counterculture’s members but by Deepak Ram, a (then) Durban-based Indian classical flautist and composer, and colleague of Peters’ at UDW. He acknowledges the composer, sitting in the second row:

This was written by a friend of ours who’s sitting right there in front of me: I can stare right into his beady little eyes. This is a Deepak Ram composition called “Give five”.

Peters plays a slow, recurring left-hand figure that imitates a *tanpura*<sup>8</sup>; his right hand follows with a shimmering, rhythmically-free melody that outlines the notes of the raga “Jog” on which the piece is based:

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<sup>8</sup> Indian string drone instrument



### 2-3: "Give five" – opening of piano alap

As Peters' 'alap'<sup>9</sup> ends, Futshane enters with the melody, a jaunty ditty that self-consciously references Paul Desmond's "Take five":



### 2-4: "Give five" – main theme

Merz takes up the melody on soprano sax while Peters comps using cluster chords made up of notes of the raga. Thereafter, Merz plays a solo, improvising strictly within the confines of the raga. Peters follows with a piano solo that Merz, standing to one side, visibly enjoys. Appreciative applause accompanies the conclusion of Peters' solo. They end the piece by playing the head again.

Merz introduces the next item, his own composition, as a "very, very multicultural piece" that "includes elements of Japanese *shakuhachi* music, although played on a concert flute, Hebrew music, and African music." At this point, he invites music student, and guest *amadinda*<sup>10</sup> player, Geoffrey Tracey on stage. After a brief interruption in which the sound crew try (unsuccessfully) to fix a faulty piano mike, Merz picks up his flute and, improvising over a pentatonic Japanese-sounding scale, plays the rhythmically-free solo introduction to "Sui Zen". He ends by holding a long note, whereupon Futshane brings in the five-four groove on which the rest of the composition is based:

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<sup>9</sup> The *alap* is the slow, rhythmically-free section with which North Indian classical performances begin.

<sup>10</sup> Large xylophone-like African percussion instrument



### 2-5: "Sui Zen" – bass ostinato

Against this, Tracey plays counter-rhythms on the *amadinda*. Over this polyrhythmic texture, Merz and Faku, harmonising in perfect fourths, play a broad, sweeping melody (also in polyrhythmic counterpoint to the groove). A rhythmically-busy unison line, played by the two horns, ushers in the solos, which are played by Faku and then Peters. The piece ends with a restatement of the head, and a brief repetition of the '*shakuhachi*' section.

Fourth on the programme is Merz's "Travel in peace: Part II", the second part of an extended composition, originally for big band, that he wrote in honour of composer and bandleader Sun Ra, who died in 1993. A series of discrete, loosely-connected sections, "Travel in peace: Part II" begins with an unaccompanied bass solo. Thereafter, Merz plays a tenor solo over an energetic two-bar riff played by the rhythm section. A trumpet solo, accompanied only by drums, follows. Amidst various references to early trumpet masters like Louis Armstrong and Bubber Miley, Faku deftly sneaks a fragment of "Old MacDonald had a farm" into his improvisation. Immediately picking up the reference, the audience breaks into approving applause. After the trumpet solo, there is a brief restatement of the riff that accompanied Merz's solo. The piece concludes with a brief burst of intensely violent, free improvisation. Some listeners cheer wildly; others, less moved by the musical commotion, wait for the musicians to stop playing before applauding.

Counterculture conclude their first set with a composition by Faku entitled "And them". The piece consists of a simple descending melody based on the Dorian mode, played over a medium-fast Coltrane-Quartet-like groove. Peters and Merz play short solos.

The second set begins with Futshane's "Up and down", a driving 32-bar hard-bop number with a modal 'A' section, and ii-V-iii-vi-I bridge that inspires several choruses of spirited improvisation from Merz and Peters. After the piece, Merz moves over to the announce mike, and explains how the second set's repertoire has been chosen:

We decided that what we would do is, each of us (there being five of us) would get to call a tune from the [Counterculture] book and that first piece was written by Monde [Lex] Futshane and, [he looks at his list] ah, selected by Monde Futshane. [Everyone laughs].

They then play Merz's composition "Ice nine", which he describes as "the world's only melodic minor blues in seven-four." Everyone, except Futshane, solos for several choruses. Pavitt takes the evening's first and only drum solo, and his playing is enthusiastically received by the audience.

The next item, a piano trio composition by Peters, entitled "Quite candidly", has been selected by Faku, who, with characteristic humility, chooses a piece on which he does not play. Peters' wistful waltz contains echoes of Bill Evans and George Shearing, and the trio's gentle, introspective playing forms an oasis of quiet within an otherwise boisterous, bop-dominated set.

Following this, is an up-tempo composition of Merz's entitled "The Midwest coast". With its wide intervallic leaps in the melody and colouristic harmonies, the piece recalls the compositions of Wayne Shorter. Peters and Merz take solos.

The programme ends with another Merz composition, a 32-bar ballad, called "All these worlds". Consisting of a plaintive melody played over a rich non-functional chord sequence, the nostalgic, contemplative composition makes a fitting end to the farewell concert<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Merz had decided to leave Durban and return to the United States, and this was the second last concert that the group was to play. It was billed as a farewell concert.

## **Counterculture: Rainbow Restaurant (Sunday, 5 June 1994)**

### *Venue and vibe*

The Rainbow Restaurant and Jazz Club occupies a scruffy side-street of shops, takeaways, and a busy minibus-taxi<sup>12</sup> rank in the heart of Pinetown, a municipality of drab industrial estates and bland, historically-white, petit bourgeois suburbs, about twenty kilometres west of central Durban. The life and soul of the 1980s Durban jazz scene, the Rainbow used to host regular Sunday concerts, and was, at the height of its popularity, a flagrantly countercultural space patronised by students, marijuana-smokers, anti-apartheid activists, and jazz-lovers of all races. In the 1990s, however, the owner (an avid jazz fan) left town and the venue began to lose its reputation for good music as it floundered under bad management.

"The Rainbow", as it is known locally, is a long room, with fixed tables and seating on built-in benches. The stage runs against one of the longer sides of the rectangular room, and the bar and kitchen are to the right of the stage (as you face it). The venue had been most successful as a space for township jazz, and mainstream jazz, as well as other forms of jazz-influenced popular musics. The Rainbow had therefore (even in its better days) seldom hosted 'concert jazz' acts like Counterculture.

The concert was poorly attended, and there were fewer than twenty people present, including the musicians, the restaurant staff, and the audience members, some of whom did not stay for the whole gig. There was no amplification, and the venue's acoustic piano was in such poor condition that Peters ended up playing the second set on an electric keyboard which did not suit the group's sound. The

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<sup>12</sup> Because South Africa's black townships have been zoned far from its city centres, and public transport systems are unreliable, or non-existent, most township dwellers depend on privately-operated sixteen-seat mini-buses (or 'taxis' as they are called locally) to get between work and home.

audience did not seem especially taken with the music, and many talked loudly as the musicians played, or announcements were made. People constantly wandered past the stage, making trips to the bar, even as the sets progressed. However, there were some listeners who were more attentive, and during more energetic moments in the pieces – like Pavitt's drum solos – people applauded enthusiastically, and whistled approval.

The musicians were casually dressed, and in contrast to the Howard College Theatre performance, their stage demeanour was downright blasé. Between tunes, they 'fiddled' a lot, retuning their instruments, rifling through wads of scores, searching for musical parts, and the gig felt more like a rehearsal than a public concert. A few tunes were not played even after they had been announced because certain parts could not be found. There were several 'false starts', where one of the members would begin playing, not realising that the other players were not ready; they would then have to start over. Once the pieces got going however, the group displayed consistently high levels of musicianship.

Merz's announcement of tunes was often half-hearted, and as the glum, ironic tone of his opening announcement attests, he was deeply disappointed by the poor audience turnout:

Very nice to play for eh members of the press: there's Nishlyn Ramanna [myself with the video camera] representing community broadcasting, Rafs [a hirsute photographer with a keen interest in local jazz] from the Daily Beard, and Jill [Merz] of course, from the family newspaper. We're gonna continue now with a piece we haven't played in a long time, and it's called "Russ Morgan Orchestra Dead on Arrival".

The rowdy audience began to frustrate Merz intensely in the second set. During their performance of "Sui Zen", while Merz played the unaccompanied, unamplified flute coda, one patron's voice was especially audible above the music. He continued talking loudly after the piece had finished, and Merz announced their concluding number:

During the interval, I met a nice young lady from Michigan and this piece is about our part of the world and it's called ... [the patron continues talking loudly over Merz's voice, and, in frustration, Merz, pointing to his ears, shouts:] LISTEN! ... "The Midwest coast". Thank you.

The extent to which 'non-musical' factors such as audience behaviour, announcements, etc., contribute to the success (or not) of live musical performance should be self-evident from the above.

### *Repertoire*

With the exception of three pieces, the repertoire played at the Rainbow performance is the same as for their Howard College Theatre concert. The group open with Futshane's "Up and down" (described above on page 32). Merz, Peters, and Faku play fairly long solos. They follow with "Russ Morgan Orchestra: Dead on arrival", a laconic, medium-fast swing tune by Merz. The next piece, a gentle waltz entitled "Dr Dave", is also by Merz. Solos are played by Merz on tenor saxophone, Faku on flugelhorn and Futshane on bass.

There is a flurry of conversation between Peters and Merz before the next piece begins. Peters is unwilling to play Ram's "Give five", with its extended solo piano introduction, on an out-of-tune instrument, before a rowdy audience. Instead, they play another composition of Merz's entitled "Thursday May 12".

Merz then announces the next tune, "Travel in peace: Part two". Futshane begins playing, but quickly stops. A quick conversation ensues between Peters, Faku, and Merz. It seems Peters doesn't have the piano part. Instead, they end the first set with Faku's "And them". Faku and Merz play long solos.

The second set opens quietly with Merz's ballad "All these worlds". Peters is now playing an electric keyboard; its pinched, tinny sound doesn't suit the music, but at least the instrument is in tune. They follow this with Futshane's "Ngu Makazi", then

Merz's "Ice nine". All three tunes are presented in the same format as at the Howard College Theatre gig. The audience enjoy Pavitt's drum solo on "Ice nine" and they applaud enthusiastically as he concludes his improvisation. Following this, the group play Merz's "Sui Zen", sounding quite different this time without the *amadinda* and with the bass ostinato being doubled on electric instead of acoustic piano. They end the gig with Merz's "The Midwest coast".

### **Mosaic: Durban Art Gallery (Tuesday, 21 March 1995)**

#### *Venue and vibe*

Along with a library, municipal offices, auditorium, and natural history museum, the Durban Art Gallery is housed in the Durban City Hall, an Edwardian neo-Baroque building, completed in 1910, that is a replica of the Belfast City Hall. Near the City Hall are several other historical buildings that were erected by the English colonialists in the late 1800s; they now serve as a post office, performing arts complex, tourist centre, gymnasium, and shopping mall.

Featuring Feya Faku as guest trumpeter, Mosaic's Durban Art Gallery performance formed part of a concert series hosted by The Friends of Music, a private music society, who presented mostly classical music concerts at the venue. The circular gallery, where the concerts were held, is a beautiful room with peach-coloured walls, nineteenth-century artworks, and polished wooden floors. It is also an awkward performance space: the centre of the room has a hole in the floor, two meters in diameter, which overlooks part of the natural history museum on the floor below. The head of a life-size model dinosaur pokes up into this space almost at a level with the gallery floor. High above the hole is a domed skylight. As can be expected from this architectural setup, the gallery's acoustics are extremely lively. Moreover, during Mosaic's concert, there was a constant 'roar' from the room's ancient air conditioning unit which has to stay permanently switched on to protect the artworks from Durban's humid climate. The seating arrangements were equally

inconvenient, with the audience sitting at opposite ends of the room, separated by the hole in the floor. Announcements often had to be repeated because they were seldom equally audible on both sides of the room.

About fifty people attended the concert. Many of them were well-to-do, elderly, white, female 'Friends of Music regulars' who would have experienced Mosaic's performance as an aberrant event. The remaining audience-members were (black, white, and Indian) students, many of whom had heard us play before, and were therefore familiar with our music.

Because of its eclectic makeup, the audience responded with a peculiar mix of quiet reservation and audible engagement with the music. Occasionally, some patrons would applaud after certain solos and ensemble sections, especially those where the music would break off abruptly before resuming. Mostly, however, listeners reserved their applause, in the fashion of western classical music, until after a piece had finished.

Like Counterculture's Howard College Theatre performance, Mosaic's Art Gallery concert was, as jazz gigs in the city go, a relatively high profile event. Tickets for the concert were available via Computicket, and like the Counterculture concert, the performance was reviewed by local critics. This was, to date, among the more prestigious gigs we had done, and we were smartly dressed and rather serious on stage. The programme had been finalised well in advance, and the concert proceeded smoothly from tune to tune.

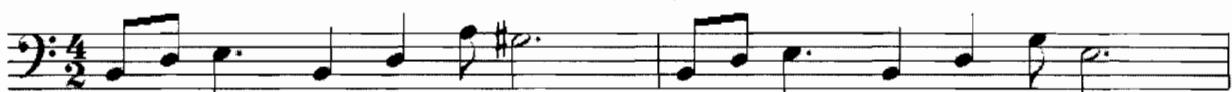
Largely formal in tone, Van Schalkwyk's announcements mostly served to inform the audience of the title and composer of particular tunes. Occasionally (like Merz in his announcement of "Ice nine") she would mention specifically-musical aspects of certain compositions. For example, when introducing my composition, "Blue thirteen", she explained that the piece has a thirteen-bar structure instead of a more conventional twelve-bar blues form. Just as Merz had mentioned the

circumstances that prompted him to title one of his tunes "The Midwest coast", Van Schalkwyk explained that her composition "NMR 1964" was named after the registration number of her first car, a rickety Morris Minor that had valiantly delivered us to many gigs, despite being overburdened with too many instruments and band-members. Such titbits of information were received with amusement, and helped soften the stiff formality of the event.

### *Repertoire*

We open with Deepak Ram's "Give five". Because of Mosaic's instrumental line-up, as well as our specific interest in fusing aspects of Indian music with jazz, our performance of the composition differs considerably from Counterculture's. Like the Counterculture version, it begins with an '*alap*' section, but it is played as a duet by van Schalkwyk on western flute and Bridglall on Indian flute (or *bansuri*) and accompanied on the piano and a *tanpura* which guitarist Naidoo gently strums. The main theme is first stated on *bansuri* (rather than on the bass, as in the Counterculture version) but otherwise, the head is the same, melodically, in both versions. Our rhythmic approach, however, is different, and we do not swing the piece, but play it with an equal subdivision of the beat. The sound of Bridglall's *tabla* emphasizes the composition's distinctly Indian flavour.

Playing strictly within the raga, I take the first solo. Also playing within the raga, Sokhela follows with a slap bass solo. A few people clap as he concludes, and Naidoo begins his improvisation. Naidoo's solo ends with a stark break in which the entire band is tacit for two beats. Thinking the piece has ended, the audience applauds. They quickly fall silent as Bridglall sets up a fast eight-beat groove, and Sokhela enters with the ostinato against which van Schalkwyk plays her flute solo:



2-6: "Give five" – bass ostinato for flute solo

Van Schalkwyk's solo concludes with a '*tiha*' (Indian rhythmic cadence), played in unison by the whole band. Following this, we close with a restatement of the opening melody, which functions as the head out. Van Schalkwyk makes an opening announcement:

We'd like to thank you all for coming tonight. We opened the concert with a piece entitled "Give five", a composition by a close friend of ours, Deepak Ram. We'd like to call on our special guest, Fezile Faku, to play his composition "And them".

Faku has arranged a very different version of "And them" for Mosaic. It begins with a *rubato* introduction played in unison by trumpet and flute, and accompanied by bass and piano. Following this, is the descending E Dorian melody, as played by Counterculture; as with "Give five", the rhythmic feel, however, is very different. Unlike Counterculture's 'spacious' four feel, rhythmically and texturally reminiscent of the Coltrane Quartet, Mosaic's version consists of busy rhythmic figures played by *tabla* and guitar over a basic pulse of sixteenth notes, and is stylistically reminiscent of 1970s funk. Faku and Naidoo play solos.

Next, we play a composition of mine entitled "Beaton Way". Formally, the composition consists of four movements, each of which is melodically based primarily on a pentatonic raga in F, with secondary material derived from the Lydian scale a semitone above. The first section, which features a piano solo, begins with a vigorous melody (played in unison by piano and guitar) against a frenetic six-four groove:

2-7: "Beaton Way" – opening melody and groove

Following this is a peaceful movement that features bass and flute (accompanied only by piano) in an improvised duet. This is followed by a guitar solo in seven-four accompanied by piano, bass, and *tabla*. Like the opening section, the final movement is very energetic, and consists of a busy melody played in unison by flute, piano and guitar, and accompanied by *tabla* and double-time walking bass. This melody is interrupted by a ‘bridge’ section in which short ensemble ‘calls’ alternate with improvised *tabla* ‘responses’. Following this, the unison ensemble melody resumes, and climaxes with a *tihai*-like figure.

Next, van Schalkwyk and I play a short duo item, a slow Satie-like waltz of mine called “A thought”. Thereafter, the full band, together with Faku (on flugelhorn), return, and we continue with “Green piece”, another of my compositions. Based on a series of ninth and thirteenth chords, the piece begins with a rhythmically-free statement of the melody in the flugelhorn accompanied by bass, piano and flute. *Tabla* and guitar then join in, and the melody is repeated against a slow samba-like groove. In an abrupt change, the piece subsequently breaks into a bright tempo in which swing and samba grooves alternate. Faku and I play solos.

“Green piece” is followed by van Schalkwyk’s “NMR 1964”. The piece begins with a *maskanda*-like guitar solo, played by Naidoo on an acoustic guitar tuned in D. Thereafter, Sokhela introduces the *mbaqanga* (township jazz) groove, and van Schalkwyk and I play the main theme in unison over this. Naidoo and Sokhela take solos over the I IV I<sub>c</sub> V chord sequence.

Van Schalkwyk explains how the piece was named, then introduces the band. She makes special mention of Sokhela who had joined Mosaic only eleven days earlier, and had learned the band’s entire repertoire in the four days prior to our departure for Johannesburg, where we had performed the previous week. Along with the audience, Bridglall, Naidoo, and I applaud Sokhela.

We conclude the first set with my composition "Blue thirteen". The piece consists of an angular, dissonant melody over a thirteen-bar blues progression based on a fast six-four groove. Van Schalkwyk, Naidoo and I play solos.

We begin the second set with a composition of van Schalkwyk's entitled "Helloys". The piece consists of three discrete sections: it begins with an unaccompanied guitar solo; a composed section with a Baroque-like melody follows; the third section is an improvised flute and piano duet.

Faku then rejoins us and we play "Child's play", an extended 253-bar through-composed piece of mine. As jazz compositions go, the piece is formally fairly complex and comprises four main sections each consisting of three subsections. The first section (an extended introduction) begins with a piano/flute melody based on a sequence of four second-inversion major triads:

The musical score shows two staves. The top staff is for 'Piano & Flute'. It starts with a treble clef, a common time signature, and a key signature of one flat. The piano part (LH) has a bass line with eighth-note chords. The flute part has a melody with eighth-note patterns. The score includes markings 'etc' and 'LH' under the piano's bass line. The bottom staff is for 'Flute' and continues the melody from the piano part.

#### **2-8: "Child's play" – opening**

The rest of the introduction is an elaboration of this material, which is presented first homophonically and then in a call and response fashion between the flute and guitar. Following this, the head proper, played over a five-four *mbaqanga* groove, begins. The head comprises three sixteen-bar sections: first, a piano trio section in which new melodic material is introduced; then, a series of descending scale patterns (reminiscent of Dollar Brand's anthemic "Mannenberg") played a sixth apart by flute and guitar; third is a section where the introductory melody is presented in alternation with the *mbaqanga* groove. Naidoo plays the first solo over the five-four *mbaqanga* groove. Improvising freely against a 32-bar sequence of pedal points, I follow with a piano solo. The *mbaqanga* groove returns and van Schalkwyk and Faku solo together. Following this, is the 'head out': it consists of an altered version of the second part of the 'head in' and a coda based on a

thirteen-eight groove which mutates into an increasingly irregular rhythmic structure as the composition climaxes to a conclusion.

Next, we play another composition of Faku's entitled "Duke's lament". The piece is a gentle ballad featuring a modal melody over 'sus-chord'<sup>13</sup> harmony, and begins with an introduction consisting of a pentatonic melody played by bass and piano. This is followed by a statement of the melody by flugelhorn and flute. Van Schalkwyk and Faku play solos.

We continue with a composition of van Schalkwyk's entitled "To Carl and Darren", an up-beat, blues-like tune of ten bars, which everyone, except Bridglall, solos over. We end the concert with "A tribute to my friends", a composition of mine titled after one of my favourite jazz records, an Oscar Peterson album by the same name. Stylistically, the piece is reminiscent of Chick Corea's composition "Samba song" (which I was learning to play around the time I was composing "Tribute") and, like "Child's play", exhibits an elaborated head-solos-head format. It begins with a stop-time introduction incorporating an angular melodic figure built round a series of perfect fourths:

2-9: "A tribute to my friends" - opening

This melody then recurs in rhythmic augmentation over a seven-four samba groove. The solos (on this occasion played by Naidoo, Faku and myself) are played over a four-four samba groove. Next is a flute solo against a drone accompaniment (usually provided by piano but on this occasion provided by *tanpura*). After this, we play the head out and then the coda, which is similar to the stop-time introduction.

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<sup>13</sup>A sus chord (suspended chord in non-jazz conventional harmonic theory) is a suspended fourth chord.

**Mosaic: Centre for Jazz and Popular Music (Friday, 26 May 1995)***Venue and vibe*

The Centre for Jazz and Popular Music at the University of KwaZulu-Natal occupies the lower, north-west corner of the Denis Shepstone building, a massive brick and concrete edifice (behind the Howard College building on the west-facing slope of the hilltop campus) which houses dozens of lecture halls, classrooms, studios, and offices. The building overlooks the lush gardens and swimming pools of Manor Gardens in the valley below; the informal settlements and low income houses of Cato Manor occupy the next hillside further west; higher up, and further west, is the bourgeois Pavilion shopping mall, the historically Indian University of Durban-Westville (as it was known), and the affluent, respectively white and Indian suburbs of Westville and Reservoir Hills.

Approximately 110 people attended Mosaic's 26 May performance. Tickets cost R10, and food at R10 a plate was on sale. The "Jazz Centre" as it is known locally, is a long, shallow rectangular room with tables and chairs, and a licensed bar on the shorter (south) side of the rectangle. The stage is up against part of the longer (east) wall. During lecture hours, the venue doubles as a teaching space, and is also used as a rehearsal room by the University of Natal Jazz Ensemble and other performance groups. Every Wednesday, early evening 'sun downer' concerts are held at the venue. The space is thus a regular haunt for musically-interested members of the University community as well as individuals who work or live in the area. Known locally as a space that hosts 'good jazz performance', the venue attracts a (mostly) racially mixed, middle-class crowd who 'come for the music' and are attentive and responsive. The vibe at this concert was no exception, and the event may be described as a typical Jazz Centre gig.

Generally, the sets proceeded smoothly and without interruption. We did not dress

as formally as we did for the Art Gallery gig, but still wore smart-casual attire. For the performance, we were joined by saxophone lecturer Dusty Cox, who had recently joined the music department, and featured as guest performer on two pieces.

Van Schalkwyk's announcements were delivered more informally than at the Art Gallery, and were generally briefer, simply informing the audience of the title and composer of each tune performed.

### *Repertoire*

As with the Art Gallery performance, we open with Ram's "Give five". We are more relaxed than at the Art Gallery, and play the piece at a less agitated tempo. Like the Art Gallery audience, people applaud after the breaks in the music at the end of the guitar solo and again after the *tihai* with which the flute solo concludes.

Following "Give five", we play "Green piece", this time with guest player Dusty Cox on tenor saxophone. We follow with Van Schalkwyk's "To Carl and Darren". The audience, more familiar with the mainstream-jazz character of the piece, applaud at the end of each solo. Next, we play "Beaton Way" followed by "A thought" with which we conclude the first set. A long break follows, during which people buy supper.

We open the second set with another raga-based composition of Deepak Ram's entitled "Siddharta". Thereafter, we play a composition by Van Schalkwyk as yet untitled, then "Child's play". Our second last piece is another composition of van Schalkwyk's entitled "Reuben", a four-four, 32-bar, medium-swing tune based on the Dorian mode. Naidoo and Sokhela play solos. Van Schalkwyk re-invites Dusty Cox on stage, and we end with "A tribute to my friends".

**Mosaic: Centre for Jazz and Popular Music (Sunday, 10 December 1995)***Venue and vibe*

Mosaic's 10 December concert was a private, fundraising event that we had arranged in order to cover outstanding expenses for a trip to the United States, where we were to perform at the 1996 International Association of Jazz Educators' Conference. The concert was the brainchild of Dr. Joan Naidoo, a retired NU Medical School lecturer, and her (then 88-year-old, and now late) mother, Mrs. M.J.C. Naidoo, who had been my first piano teacher, and wanted to assist Mosaic<sup>14</sup>. The audience at the concert were mostly family and friends, many of whom had helped us arrange the event. The tables were decorated with flower arrangements and candles; food was served, and the tickets (bought well in advance, so that we could plan the catering) cost R50 a head. (Typically, jazz concerts in mid-1990s-Durban, such as Mosaic's other two performances, or the Counterculture concerts, cost between R10 and R20). Thus, like the Durban Art Gallery concert, this performance was framed by an unusual set of circumstances.

Mostly Indian, the audience were all smartly dressed, and many of the women wore saris or other kinds of traditional Indian garb. The aroma of spicy food wafted in from the kitchen. The stage was decorated with flowers and greenery, and the wall behind it was draped with Indian fabric and hessian, thus visually complementing the group's 'Indo-Afro' theme. There were simple flower arrangements on the tables. Many of the listeners knew each other and the room buzzed with conversation before the music began. During the performance of the first tune, the candles on the tables were lit and the house lights were turned down. As with the Art Gallery performance, the audience were largely restrained and reserved their applause until after pieces had finished.

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<sup>14</sup> Several weeks earlier, she had arranged a concert for us at her home, in which she herself went round with a hat, cajoling her invited friends to make a contribution to the band!

We all dressed formally for this concert. Naidoo, Sokhela and I wore formal shirts and waistcoats. Bridgall's successor, Magandiren Moodley, wore a *kurta* (traditional Indian shirt) while van Schalkwyk wore a long, flowing Indian kaftan. As usual, we were rather serious on stage. Each of us, as well as our families and friends, had put much effort into organising the concert (from selling tickets and decorating tables to washing the plates the attendees ate off), and were anxious for its success. This was one of the larger audiences we had played for, and we were also excited and nervous about playing for an audience of friends and family. There was a minimum of fiddling and retuning of instruments between tunes and the set proceeded smoothly as if part of a theatrical performance.

#### *Repertoire*

We open with Deepak Ram's "Siddharta", followed by Van Schalkwyk's "To Carl and Darren" on which Naidoo, van Schalkwyk, Sokhela and I play fairly short solos. Van Schalkwyk makes an opening announcement in which she acknowledges the 88-year-old Mrs. Naidoo's efforts in making the evening's performance possible. We dedicate our performance of the next piece, "Beaton Way", to her. Following this, we play a new composition of Naidoo's entitled "G force"<sup>15</sup>. The piece consists of a slow abstract four-bar melody based on a G diminished whole tone scale; it is played in unison by flute and guitar, and accompanied by the other three instruments. This melody is repeated; then, Naidoo and Van Schalkwyk take short solos. After "G force" we play "Child's play" and then another composition of mine, a brisk waltz entitled "Calistra's waltz". Following this, we play Ram's "Give five". At Moodley's suggestion, we have made a minor alteration to the *tihai* with which the flute solo concludes, and without Bridgall to play the *bansuri*, the *alap* section is now played by van Schalkwyk alone; otherwise, the piece remains the same. Before our final item, I present a formal vote of thanks to acknowledge the numerous individuals who have helped us put the event together. We then call Dr. Naidoo and two of her colleagues to the stage, and give them each a small 'thank-

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<sup>15</sup> Please refer to the accompanying CD for a (studio) recording of this piece.

you' gift for having helped arrange the concert and for selling over 75 tickets for us. Just before we play our concluding piece, "A tribute to my friends", van Schalkwyk mentions that all the individuals who have been especially helpful are women: "I think this is very significant," she remarks wryly, "we women make things happen." Laughter: "A tribute to our friends, male and female," I rejoin from the piano; the laughter then subsides, and we begin our concluding number.

### **The Prisoners of Strange: Bassline (Sunday, 3 August 2003)**

#### *Venue and vibe*

About seven kilometres northwest of central Johannesburg, is Melville, a small, trendy suburb that is home to upmarket houses, various bed-and-breakfasts, antique dealers, arts-and-crafts outlets, coffee bars, second-hand bookstores, and restaurants, largely frequented by the bohemian fractions of the city's post-industrial elite. Until recently, the suburb's lively Seventh Street was home to the Bassline, a cornerstone venue on the Johannesburg (and indeed national) jazz scene, that hosted some of the country's best-known performers every night for six nights a week, since it opened in 1994. Unable to afford the rising rent on the premises (driven up by the locale's bullish property market), the owners closed the venue in September 2003, and reopened as Queenies in central Johannesburg's Newtown a month later.

Patronised by an eclectic clientele, the Bassline in Melville was a long, dimly-lit, narrow room, dotted with circular tables and metal chairs; it always felt pleasantly crowded. Just to the right of the entrance, against its long northern wall was the bar, and further along the wall, tucked deep into the venue, barely fifteen centimetres above the floor, was the tiny, piano-less stage. Left of the stage, and opposite it was a raised, L-shaped area that seated roughly twenty people, but was often jam-packed with dozens of standing patrons too. The audiences at most gigs generally consisted of two groups: a chattering 'socialising crowd', who occupied

the area nearer the entrance, and a 'listening crowd' that congregated near the stage, focussing intently on the music. During breaks, listeners and musicians would spill out onto the pavement outside.

A 'typical' Bassline gig, the Prisoners' 3 August performance attracted an audience of around 120 people, many of them regular supporters who are on the group's mailing list, and would have received e-mail and SMS reminders of the performance a few days earlier. Tickets cost R50, and were available at the door. The male musicians were all very casually dressed; Makuzeni wore a smart, black, long skirt and top. Being familiar with many of the listeners, Mombelli's announcements from the stage were relaxed and often humorous. His opening announcement is a case in point:

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Bassline and an evening of Prisoners of Strange ... um I just had to talk a bit now to get your attention, so ... [he laughs] ... I've got nothing to say right now; I'll talk a little bit after the next song. [The audience laughs.] Alright, here we go.

#### *Repertoire*

Mombelli checks whether the other musicians are ready, and attempts to begin playing, but the audience remains noisy. He makes an opening announcement (quoted above). As the audience falls quiet, they begin their first piece<sup>16</sup>. Mombelli presses a foot pedal and plays the following figure:

2-10: "Sunlove" – opening loop

He presses another pedal which 'loops' (records and keeps repeating) the pattern. He lets it run once; thereafter, he begins recording a second set of patterns that he

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<sup>16</sup> Please refer to the accompanying CD for a (studio) recording of "Sunlove".

superimposes on the first:

The musical notation consists of five staves of music. The top staff has a circled 'IN' above it and a circled 'OUT' below it. The second staff has 'Loop 2' with a bracket and a '3' below it. The third staff has 'Loop 3' with a bracket and a '3' below it. The fourth staff has 'Loop 4' with a bracket and a '3' below it. The fifth staff has 'Loop 5' with a bracket and a '3' below it. The bottom staff is a continuous bass line.

### 2-11: "Sunlove" – 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> loops

After it runs a few times, Siya Makuzeni begins singing the melody, doubled by Mombelli on the bass an octave below:

**Staff 1 (Voice/Bass):**

A  
SUN LOVE SMILES REST PEACE I FEEL

**Staff 2 (Bass):**

5 SOFT SI - LENT LIGHT LIKE FEA - THERS FALL

**Staff 3 (Bass):**

9 RAIN GIVES BIRTH TO LIFE YOUR LOVE A - WAKES MY SOUL

13 SOFT SHADES OF JOY THAT GROWS AND MAKES ME TALL

### 2-12: "Sunlove" – main theme

The melody repeats, and the cleverly delayed ‘blue’ note on which it cadences, is picked up by tenor saxophonist Sidney Mnisi and trumpeter Marcus Wyatt, who begin improvising scraps of ‘jungle’ sounds reminiscent of early Duke Ellington. They are accompanied by drummer Lloyd Martin, who plays a spare pattern on a cowbell, and Mombelli who improvises embellishments over the bass loops. After a few bars, the horns and cowbell lay out, and Makuzeni sings the third verse of the melody. Following this, Martin rejoins, and the two horns improvise a short duet against the bass and woodblock texture. Mombelli then cues the ‘head out’, a four-bar figure that is repeated four times:

### 2-13: “Sunlove” – beginning of head out

After this, and as the bass loops continue running, Mombelli picks up a toy whistle, plays it into a mike, and loops the squealing sound. He then loops a second set of squeals. These play against the original bass loops, which Mombelli fades out till we are left with just the recorded squeals, which he then also fades out. The audience applauds enthusiastically, and Mombelli makes an announcement:

That was called Sunlove and was inspired while I was sitting at the traffic lights and the indicator was going and I was just hearing all this other stuff. We’re gonna do a piece now, the Processional march of King Ferd the third; I always talk about King Ferd the Third<sup>17</sup> so I’m not going to talk much about him but he was the King of Fook Island which is an island in your imagination, and to become a member of Fook Island you had to pretend that you were invisible. So once a year, there was this processional march with the King walking around the island having a good time, and everybody having a good time as well. [Everyone, including Mombelli laughs.] So the procession is going to start here somewhere [gestures to his right] and it will probably end up somewhere over there [gestures left towards the bar and entrance]. So this is the processional march of King Ferd the Third.

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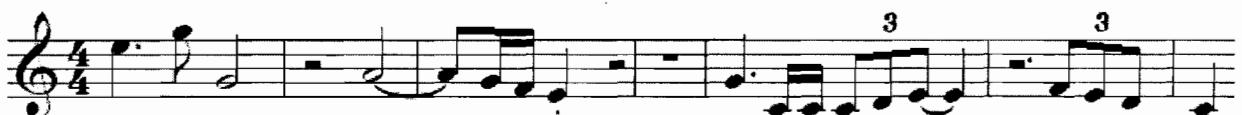
<sup>17</sup> King Ferd the Third and Fook Island are the creation of South African artist and philosopher Walter Battiss (1906-1982).

Blowing into a whistle, Makuzeni inauguates the procession with a gleeful 'WHEEEE' whereupon Mombelli, accompanied by Martin on the toms, begins playing the composition's bouncy bass groove:



**2-14: "King Ferd the third" – bass groove**

After a few cycles, Makuzeni and Wyatt sing and play the spare melody in unison:



**2-15: "King Ferd the third" – opening melody**

Improvising freely against the groove, Mnisi takes the first solo. Wyatt plays a counter-rhythm on a woodblock. Cued by Mombelli, he picks up his trumpet, and plays the melody again. Thereafter, Wyatt plays a short, muted-trumpet solo following which the melody returns a third time. As it unfolds, Mombelli's and Martin's accompanying groove grows softer and softer, almost disappears for a bar, then abruptly returns to a normal dynamic towards the end of the sixteen-bar melody. The horns and bass lay out, and Makuzeni breaks into a solo in which she chokes out a series of highly rhythmic squeaks and screams against the intensifying groove. As Martin's drumming becomes progressively sparser, Makuzeni's improvisation disintegrates into sequences of still-rhythmic, strangled gasps. While she solos, Mombelli picks up a stainless steel mixing bowl, and loops the sound of a marble rolling around in it. As the audience warmly applauds the conclusion of Makuzeni's solo, he gently drops the marble into the bowl and additionally loops the brief clatter it makes as it bounces to rest.

Against this cold, metallic texture, Mombelli, using a pedal-effects unit, plays a series of siren-like wails. Operatic tenors and sopranos wander out of, and back into, a record player that Wyatt operates. Makuzeni issues forth a series of deathly groans and unearthly cries. Scraps of dialogue (from the record player) break out of the musical ooze. Martin plays fragments of groove. Mnisi's soulful soprano saxophone emerges out of the gentle chaos, before disappearing into it again. The recorded voices take over: "Good morning Adam", comes a crisp, authoritative male American voice, "I trust you slept well." Another male American voice, nervous and churlish, replies, "What are you trying to do to me?" As this pre-recorded dialogue fades away, Mombelli and Martin strike up a groove, against which the other three members improvise freely. A quick nod from Mombelli and the quintet break into an angular, sixteen-bar bebop melody which concludes "The silence of a storm" (the evening's third item). They then segue into "I drank my coffee and dreamt" which features flashes of melody against an atonal bass ostinato:

$\text{J} = 160$

The musical score consists of two systems of music. The top system shows parts for Trumpet, Soprano Saxophone, Trombone, and Bass. The bottom system shows parts for Tp. S. Sax., Tbn., B., and Dr. The tempo is marked  $\text{J} = 160$ . The first measure of the top system is mostly rests. The second measure begins with the Bass part playing eighth-note patterns. The third measure starts with the Drums. The fourth measure begins with the Tp. S. Sax. The fifth measure begins with the Tbn. The sixth measure begins with the B. The seventh measure begins with the Dr. The eighth measure begins with the Tp. S. Sax. The ninth measure begins with the Tbn. The tenth measure begins with the B. The eleventh measure begins with the Dr.

Trumpet  
Soprano Saxophone

Trombone

Bass

Drums

Tp.  
S. Sax.

Tbn.

B.

Dr.

### 2-16: Opening of "I drank my coffee and dreamt"

The piece continues in a similar vein for a further ten bars, following which Wyatt solos freely over the bass groove. The head returns, and Mnisi follows with an especially successful soprano solo, which the audience cheers wildly. Mombelli

cues the last four bars of Mnisi's solo by shifting to a new bass pattern, which is then picked up by Makuzeni (on trombone) and Wyatt:

As this fades and continues in the background, Makuzeni and Wyatt enter with a new melody at a completely different tempo:

The musical score consists of two staves of music. The top staff includes parts for Trumpet (4/4 time, treble clef), Trombone (4/4 time, bass clef), and Bass Drums (3/2 time, bass clef). The bottom staff includes parts for Tpt. (4/4 time, treble clef) and Tbn. (4/4 time, bass clef). The score begins with a section for the Trombone and Bass Drums, followed by a section for the Tpt. and Tbn. The Bass Drums part includes markings for '(Drums enter Groove)' and 'Groove Continues'. The Tpt. and Tbn. parts include markings for 'Drum & Bass Groove Continues' and '(Fade and disappear)'. The score concludes with a 'Fine' marking.

2-17: Final bars of "I drank my coffee and dreamt"

Mombelli continues playing the faster groove for a little while longer before fading it out. The audience applaud, and Mombelli introduces the band. Thereafter, Mombelli picks up an acoustic, fretless, bass guitar, and they follow with a quiet, introspective ballad entitled "Malunde".

After this, they premier a new piece, "Ethical Sam's cookery class" which Mombelli explains is about Ethical Sam who goes round the world teaching people how to cook their traditional food (Sam's way). Initially perplexed by Mombelli's description of the piece, pockets within the audience begin laughing as they grasp the meaning of the title. "Ethical Sam" begins with a brief figure that Mombelli records and replays backwards. It's a tricky manoeuvre, and he doesn't get it right at first. He explains to the audience: "I'm trying to play the bass so that it comes back to me back to front, so I can play forwards, if that makes sense." "Think backwards," Wyatt chips in; it works, and Mombelli sets up the infectious hip-hop groove that underpins the piece. Makuzeni sneers out the cynical melody. Playing in a spare two-part counterpoint, the horns emphasize the sinister mood:

The musical score consists of two systems of music. The top system starts with a vocal part in 4/4 time, indicated by a tempo of J = 100 and a note value of eighth notes. The vocal part features a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *Fall* and *Scratch*, enclosed in parentheses. The trumpet tenor part follows, also in 4/4 time, with a dynamic marking of *Set up reverse bass groove*. The bass part begins with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. A dynamic marking *Bass groove till Fine* is placed above the bass staff. The bottom system begins with a vocal part (Voice) in 5/4 time, singing the lyrics "LET ME SEE" and "DAD IS HERE". The trumpet part continues in 5/4 time, and the tenor saxophone part begins in 2/4 time, marked with dynamics *mp* and *mf*.

The musical score consists of two staves of music. The top staff begins at measure 9 and features three parts: Voice (soprano clef), Trumpet (treble clef), and Tenor sax (bass clef). The lyrics for the first section are:

WHAT IN - GRE - DIENTS YOU NEED  
I WILL SAVE YOU FROM YOUR STEW

The bottom staff begins at measure 13 and also features three parts: Voice, Trumpet, and Tenor sax. The lyrics for the second section are:

THERE IS TOO MUCH SPICE YOU FOOLS  
HAVE YOU TAS- TED FAS- TER FOOD

A dynamic marking *mf mp* and the word "drunk" are written above the Tenor sax part in the second section.

### 2-18: Opening of “Ethical Sam’s cookery class”

Wyatt plays the first solo; after a while, he is joined by Mnisi on tenor, and then Makuzeni. They conclude with a restatement of the head: as everyone repeats the composition’s closing line, we hear recorded sirens and a brief torrent of ‘bombs’ and snare-drum fire from Martin:

The musical score consists of two systems of music. The first system starts with a vocal line and includes two instrumental parts (Tpt. and T. Sax.). The second system begins with a vocal line and includes two instrumental parts (Tpt. and T. Sax.). Both systems feature lyrics and specific performance instructions.

**System 1 (Measures 5-6):**

- Voice:** TASTE MY PO - LI - CY \_\_\_\_\_ WE
- Tpt. (Snare - gunfire):** (Accompanied by a snare drum part with sixteenth-note patterns)
- T. Sax.:** (Accompanied by eighth-note patterns)

**System 2 (Measures 8-9):**

- Voice:** COME IN PEACE WE
- Tpt.:** (Accompanied by eighth-note patterns)
- T. Sax.:** (Accompanied by eighth-note patterns)

**System 3 (Measures 8-9):**

- Voice:** COME IN PEACE WE Open Times Pre-recorded Sirens
- Tpt.:** Horn Improvs.
- T. Sax.:** Drums Nuke the Kitchen

### 2-19: Conclusion of “Ethical Sam’s cookery class”

They end their first set with “87/99”, another loop-based composition, and it features Makuzeni in a trombone solo.

The second set is briefer, and consists of five (generally) shorter pieces: "Bass spirits"; "Gismonti"; "Basel, lemons, roses, love"; "Unlock the wisdom door"; and "Mango picker", which like van Schalkwyk's "NMR 1964" and my "Child's play" is based on a I-IV-I<sub>c</sub>-V township jazz progression, and is especially popular with audiences. Collectively, these compositions exhibit several 'Mombelli trademarks' including loops, combinations of live and recorded sound, juxtapositions of unrelated tempi against one another, collective free improvisation, abrupt changes of dynamics and texture, unusual time signatures, and changes of groove.

### **The Prisoners of Strange: Queenies (Sunday, 2 November 2003)**

#### *Vibe and venue*

On the western edge of the Johannesburg city centre, flanked by a railway yard to the north, and a concrete highway that runs several storeys above its western border, is Newtown, one of the city's oldest residential and commercial districts. In the early 1900s, the area was populated by a multiracial community of some 7000 people, and was home to the town's first fruit and vegetable market, several eateries, various trading companies, a brewery, a worker's compound, a bus and tram shed, and so on. A casualty of inner city decay since the late 1960s, the area has recently become the focus of a government-driven, arts-and-culture-centred gentrification programme, and its historic buildings now house a music centre, two museums, two theatres, an arts, crafts, and design centre, etc. The area is also home to several bars and restaurants largely patronised by an upwardly-mobile black clientele. In a relocation initiative reminiscent of the early apartheid state, the district's unfortunate 'non-gentry' – its hawkers, informal traders, and homeless poor – are being forcibly removed to Diepsloot, a semi-rural area, 50km out of Johannesburg, where their livelihood prospects are severely limited. Moreover, although millions of rand have been spent upgrading its infrastructure, Newtown still seems haunted by its 30-year history of neglect, and in comparison to entertainment hotspots in wealthy northern Johannesburg, the precinct, as a

whole, often feels under-patronised.

Occupying premises within Newtown's music centre, Queenies was the Bassline's 'successor' venue. Opened in October 2003, it had a brief and unsuccessful existence, and was subsequently re-launched in March 2005, at the same location, as the (Newtown) Bassline. A lacklustre venue, Queenies was a reverberant room with exposed rafters, bare walls, and iron-grated windows, sparsely dotted with tables and chairs. The spacious, triangular stage occupied a corner framed by the north and east walls of the large square room, while the bar was on the south end of the room opposite the entrance. Roughly twenty people attended the concert. Most of them were regular supporters (I recognised several faces from the four other Prisoners concerts I had attended from May to August), and unlike Counterculture's Rainbow listeners, they were a warm and attentive audience.

#### *Repertoire*

Mombelli makes an opening announcement: "Alright, good evening everyone," he begins. "How's it<sup>18</sup> Carlo" comes the deadpan voice of Martin from the drum kit. Mombelli laughs, and introduces the musicians, eliciting pockets of applause and cheers that fail to coalesce, and echo round the large room.

The audience falls silent, and the cackle of two metal sheets, that Mombelli grips, and wobbles with his hands, hacks the quiet. The novel percussion 'instruments' are immediately recognizable as the marketing boards of a local security company, that conventionally do duty on the high walls that surround crime-weary Johannesburg's middle- and high-income homes, warning off would-be intruders. Wyatt coaxes bird calls out of a wooden flute; Makuzeni replies with gentle groans and cries. Their improvisation feels unfocused, and they segue untidily into "King Ferd the third" (described above). They take the piece at a much slower tempo than at the Bassline, and the performance is initially listless and flat. During Mnisi's

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<sup>18</sup> A colloquial greeting meaning "hi"

long tenor solo, however, the musical energy picks up and their performance of the rest of the piece is groovy and intense. Following his solo, Wyatt comes in too early with the opening bar of the head out. The musicians laugh at the mistake, following which Martin plays an overstated, two-bar triplet cue, and they play the closing melody.

They perform their subsequent pieces with characteristic slickness, and there are no further musical errors. After "King Ferd", they play "Bass spirits", followed by a ballad called "Untitled prayer" which Mombelli plays on a fretless acoustic bass guitar. Thereafter they play "The silence of a storm" followed by "I drank my coffee and dreamt". The improvised *musique concrète* section that links the two pieces is truncated because a microphone is not working, and Mombelli is unable to loop the sound of the marble in the bowl. They end the first set with "Malunde".

Before they take their break, Mombelli makes an announcement advertising their recently released CD, *When serious babies dance*, which is on sale outside. He also encourages patrons to join what he satirically terms their "voyager miles" programme (attend three concerts; come to the fourth for free).

I was unable to stay for the Prisoners' second set, because their gig began later than expected, and a friend (and potential interviewee) I had brought along to the concert needed to be taken back home.

### **The Prisoners of Strange: Wits Theatre (Thursday, 11 December 2003)**

#### *Vibe and venue*

Just north of Newtown is Braamfontein, an extension of the Johannesburg CBD that is home to the city's municipal offices, its main theatre complex, various tower blocks, and the University of the Witwatersrand (or Wits, as it is locally known). Opened in 1983, the 360-seater Wits Theatre is on the campus's southern edge

amid a collection of buildings occupied by the University's School of Arts. A 'standard' theatre with an adjustable stage, stepped seating, and a glassed-off lighting and sound kiosk at the back, the venue is mostly used for dance and drama productions, and only rarely hosts live music performance.

As mentioned, Mombelli was enrolled for a Masters in composition at the University, and the Prisoners' performance at the Wits Theatre was a public, examination recital that formed part of the requirements for the degree. Thus, whereas their other performances cost R50, this concert was free, and the band-members, who usually share the door-takings, received no payment. About 150 people attended the recital, and the audience was an even mix of Prisoners regulars, family and friends of Mombelli, and people associated with the University. They mostly listened in silence, occasionally cheering soloists during the more exciting moments of their improvisations.

### *Repertoire*

As with their Queenies gig, the Prisoners begin with some free, textural improvisation, following which they segue into "Bass spirits". Before they play their next piece, the ever-ironic Mombelli makes an announcement: "Good evening everyone and welcome to the ... event." As the ensuing laughter dies down, he introduces the band and announces the next piece, a new composition that does not as yet have a name, and that he has provisionally titled "Nine-eight sketch". Before they begin playing it, he explains: "Antonio Carlos Jobim once wrote a piece with only one note; so I also wrote one." Mombelli's subtle sense of humour goes down well with the audience, and there is much appreciative laughter.

Following "Nine-eight sketch", they play "Sunlove". There is a problem with the recording equipment and Mombelli is unable to replay the second series of loops that accompany the piece's second verse. Unfazed, Makuzeni sings the melody solo. Wyatt and Mnisi's subsequent improvised duet is fairly brief, and during the

coda, Wyatt plays a recording of Disney's chipmunks singing "I taught I taw a putty-tat" against Mombelli's looped squeaky toys. Otherwise, their rendering of the piece is similar to their performance at the Bassline. They follow with a much shorter version of "The silence of a storm", which, as at their other two performances, segues into "I drank my coffee and dreamt". Accompanied by bass, drums, and the record player, which Wyatt operates, Mnisi takes a long soprano sax solo. Next they play "Malunde" followed by "Ethical Sam's cookery class" which segues into "87/99".

After these two energetic hip-hop based pieces, they perform the ballad "Untitled prayer". They end the concert with two 'Latin' pieces, "Gismonti" and "Surdo", concluding their performance as they began it, with a short section of improvised *musique-concrète*. As the cackling metal sheets, drum rolls, and bass loops die down, the matronly voice of South African opera diva, Mimi Coertze, makes its way into the dissipating dissonance and resurrects musical order from the record player, which Mnisi operates. As she warbles along, a miming Mnisi treats us to a mock rendition of an opera singer in bravura mode. Amid the hilarity, Mombelli walks over to him, hugs him, and acknowledges the saxophonist: "Sidney Mnisi!" He then hugs and acknowledges the remaining Prisoners in turn. As he concludes, Wyatt, gesturing at the record player, calls out, "And Mimi!" ending the recital on a mirthful note.

## **Interviewees**

As mentioned, I interviewed 25 people: thirteen participant musicians and twelve audience members. I did second interviews with four of the Durban-based audience members, and three of the Durban-based performers, and, as such, conducted a total of 32 interviews. Each interview was unstructured, and lasted 45 to 90 minutes. I typically initiated the interviews with open-ended questions such as "Why do you play jazz?" in the case of the participant musicians, and "Why did you come out in the rain to a live concert?" or "What stands out for you from concert

[X]?" in the case of the audience members. The interviews would then develop conversationally out of these questions.

Of the musicians, I was unable to interview three: Counterculture's drummer Vince Pavitt, who relocated to Cape Town shortly after the group's concerts in June 1994; Mosaic's *tab/a* player Bhisham Bridglall, who left the band in June 1995, and the Prisoners' saxophonist Sidney Mnisi, whom I was unable to pin down for an interview. Bridglall was replaced by Magandiren Moodley who was interviewed. Deepak Ram (one of the 'participant musicians'), did not play at any of the concerts examined. However, his composition, "Give five", was performed by both Mosaic and Counterculture. Indeed, Counterculture's Howard College Theatre performance of "Give five" was the first and only time the group played a composition by a non-band member. Similarly, Mosaic, which otherwise only played music written by its members, included "Give five" and some of Ram's other compositions in its repertoire. Moreover, Ram was an interesting interviewee because his formal training and performance expertise is in north Indian classical music, and he has a keen interest in jazz.

Six of the twelve audience members were chosen for interview on the basis of their professional participation in the Durban, Johannesburg, and national music scenes: they are Christopher Ballantine; Michael Blake; Darius Brubeck; Marion Dall; Neil Gonsalves, and Gisele Turner.

Although he had attended only one of the concerts discussed here, I decided to interview musicologist Christopher Ballantine, because I realised that, as an experienced scholar of music and society, and a Durbanite for three decades, he would be able to shed light on some of the social and environmental dynamics that influence music-making in Durban.

Classical-music composer Michael Blake is artistic director of an annually-held, national, contemporary music festival that hosted the Prisoners in 2001, and

Mombelli as composer in 2003. I asked Blake to talk about his understandings of Mombelli's novel fusions of jazz improvisation with aspects of twentieth-century classical music.

Director of the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Centre for Jazz and Popular Music, Darius Brubeck, has been a participant in the local jazz scene since 1983, when he moved from the United States to Durban to take up the country's first lectureship in jazz. Brubeck had attended many of Mosaic's and Counterculture's concerts in the years since their formation, and was familiar with the repertoire of both groups, even to the extent of having played some of Counterculture's music.

Fellow music student and classical pianist Marion Dall had not attended either of the Counterculture concerts, but had attended two of the Mosaic performances discussed. A frequent audience-member at Mosaic's concerts over the years, she offered interesting perspectives on the music by mentioning the importance of 'sound', timbre, and texture, and offering valuable criticisms of our performances.

Another fellow student, jazz pianist Neil Gonsalves had heard Counterculture and Mosaic on numerous occasions, and had attended Counterculture's Howard College Theatre concert as well as two of the Mosaic concerts. As keyboardist in the Johnny Clegg band between 2001 and 2004, Gonsalves was able to offer insightful comparisons of rock and jazz. Moreover, because his work with the Clegg band often took him to Johannesburg, he made some interesting comparisons of Durban and Johannesburg as musically and socially different spaces.

In the mid-1990s, Gisele Turner hosted monthly jazz soirees at her home, one of which featured Mosaic. Since 1997, she has written a weekly jazz column in the arts and entertainment supplement of Durban's *Daily News*, and having attended literally most of the public jazz performances in the city since the mid-1990s, she has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the contemporary, local jazz scene.

The remaining six interviewees are not music professionals but had attended many of Counterculture's, Mosaic's, and the Prisoners' concerts. Ralph Adendorff, a lecturer in linguistics (and teacher of mine) at the University of Natal, had attended the Counterculture concert at Howard College Theatre as well as many of the group's other performances on campus. Kreesan Chetty, a (then) nursing student on campus, and close personal friend, had attended several Mosaic performances including two of the concerts discussed.

I was introduced to anthropologist Kerryn Scott<sup>19</sup> by a mutual acquaintance. She had relocated to Johannesburg around the same time as I, and as fellow 'newbies' to the city (a big scary place if ever there was one!), we found ourselves hanging out together quite a bit in 2003. I described my research to Scott, and explained that I was interested in hearing an anthropologist's thoughts on the Prisoners' unusual music. Although we rapidly established that she is no fan of Mombelli's music, Scott generously accompanied me to four of their gigs, including two discussed in the present study.

I did not know Jan Schoemann<sup>20</sup> at all, but having seen him at the poorly-attended Queenies gig, and again at the Wits Theatre five weeks later, I figured he was a serious Prisoners fan; I therefore approached him in the Wits Theatre foyer, explained that I lecture music at the University, described my research, and asked whether I might interview him. He readily acquiesced, but requested that I do not tape the interview. I was rather disappointed, because, as an engineer and martial arts practitioner, he drew on a fascinating set of analogies to describe Mombelli's music that I would love to have been able to quote in the present text.

At the first Prisoners concert I attended at the Bassline in May 2003, I was introduced by Feya Faku (who had moved to Johannesburg in 2001) to union

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<sup>19</sup> Scott was one of two interviewees that asked me to use a pseudonym. The remaining interviewees have consented to my using their real names.

<sup>20</sup> Also a pseudonym

activist and occasional jazz writer for *The Sunday Independent*, Dinga Sikwebu. Since his debut recording was released in 1998, Faku has become recognised as one of the leading jazz artists in South Africa, and this was a fortuitous introduction. As such, when I bumped into Sikwebu again, six months later, at the Prisoners' Queenies gig, and asked to interview him, he readily agreed.

A childhood friend who moved to Johannesburg in 2001, Seena Yacoob is an advocate, onetime music student, and ardent fan of the Prisoners. She had attended many of the Prisoners' performances, including two discussed here, and had also been to many of Mosaic's concerts when she lived in Durban.

The subject positions of the interviewees are central to arguments presented in the final three chapters, and in the table below I therefore detail the gender, age, 'race' and linguistic identity of each interviewee<sup>21</sup>:

Name	Gender	Age at interview/s	'Race'	1 <sup>st</sup> language
Ralph Adendorff	M	30s/40s	White	English
Christopher Ballantine	M	50s	White	English
Michael Blake	M	50s	White	English
Darius Brubeck	M	40s	White	English
Kreesan Chetty	M	20s/30s	Indian	English
Marion Dall/Caldwell	F	20s/30s	White	English
Feya Faku	M	30s	Black	Xhosa
Lex Futshane	M	30s/40s	Black	Xhosa
Neil Gonsalves	M	20s/30s	Indian	English
Siya Makuzenia	F	20s	Black	Xhosa
Lloyd Martin	M	40s	White	English
Chris Merz	M	30s	White	English
Carlo Mombelli	M	40s	White	English
Magandiren Moodley	M	20s	Indian	English
Mageshen Naidoo	M	20s	Indian	English
Melvin Peters	M	30s/40s	Indian	English
Deepak Ram	M	30s	Indian	English
Jan Schoemann	M	30s	White	Afrikaans
Kerryn Scott	F	20s	White	English
Dinga Sikwebu	M	40s	Black	Xhosa
Bongani Sokhela	M	20s	Black	Zulu
Gisele Turner	F	50s	White	English

<sup>21</sup> I am a 33-year-old, male, South African of Indian origin, and my first language is English.

Stacey van Schalkwyk	F	30s	White	Afrikaans
Marcus Wyatt	M	30s	White	English
Seena Yacoob	F	30s	Indian	English

#### 2-20: Subject positions of interviewees

To summarise: this chapter has introduced the reader to local jazz's musical and social landscapes by providing 'thin' descriptions of the eight concerts considered, and briefly profiling the interviewed audience members. The next chapter focuses more closely on the music played by Counterculture, Mosaic, and the Prisoners of Strange, and shows how local jazz functions as a cohesive field of musical discourse.

### 3. Local jazz as musical discourse

The present chapter maps the 'musical terrain' represented by local jazz, and describes its defining musical features. It poses the following questions: In what ways is local jazz a "coherent ... universe of significant sonic options" (Walser 1993: xiv)? What are its recurring musical features? Which features are typical of jazz in general and which features are unique to the music examined?

Drawing on Walser's (1993) work, I begin with a discussion of genre as a "horizon of expectations" (*Ibid*: 29), and explore jazz's contested status. Noting that the term jazz is unstable, I then propose that the music played by Counterculture, Mosaic, and the Prisoners of Strange inhabits the wider context of African American musical culture, as defined by Wilson (1996), and includes improvisation as a principal feature. Thereafter, I present a parametric analysis of local jazz that considers the following categories: composition and improvisation; form; pitch; rhythm; timbre and texture. Exploring the intertextual relationships between local jazz and 'mainstream jazz', I argue that the music examined may be usefully located vis-à-vis jazz as a horizon of expectations.

#### **Genre**

##### **Genre as a horizon of expectations and field of aesthetic possibilities**

You've got to listen to great masters to kind of have ... not only examples but ... templates in your mind and imagination. (Darius Brubeck)

It's a jazz band so then you have these stereotypes in your mind, whether you like it or not, of what that is supposed to be. (Kerryn Scott)

Noting that "musical structures and experiences are intelligible only with respect to [genre categories]", Walser (1993: 27) argues that an exploration of "genre conventions ... can help us to place the significance of musical details" (*Ibid*: 28). Applying literary theorist Tzvetan Todorov's analysis of the relationship of genre and discourse to music, he makes three key observations. First, "genres

arise from metadiscursive discourse"; second, "genres ... function as horizons of expectation for readers (or listeners) and as models of composition for authors (or musicians)"; third, "genres exist because societies collectively choose and codify the acts that correspond most closely to their ideologies [and] thus the details of a genre ... can reveal much about the constitutive features of a society" (*Ibid*). The relationships of genre and ideology are addressed in the next three chapters; in the present chapter, I focus only on the first two ideas raised by Walser.

As metadiscursively-constituted "horizons of expectation", or intertextually-defined "models of composition", music genres represent the frameworks of shared musical and social assumptions that subtend music-making and listening. They may be described as the structured and *structuring* ideational entities through which musicians and listeners make sense of particular musical encounters (for example, the music played at the concerts discussed). Thus in 'mapping' local jazz, I will, more accurately, be generically locating the music examined in relation to jazz as a kind of 'langue' or a (quasi) trans-historical repertory of generative musical principles that produces, and evinces itself as, a field of aesthetic possibilities. In part, this process (of mapping local jazz) has been necessitated by the fact that this aesthetic field is a contested arena, variously perceived (and therefore metadiscursively constituted) as elastically inclusive and fluid or rigidly "exclusionary" (Chris Merz).

As defined by Neil Gonsalves, the interviewed performers may all be described as jazz musicians:

I think of a jazz musician as someone who plays in the history of jazz: someone that listens to Charlie Parker, and learns the Omnibook<sup>1</sup>, and listens to Miles Davis and John Coltrane.

Nevertheless, although the music played by Counterculture, Mosaic, and the Prisoners shares many features in common with jazz, a few interviewees expressed reservations about the label 'jazz' as it pertains to the music examined. For example, Lex Futshane responded to my question "Why do you

play jazz?" as follows:

Why do I play jazz? Well you have to define the word itself ... probably, why do I play *improvised* music...

Marcus Wyatt and Lloyd Martin are similarly uncomfortable about being labelled jazz musicians:

I don't really consider myself a jazz musician. I'm a musician who plays jazz, but I also play all sorts of other music like funk, house music, drum and bass. They tend to pigeonhole us you know: "Oh, you're a jazz musician" and that's it. I wouldn't call Carlo a jazz musician either; I wouldn't call him that by any stretch of the imagination. (Marcus Wyatt)

I don't like jazz: the stereotypical kind of jazz. It's terrible; I think if I play "Mack the Knife" again I'm going to hurl over my drum kit. (Lloyd Martin)

While Siya Makuzeni noted that Mombelli's music cannot be categorised in terms of "one particular genre even if people are going to call it jazz", Mombelli was less certain about eschewing the jazz label altogether. As he put it, "Well I am kind of jazz in a way because jazz is about improvisation."

Like Futshane and Mombelli, Chris Merz emphasizes the centrality of improvisation to his work, and prefers the term "creative improvised music" which he believes to be less "exclusionary" than jazz:

"Creative improvised music" doesn't seem to be exclusive. Jazz is always seeking to be exclusionary. "Exclusive" is not even the right word. Any jazz fan has their idea of what jazz is and what it can be and these people seek to enforce their views on the record-buying public. [For example] guys like Wynton [Marsalis] – while he has been very good for jazz, for his *kind* of jazz – [he] has been quite detrimental to the other side. Okay now look, there's nothing he could say that could keep Kenny G from selling 400 000 records a year but there are things he can say that will keep people from buying Ellery Eskelin's records, Paul Smoker's records or Tim Burns's records. Why does he have to do that? Well I don't really know because it's not helping him any. It's only making those of us who can see past that say, "Oh why doesn't he shut up and play the trumpet" ... So that's problematic. These people who set themselves up as the arbiters of what "jazz" is are only creating problems for the rest of us. As far as why, I really couldn't begin to get inside their heads ... and I just wish they'd knock it off [he laughs].

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<sup>1</sup> A transcribed collection of many of Parker's recorded solos

Marion Dall similarly experiences the term jazz as limiting, and accordingly does not class Mosaic as a jazz group. For Dall, Mosaic's music did not "strictly fit into [an] exclusively kind of jazz category".

Confirming Gisele Turner's observation that "jazz is such a *broad* term for such a *lot* of music", Kreesan Chetty understands jazz as encompassing a wide array of musical styles:

Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington: all those Black American jazz artists ... and then besides that there was contemporary jazz. I don't know whether you call them jazz-fusion artists... like Sadé: she has a dimension of jazz to her music, and Aretha Franklin; that kind of contemporary jazz is what I enjoyed. To tell the truth, I preferred them to the old classical jazz artists.

These widely divergent notions of what jazz is, are not accidental since genres are "historically developing discursive systems [that] ... are developed, sustained and reformed by people, who bring a variety of histories and interests to their encounters with generic texts" (Walser, 1993: 27). In other words, the "templates" or "horizons of expectation" individuals bring to bear on their musical experiences often differ dramatically. Moreover, the perceived confines of the aesthetic fields encompassed by listeners' horizons of expectation – and the extent to which these may expand to accommodate various forms of discursive diversity – symbolise domains which are often fiercely defended. Thus, in Monson's *Saying something* (1996: 133) interviewee Jerome Harris argues that the "lines in terms of what's *pure jazz* are not necessarily as hard and fast as some folks would want to believe." More forcefully, interviewee Don Byron voices a similar idea:

I don't think that anybody has the right to tell anyone else what jazz is. You know what I mean? Like what some motherfuckers say: "Well, that ain't jazz, the one over here is jazz." Anybody who says that about anybody is *fucked up*. (*Ibid*)

Likewise, Amiri Baraka [LeRoi Jones] (1967: 18) asks: "What is the definition of jazz? And who was authorized to make one?"

Still, for various reasons (explored in chapter 6) “some folks” set themselves up as the “arbiters of what ‘jazz’ is” (Chris Merz) and as Monson (1996: 133-137) shows, “the historical literature has by and large attempted to prove ... that jazz is a distinctive ‘pure,’ autonomous, strictly defined genre that can be distinguished from the musics surrounding it.” Similarly, Gary Tomlinson (1991: 245) remarks that

Jazz has been institutionalized, its works evaluated, and those judged to be the best enshrined in a glass case of cultural *admirabilia*. The jazz canon has been forged according to old strategies ... in which the limiting rules of aestheticism, transcendentalism, and formalism are readily apparent.

In other words, in certain powerful institutions, jazz is conceptualised in terms of an inflexible horizon of expectations (or rigidly-defined set of aesthetic criteria). In this regard, Monson observes that with the exception of “even eighth notes in ‘Latin’ grooves” (Ibid: 230), “[the] closer a rhythmic feel comes to an even duple subdivision of the beat, the more likely that some musicians and audiences will find that the music has left the realm of jazz and entered the sphere of rock and roll or contemporary funk” (Ibid: 196-197). In his influential essay on cultural dialogics and jazz, Tomlinson (1991: 249-251) discusses how Miles Davis’s jazz-rock fusion work in the late 1960s and early 1970s was the target of such criticisms.

Because of their respective explorations of various world musics and *musique concrète*, Counterculture, Mosaic, and the Prisoners render problematic the rigid definitions of jazz mentioned by Monson and Tomlinson. Therefore, in order to account for the heterogeneity of local jazz, I define jazz, rather flexibly, as an African American musical genre that includes improvisation as a principal feature.<sup>2</sup> However, although the music examined exhibits compelling underlying links with the more tightly-defined ‘mainstream’ jazz tradition, and may therefore be usefully located in relation to jazz as a field of aesthetic possibilities, Marion

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<sup>2</sup>I will explore this idea in greater detail in the subsection titled “Local Jazz; ‘mainstream jazz’ and African American musical culture”.

Dall and Neil Gonsalves felt that Mosaic could not be neatly classified as a jazz group, and had to be listened to in terms of a different set of expectations:

There were people I think who were confused by what [Mosaic] was doing ... but that was the whole thing of how do you categorize it [and] I don't think you can always categorize it. There were people who were normally a classical crowd who go to hear classical things and thought – seeing as this was a 'Friends of Music' thing – it must have been of quite a high standard, but they were still expecting it to be jazz. And, when they got there, and it wasn't their idea of what jazz should be and it wasn't quite their idea of just what *classical* should be, they didn't *quite* know how to categorize it, and they weren't sure how to receive it themselves. (Marion Dall)

Most of [Counterculture's repertoire is] groove-based: you get the head at the top, solo, and the groove pretty much stays there. The thing about the time [with] those kinds of tunes is that you get a sense of propulsion. The music takes on an energy and drive, and it just makes the music work: pushes the soloist; the audience gets excited, and the whole communal energy thing happens. And that's how jazz works: I mean traditionally, that is how jazz works. Now in *Mosaic* a lot of times, you get a groove and a melody and you get to the end of the head or to the end of a solo and you think the energy is just starting to build up, and suddenly the plan is, "Okay, let's stop and change grooves or come up with a different section." So you get a lot more different sections (which makes things more interesting) but for a listener who's acquainted with more traditional jazz, [it] breaks things up rhythmically, and you don't get that same sense of propulsion ... I think it requires a different kind of listening from the listener. You can't have the same expectations of this music that you have for example from Counterculture. (Neil Gonsalves)

The issue of listeners' expectations was also raised by Chris Merz who observed that the "musicians and audience[s] in [Durban] seem[ed] to be at odds" in terms of their respective horizons of expectation:

The musicians are all into something else ... there's no real 'down the middle' musician in town. Well, there are some ... but the ones you hear about and the ones that are good are the ones that are getting into other areas. I don't know which came first – the audience reaction or this interest in other kinds of improvised music – but the audience and musicians in this town seem to be at odds. I think our music (well like a lot of other music, your music for example too) is very demanding of the audience and a lot of people just don't wanna work that hard. You know, they've come to be entertained and by God they don't wanna have to think about it. We're sort of 'audio television' you know ... Jill [Merz] is always saying it's funny how people in this town will look down their noses at you if you read Danielle Steele books<sup>3</sup> or what not, yet they

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<sup>3</sup>Danielle Steele is a popular fiction author in the "mould" of Jackie Collins or Harold Robbins or

expect their music to be like handed to them. There's a real double standard at work here that somehow music is less important than literature or painting, dance or drama. Chances can't be taken in [the] arena [of music]; meanwhile, they expect all these great chances to be taken in every other phase of artistic life.

Similarly, Merz commented on the conservative programming at an annual national jazz festival:

There is a real strong current of going with the flow in certain parts of this country: "Well this is what everybody else is doing; this is what people want; this is what we have to give them." It runs very counter to the creative way of thinking and I think ultimately ... if it doesn't become destructive, it's going to get pushed out in favour of a more artistic viewpoint. Witness the Grahamstown Jazz Festival; look at the people who are the headliners at the ... Festival. There's not a free-thinking one in the lot. I mean, they are *great* musicians but they're not pushing it even a little bit.

For Lloyd Martin, such conservatism afflicts jazz culture as a whole:

It's like we have a beautiful building – and it really is a masterpiece – yet we [are] constantly digging under the ground, and taking out the foundation bricks to worship them and dust them off. The foundation stones are very important: they're the Charlie Parkers, the John Coltranes; all the greats. But every time you take a brick out of the foundation, the whole building is [jeopardised]. If those guys could come back to life and assess the situation, I'm convinced they'd say: "What the hell are you doing uncovering me! Why don't you build a roof? Why don't you build up or sideways?" But everyone's trying to do things the same way: guys lock themselves into Bebop or whatever. Why don't they just play?

As the interviewees' comments attest, acts of classification are politically charged, and musical genres are often deeply contested entities. Because genre is central to my discussion of jazz's social meanings, I constantly revisit the concept in my exploration of local jazz as discourse. Cued by Walser (1993: 28) I attempt to "analyze signification dialectically, working between the levels of specific details and generic categories toward social meanings".

## Local jazz, ‘mainstream jazz’, and African American musical culture

You can slot South African jazz into the American jazz category because they’re so related. (Marcus Wyatt)

As mentioned, I define jazz, rather flexibly – as an African American musical form that incorporates improvisation as a principal feature – in order to account for the widely-differing senses of the term that emerged in my interviews. On the one hand are the reservations about the ‘j-word’ expressed by Merz, Futshane, and Wyatt, and on the other hand, Chetty’s conception of jazz as inclusive of everything from Duke Ellington to Sadé. Chetty’s understanding of jazz is largely idiosyncratic, but, in lumping together Fitzgerald and Ellington (whom music professionals and lay-people alike would identify as jazz artists) with Sadé and Franklin (whom most music professionals would *not* identify as jazz artists), Chetty presciently alludes to their broader location within the context of African American culture.

According to Olly Wilson (1996: 43), there is a “distinct musical tradition that may be called African American.” Drawing on W.E.B. Du Bois’ “basic notion of the duality of the African American experience”, he argues that “a consideration of composition from the perspective of the African American tradition must ... recognize the duality of African American culture” (*Ibid.*: 44).<sup>4</sup> Many of the following “basic conceptual approaches to music-making ... and basic assumptions about the music process” (*Ibid.*) that Wilson identifies as emblematic of “African American musical culture” (*Ibid.*: 43) may be understood in terms of this duality:

The notion of music as a ritualistic, interactive, communal activity in which everyone is expected to participate; the concept of music as a multidimensional, musical/verbal experience in which a continuum from speech to song is expected and the rhetorical strategies of speech as music and music as speech are shared (signifying, troping); a conception of music based on the assumption of the principle of

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<sup>4</sup>Monson (1990: 40) theoretically locates this duality (which she describes as “the ability of African-Americans to manage competing cultural frameworks”) in terms of Bourdieu’s concept of “habitus’ ... [a] historical-cultural process ... whereby shared historical experience produces a recurrent set of cultural practices” (*Ibid.*: 31).

rhythmic contrast; the predilection for call and response; cyclical musical structures; the propensity to produce stratified, percussive musical textures; a heterogeneous timbre and sound ideal ... the notion of physical body motion conceived as an integral part of the music-making process ... (Wilson, 1996: 44)

With the possible exception of “the notion of physical body motion conceived as an integral part of the music-making process”, the principles outlined by Wilson are wholly applicable to the music examined. Thus, in referring to this music as jazz, I mean, more accurately, that the music played by Counterculture, Mosaic, and the Prisoners of Strange is conceptually ‘contained’ within the African-American musical tradition (as described by Wilson), and incorporates improvisation as a principal feature.

I find this a useful way of thinking about the music examined because, as discussed, the term jazz is problematic. Moreover, “the boundaries among African American musical genres are fluid ... [and] while writers have generally treated jazz, rhythm and blues, and gospel as separate genres, it is common ... for jazz musicians to have performance experience in several different African American genres” (Monson, 1996: 195).

Furthermore, Wilson’s notion of African American *musical culture* (as opposed to ‘music’) implicitly views musical and social processes as in-dissociable phenomena. Like Christopher Small’s (1987) notion of “musicking”, Wilson’s “musical culture” emphasises music’s inescapable location in the ‘present continuous’, and embraces all forms of musical activity from composition and performance to listening and dancing. In the discussion that follows, I examine each of Wilson’s propositions more closely, and explain how they pertain to jazz in general, and, more specifically, to local jazz:

*The notion of music as a ritualistic, interactive, communal activity in which everyone is expected to participate:*

Although much jazz heard today occurs in concert settings previously associated only with western classical music, it is still fairly common, even in the most formal of venues, for audience interaction in the form of shouts of

approval, or applause between solos to occur<sup>5</sup>. Darius Brubeck had the following to say on this subject:

Sometimes I ask myself why I don't listen to records very much anymore or CDs, but I'll go to a jazz gig even if I don't expect it to be very good ... I think it's [because] jazz is always, and remains, a social experience too. It preserves one of the elements that's African about it: it preserves a sense of it being participatory. What the *audience* does in a jazz gig is drink and talk. It's much more participatory than a classical gig, and, strangely enough, most pop gigs are not participatory because the sound is so overwhelmingly loud that after you've applauded once or twice you realise that it doesn't mean anything because the sound that you are making back to the performers never reaches them ... they're orders of magnitude apart. But in a jazz situation, you can applaud even while the music's going on or react in some other way and it enhances the atmosphere. You're in a subtle way jamming with the group and you might believe whether it's true or not, that you're influencing the performance. So you're participating.

Kerryn Scott experiences jazz in similar terms:

If you go to jazz, it's relaxed in the sense that you can touch and you can talk and you can appreciate and you can make a noise. Even at the [Prisoners' Wits Theatre] concert, people clapped after the [solos] and cheered. You're allowed to do that; you're expected to do that cos it's a dialogue thing and it's a conversation thing. You're a lot more involved as an audience member than you are when you go to something classical or even if you go to theatre.

Several other interviewees also commented on the important role of audience interaction. For example, Kreesan Chetty felt that the success of Mosaic's fundraising concert was due to the presence of a supportive audience of family and friends:

[Many of the audience members] were family and close friends and they were really supporting you. There was this real sense of camaraderie ... supportiveness ... It was like this whole film of plastic that pulled everyone together and there was a sense of togetherness there that supported the musicians to produce the kind of energy to perform like they did that day. I don't think that I've ever heard you play that well. I've always enjoyed your music but that day I enjoyed it most.

Complementarily, Mageshen Naidoo observes that the presence of an

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<sup>5</sup> See also Monson (1996: 95).

interested audience often inspires him to play better:

In recent years I've noticed that I can play off an audience and they can prompt me to play better, by just their presence. You can just pick up the vibe from an audience, and if they're relaxed and open to whatever's coming in, you tend to be more relaxed, and you play better.

*the concept of music as a multidimensional, musical/verbal experience in which a continuum from speech to song is expected and the rhetorical strategies of speech as music and music as speech are shared (signifying, troping):*

Monson (1996: 73) identifies the following "metaphors about language and music" that emerged in her interviews with jazz musicians: "jazz as a musical language, improvisation as musical conversation, and good improvisation as talking or 'saying something'." Similar ideas appear throughout Paul Berliner's authoritative *Thinking in jazz: The infinite art of improvisation* (1994). For example, Max Roach (one of Berliner's interviewees) describes soloing or improvising as being "like language: you're talking, you're speaking, you're responding to yourself. When I play, it's like having a conversation with myself" (Ibid: 192). Similarly, according to Tommy Flanagan, "Soloists elaborate upon what the structure of the piece has to say, what it tells them to do" (Ibid: 170).

Likewise, metaphors of music as conversation pervaded my interviews with the participant musicians. For Melvin Peters, jazz represents "a way of communicating certain ideas spontaneously and that just speaks to me." Mageshen Naidoo expressed a similar idea: "Jazz says so many things without words." Chris Merz was more self-conscious about the ubiquity of the idea of jazz as a form of communication, but was nevertheless unwilling to abandon the idea:

Well I suppose it's a bit of a cliché ... but I've got these ideas which I have to express and [improvised music] is the only medium that allows for enough flexibility that I can say what I have to say without feeling hemmed in. I suppose if I weren't an improvising musician I probably would be a painter or something rather than a player of composed music because I don't feel that there's enough latitude for expression in that context.

Similarly, for Stacey van Schalkwyk, playing improvised music "is about who I

am and what I need to express."

On a specifically musical level, this music-as-speech idea manifests itself in a vocal aesthetic ideal which encourages the development of an individual sound or 'voice'. Thus, famous jazz musicians like Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis or John Coltrane (to name but a few) have been celebrated for their personal "sound profiles" (Berliner, 1994: 125), their musical idiolects comprising distinctive musical "voices" and unique musical "vocabularies". Likewise, this aesthetic ideal finds expression in "a speech-like, multifaceted layering of rhythm" (Kernfeld, 1995: 13) that favours "the uneven stress patterning of everyday vocalization and speech" characteristic of African musics over the more "stylized" stress patterns characteristic of western classical music (Shepherd, 1991: 129).

*a conception of music based on the assumption of the principle of rhythmic contrast:*

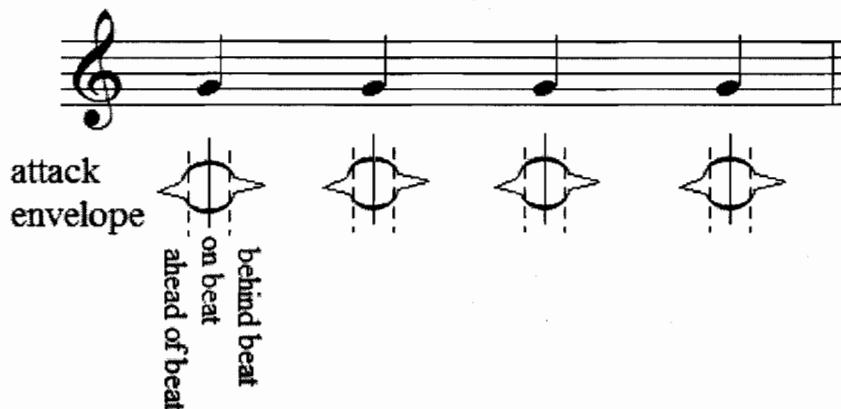
Shepherd (1991:130-131) notes that "rhythm in most Afro-American musics is contained within a framework of divisive metre derived from functional tonal music." However, the stress patterns of most African American musics suggest a "cross-fertilization of additive and divisive metrical principles" whereby "one gains the feeling that the [African] legacy of additive metre is trying to break out of the constraining divisive metre derived from or imposed by functional tonality" (*Ibid*). In the case of jazz, this "dual accentuation scheme" (Berliner, 1994: 148) is evident in the 1 2 3 4 stress pattern of a swing groove (which sets itself up in tension with the underlying divisive "**ONE** two **three** four" simple-quadruple stress scheme) or in the use of implicitly additive rhythms (such as 123 123 12) over a 4/4 metre.



### 3-1: Dual accentuation scheme

Likewise, whereas the “rhythms of functional tonality approximate to a mathematically strict sense of timing ... where notes fall exactly ‘on the beat’”, in much African-American music there is a predilection towards rhythmic inflection “whereby notes are either ‘anticipated’ or ‘delayed’” (Shepherd, 1991: 131). This is particularly true of the approach to melody in the jazz idiom, and Kernfeld (1995: 24 - 25) notes that jazz soloists need not “strap themselves to the beat” but are instead free to “toy with the melody as if it were connected to the beat by means of a short, sturdy piece of elastic.” Berliner (1994: 151) makes use of a visual analogy to explain this phenomenon:

Imagining the beat as an ‘elliptical’ figure ... [a] player can play either ‘ahead of the beat’ (that is on the front part of the elliptical figure), ‘behind the beat’ (that is on the very end of the elliptical figure or in varying degrees toward the centre of the figure), or ‘on the beat’ (that is the centre of the figure).



### 3-2: The beat as an elliptical figure

In a similar vein, Neil Gonsalves commented on Merz’s “very behind-the-beat,

typically jazz-like" rendition of "Give Five".

*the predilection for call and response:*

According to Monson (1996: 89), call and response musical formats represent "a fundamentally social, conversational, and dialogic way to organise musical performance" and are used by jazz musicians in the contexts of both composition and improvisation. Many jazz compositions are structured around call and response formats, and the concept is implicit in the AA'B structure of the blues. Likewise, other jazz compositions derive their structure from the call and response idea, for example, Miles Davis' "So What" or Art Blakey's "Moanin".

Performers may also use call and response manoeuvres whilst improvising and Berliner (1994: 657) shows the following example of musical interchange between Miles Davis and Red Garland:

Miles Davis and Red Garland, "Blues by Five"

### 3-3: Improvised calls and responses

Likewise, much of the music examined displays call and response structures or playing. For example, Merz and Faku play in 'dialogue' in the improvised introduction to "Ngu Makazi" and in the coda to "And Them", and duet improvisations are central to many of Mombelli's compositions. Similarly, the bridge section of the fourth movement of "Beaton Way" is based on a call and

response format:

The musical score consists of four staves of music. The top staff shows two measures of composed music for piano, guitar, and bass, followed by a measure of silence labeled "improvised response". The second staff shows another measure of composed music followed by an "improvised response". The third staff shows two measures of composed music followed by two measures of silence labeled "response resp. resp. resp.". The fourth staff shows a measure of composed music for piano and bass, followed by a measure of composed music for piano, guitar, and bass, followed by a measure of silence labeled "resp.", and finally a measure of composed music for piano, flute, and bass followed by a measure of silence labeled "resp.". The tempo is indicated as  $\text{♩} = 144$ .

### 3-4: “Beaton Way” – composed calls and improvised responses

*cyclical musical structures:*

In most jazz, cyclical structures occur in the form of recurring chord sequences that generally repeat themselves every twelve bars (as with the blues) or every 32 bars (as with AABA popular song forms). Kernfeld (1995: 41) terms such structures “chorus” forms and notes that they are characterised by a “formal instability that perpetually energizes a piece, pushing it toward a simultaneous

resolution of harmony and rhythm but never allowing it to reach that resolution." Typically, this avoidance of closure is achieved through "a lack of coincidence between two points of arrival – the cadence on a tonic chord, which falls two (sometimes four) bars before the end of a chorus, and the strongest metric downbeat, which falls on the first bar of the next chorus" (Ibid: 41) [Figure 3-5]. In modern jazz styles, a similar effect is created in compositions where the beginning of the chorus forms the harmonic point of arrival<sup>6</sup> [Figure 3-6]. This effect of perpetual motion is achieved through similar means in many ostinato bass grooves [Figures 3-7 & 3-8].

Arrival on tonic  
2 bars "early"

**3-5: "Take the A Train", bars 29 - 2**

"top" of form

**3-6: "Blue in green", bars 8 - 3**

↓      ↓  
"dom"    "melodic" point of arrival

**3-7: "All Blues" bass groove**

**3-8: "Sui Zen" bass groove**

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<sup>6</sup>Merz describes such forms as "cyclical because there's no real top of the progression".

*the propensity to produce stratified, percussive musical textures:*

Typically, jazz is a polyphonic music comprising four discrete, but interdependent musical layers: 1) a solo line or melodic layer, generally played by a wind instrument or 'horn' in jazz parlance; 2) an accompanying harmonic layer (played by a chord instrument which comps); 3) a bass-line, and 4) a percussion layer. Importantly, each of these layers, even when heard in isolation, should swing. In other words, the creation of rhythmic interest is not just a function of the percussion layer but a shared responsibility. According to Kernfeld (1995: 12), "Swing in its broadest sense involves the simultaneous interaction of rhythmic components of articulation, duration, note placement, contour, dynamics and vibrato." His description of swing in terms of "layers of rhythmic pulsation ... piled on top of one another" (*Ibid*: 13) is one of the best written accounts of the subtlety and complexity of the phenomenon and bears repeating:

The musician articulates one note crisply, another gently, another imperceptibly, in an infinitely varied succession of pulsations. The relative length of adjacent notes or silences creates a second layer of pulsation. Placement of notes in relation to the underlying beat – on the beat, between the beat, ahead of it (by a lot, by a little), behind it (by a lot, by a little) – creates a third layer of pulsation. Against these three layers, pitches move - high note, low note, in between, back up, higher still - and the resulting contours of melody, countermelody, or bass line create another infinitely varied pulsation, defined by the pace at which pitches (or general areas of pitch) recur. These same pitches (or areas of pitch) vary in loudness, perhaps in a clichéd manner – high and loud, low and soft – but often in a marvellously ingenious and unpredictable manner, thereby creating yet another infinitely varied pulsation. Finally, a steady or a changing vibrato, if present, pulsates in relationship to the ground beat, perhaps moving in phase with that ground beat but more often defining as it were, a different and variable beat. When these layers are presented in the right way – whatever that may be – the result swings.

Berliner's (1994: 681) full band transcription of the Miles Davis Quintet's (1956) performance of "Bye-bye blackbird" presents a classic example of this approach to texture [Figure 3-9]. Similarly, many of the pieces played by Mosaic, Counterculture, and the Prisoners of Strange exhibit percussive four-part textures:

t      p      b      d

FM<sup>9</sup>    FM<sup>13</sup>    Gm<sup>9</sup>    C<sup>13(♭9)</sup>    FM<sup>9</sup>    Gm<sup>9</sup>    C<sup>+7(♯9)</sup>    FM<sup>9</sup>

*sfz*    *mp*

### 3-9: Stratified, percussive musical texture

Voice + Tp      Tenor Sax      Bass

Voice      Tenor Saxophone      Bass

4

Groove Cont.      FINE

FINE

Drums

### 3-10: "Gismonti"

*a heterogeneous timbrel and sound ideal:*

Shepherd (1991: 130 - 132) notes that whereas “tone qualities in functional tonal music approximate to ideal norms and tend to be ‘clean’ and stable ... Afro-American musics are notable for highly personal ‘dirty’ timbres.” Focusing on jazz, Kernfeld (1995: 169) notes that “personal sound is the most coveted possession in [the genre], a virtual prerequisite for – though no guarantee of – being counted among the giants of the music.” Thus, even on an instrument like the piano (which is particularly suited to the production of ‘clean’, stable tone qualities) players such as Count Basie, Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, Bill Evans, McCoy Tyner, Keith Jarrett or Chick Corea are immediately identifiable by their distinctive pianistic ‘voices’.

This principle is also apparent in the versatility with which jazz performers ‘modulate’ their voices (in the manner of an actor portraying different characters) in relation to the stylistic feel of a particular composition or the mood of a particular musical moment. Thus Berliner (1994: 67) observes that “players [may] maintain uniform tonal quality and even articulation ... [while] at other times, they create interest along a melody’s contour by colouring it with myriad tonal effects.” This “pliable” (Kernfeld, 1995: 159) timbrel conception is similarly evident in the music examined, and Faku’s playing (to name just one example) provides several striking instances of the principle at work. For example, at certain points during his ‘free’ solo (accompanied only by drums) in “Travel in peace”, Faku’s sound was reminiscent of Bubber Miley’s growling jungle sound. At other times, as with “All these worlds” or “Dr. Dave”, he produced a more ‘classical’ sound reminiscent of Kenny Wheeler. On the other hand, when he soloed on “Child’s play”, he produced a more ‘African’ township-jazz sound like that of Hugh Masekela.

*the notion of physical body motion conceived as an integral part of the music-making process:*

Berliner (1994: 460) notes that jazz artists sometimes “dramatize features of

performance ... and support improvisations ... with subtle dance moves." For example, "singers may use specific movements to guide their singing ... pianists [may] lift their hands dramatically off the keys to highlight the ending of a long phrase. Horn players may crouch slightly or raise a foot off the floor when reaching for high pitches within a difficult passage" (*Ibid*).

Similarly, local jazz's performers accompanied their performances with subtle choreography. This was strikingly evident when Counterculture played "Sui Zen" at Howard College Theatre. For virtually the entire duration of the piece, Futshane shifted from one foot to the other in rhythmic counterpoint to the ostinato bass pattern. However, during the breaks which interrupted the groove, he would become still, and bow his head down. For Kreesan Chetty, it is important that performers *physically* communicate their enjoyment of their music, and he cited the example of a bassist whose playing "did a lot" for him:

I used to enjoy watching Deon play because he seemed to be having such a good time playing his music.

On the other hand, he felt that this performance element was lacking in Mosaic's stage presence:

I always thought that Stacey and you and basically all the musicians that you have at the moment aren't ... eh ... performers. You're good musicians and you put a lot of yourself into your music but the performance aspect of your music isn't as important to you. I mean look at American musicians; part of the product that they sell is their music and the other part is their stage performance ... I always feel that you'd become a lot more sellable if you work on that aspect.

Chetty's comments notwithstanding, I do not feel that such bodily motion is necessarily an *integral* part of the music-making process in jazz. Commenting on his experiences with the Johnny Clegg (rock) band, Neil Gonsalves concurs:

I watch [bassist] Concorde or [saxophonist] Brendan; I see them do their little moves, the expressions on their faces, and it all helps the act. They put this on as part of the performance. Now with me, I don't do that; can't do that because [laughing] I'm a jazz musician, or that's my ideal.

As such, it is the *body* (rather than physical body motion) which is an essential

and always-present dimension of the music process. Like most musics, jazz is metaphorically expressive of kinesic and proxemic experience (Keil, 1994: 55), and as a result of its African heritage, has a sophisticated rhythmic language that facilitates this expression. Thus while some jazz performers like Thelonious Monk have been known to “[leap] from the piano to dance a chorus or two” (Ibid: 56), many others assume a more discrete body language when they perform. Likewise, in the case of local jazz, some of the players like Merz, Futshane, Mombelli, and Makuzeni accompanied their performances with body movements, whereas others like Wyatt (“he stands there like a soldier”, Seena Yacoob complained), Faku, Peters, and Naidoo, are very economical in their body movements when they play.

Regardless of the peculiarities of body language however, “the vast majority of musicians [would] agree on the need to keep feet tapping, walking, marching and dancing” (Kernfeld, 1995: 4). Thus I would argue that while jazz retains this assumption about the music-making process, it is not a key component of the music.

Thus far, I have examined jazz’s contested status, and proposed that the music examined inhabits the wider socio-musical context of African-American musical culture as defined by Wilson (1996). Drawing on Berliner’s (1994), Kernfeld’s (1995) and Monson’s (1996) work, I explored how these concepts find expression in the broader jazz tradition, and argued that they recur in similar ways in the music examined. I now present a more detailed account of local jazz’s musical characteristics that considers: 1) improvisation and composition; 2) form; 3) pitch constructions; 4) rhythmic constructions and 5) timbre and texture.

## **Improvisation and composition**

Monson (1991: 42) notes that “In jazz, performance practice and improvisational compositional process are essentially combined.” Melvin Peters makes a similar

observation:

To me, [jazz composition and improvisation] are pretty much intertwined. There is no point of definition and to me, that's what's so great about jazz: it's thought of in that vein ... So I prefer to think of it as one and the same thing.

In addition, the following two conceptions, suggesting a reciprocal relationship between jazz improvisation and composition, emerged in my interviews with the participant musicians: 1) the notion that jazz improvisation functions as a means of generating (jazz) compositions, and that as such, jazz composition is a form of improvisation; 2) the idea that an improvisation on a particular tune represents an enactment or "extension" (Melvin Peters) of that composition, and that improvisation is therefore a form of composition.

### **Composition as improvisation**

According to Berliner (1994: 90-91), "A musician's ongoing experimentation with the jazz repertory ultimately provides the basis for original pieces." In other words, as a result of their experience of improvising within the jazz arena, jazz musicians internalise its basic generative musical principles and become equipped with the skills to create a "distinct musical environment" (Berliner, 1994: 222) in the form of a particular jazz composition. As such, jazz composition may be defined as a form of improvisation:

Composition for me is like improvisation. There's a fine line between improvisation and composition ... When I write music I solo with my pen, not my flute. (Deepak Ram)

[Composition is] slowed-down improvisation. (Carlo Mombelli)

In Berliner's *Thinking in jazz* (1994:221) interviewee Harold Ousley makes a similar observation:

If you listen to many jazz compositions, a lot of times the melodies were once solos. I know because a lot of songs which I've written have come from just my plain practising of certain solo phrases. When I'm soloing, I'll hear a certain phrase and I'll say "Hey, I like this; I think I'll write a song with this phrase in it."

The notion of composition as something which “comes from practising” improvisation also emerged in my interviews with Naidoo, Faku and Mombelli:

In jazz studies, [we were asked], “What do you think about when you write a tune? How does it come? What comes first?” With “G force”, I was practising the altered dominant scale and there were all these phrases that I was singing and playing and then there was this chord and I loved the sound ... the diminished-whole-tone sound. As I practised [it], it became more beautiful to me. Then, practising lines and stuff there were lots of these ideas and suddenly there was this nice melody that came along with those lines. [So] basically, the first half of the melody came from just playing around with those [ideas] and then I expanded on that. (Mageshen Naidoo)

What for me is a jazz composition? It’s all about improvisation because for me how I compose; it comes from practising. That’s how I write stuff. I start with scales or warm ups [and then] I just play around and I come up with ideas and then I check the melody. Sometimes I don’t know what is the time [sic] – like I just wrote this blues and the guys had to juggle around to check [figure out] the time [signature] – and we discovered that it was in seven-four. It just came from practising. (Feya Faku)

Compositions come about when I’m practising. I take a break, start jamming a bit, and I start hearing things. Funny enough, some of my good bass lines have come out when I’m ... on the phone. If you phone me certain times in the morning, I’m gonna have my bass around my neck: as I’m listening, I’m playing with my one hand, doodling. You won’t believe what comes out; sometimes, the most amazing things happen and I’d say, “Just wait, I got this most amazing bass line; let me write it down quickly.” [After] I write it down, we carry on talking. (Carlo Mombelli)

Likewise, Ram commented that “every composition that [he] wrote was written while [he] was practising [his] traditional things.”

### **Improvisation as composition**

A lot of times, I write so that I can set up specific challenges improvisationally, which may range anywhere from playing on a certain time signature to covering a certain harmonic area to saying as much as I can within a very limited harmonic framework. (Chris Merz)

The improvisation is an extension of the composition. It’s the impression that you’re trying to create on the piece. (Melvin Peters)

Since jazz is primarily an improvised music, the distinctions between the composer and performer of a jazz text are not clear-cut. The harmonic/melodic, stylistic, and rhythmic framework supplied by the composer does not 'fix' the performance. Rather, it functions as a discursive pre-structure, "conceptual scheme" (Shepherd, 1991: 136) or "distinct musical environment" (Berliner, 1994: 222) which specifies a set of musical cues with which the performers then dialogically engage. The musical choices performers make while improvising on a particular tune result in the creation of the actual text. We may thus envision the processes of jazz composition and performance as existing on a continuum where 'Jazz' as a genre or a (quasi) trans-historical field of aesthetic possibilities (or a general musical environment, to continue Berliner's metaphor) functions as a 'supply' of generative principles from which a potentially infinite variety of musical sentences may be created. Functioning intermediately, the act of composition entails delimiting a more strictly defined *subset* of musical cues realised in the form of a particular tune. Finally, in improvising on a tune, jazz musicians discursively realise/actualise these musical cues, and thereby create coherent musical utterances. In terms of this continuum, these utterances may be described as historically specific, sonically-embodied instances of the generically possible.

In short, jazz improvisation is composition in process. As such, the distinct musical environment represented by a particular composition is typically structured so as to incorporate improvisation and invite musical dialogue. Thus, jazz compositions "allow the rhythm section considerable freedom in the voicing of chords, the selection of bass notes (unless the piece is built on a rigid ostinato), and the placement of drum accents" (Kernfeld, 1995: 101). I asked Merz how he structures this dialogism into his compositions:

NR: When one writes jazz, one has to always keep it written but at the same time keep it open so that other people can come in. How do you solve that problem? Or do you even think about it?

CM: I haven't really thought about this too much but I never try to fix everything. I try to leave enough latitude on at least one front for different things to happen. A lot of times, I'll have an idea that has a very specific drum groove or ... a very specific bass ostinato. Now if I do that, if I fix one of those things, I'm likely not to fix the other one[s] ...

Generally, I try to keep something open about each piece and then ... if somebody comes up with something that's better than what I've got in the lead sheet – or more interesting – I'm actually happier ... because then it's going to be more personal.

Speaking from the perspective of performance (rather than composition) Lex Futshane makes a complementary observation:

In Counterculture we were all composers [in that] although we were using Chris's music as a vehicle ... at the end of the day – whatever we were doing there – it was an individual contribution from individual players involved in the band. He would come up with an idea or say he would come up with a route map and then we would bring in alternative routes to that or build houses, scenery and stuff like that so that [you're] not bored when you go down that map.

In a similar vein, Mageshen Naidoo made the following comment:

It's really nice when you can solo in the context of an arranged piece so you have something to draw from in terms of "This is what the architect wants and maybe see if I can build it."

## **Form**

This 32 structure of solos over solos becomes too dull after a while.  
(Sya Makuzeni)

Nothing's more boring for me than to go into a concert where people play 32-bar tunes, head-in, solo, solo, solo, solo, head-out ... that's a drag: it's become so clichéd and predictable that I've not gotten time for it. I like a certain number of tunes like that in a concert, but a whole concert of that really, really bugs me. (Chris Merz)

In terms of (large-scale) formal structure, the compositions played by Counterculture, Mosaic, and the Prisoners may be grouped into two basic categories: chorus forms in which the head and solos occur over the same underlying harmonic-rhythmic structure, and 'complex' forms in which the head and solos occur over different structures.

### Chorus forms

In the mainstream jazz tradition, chorus forms typically occur in the form of twelve-bar blues or 32-bar AABA structures. By contrast, unusual lengths predominate in local jazz. With the exception of "Ice nine" (a twelve-bar blues) and "All these worlds", "The Midwest coast" and "Up and down" (which exhibit 32-bar AA'BA', AAB and AABB structures respectively) most of the other pieces feature more unusual chorus forms. For example, "A thought" has a through-composed sixteen-bar structure, "Duke's lament" has a sixteen-bar AABB structure, "Green piece", a 48-bar AAB structure and "Dr. Dave", a 40-bar AABC structure. Even more unusual forms of nine bars, ten bars and 22 bars as with "Malunde", "To Carl and Darren" and "Reuben", thirteen bars as with "Blue thirteen", and 49 bars in the case of "Quite candidly" also occur.

However, despite this surface-level diversity, all the compositions mentioned above (with the exception of "Dr. Dave" and "A thought") reveal – on closer examination – a deeper underlying link with more conventional approaches to form in the jazz tradition. Like most jazz standards each of these compositions incorporates two contrasting ideas, and the form serves as a musical means of lending shape to this binarism.

For example, a popular jazz standard like "Autumn leaves" contains two main melodic ideas. These are presented in the A section and the B section or bridge respectively. Duke Ellington's "Satin doll" exhibits a similar structure:

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (indicated by a G clef) and common time (indicated by a '4'). The top staff is labeled 'First melodic idea' and begins with a quarter note followed by an eighth note, then a series of eighth notes with grace marks. The bottom staff is labeled 'Second melodic idea' and begins with an eighth note, followed by a series of eighth notes with grace marks. Both staves end with an 'etc.' symbol. The notation uses a mix of quarter and eighth notes, with grace marks indicating additional notes implied by the rhythm.

3-11: "Autumn leaves"



### 3-12: "Satin doll"

A similar principle of presenting contrasting ideas in different parts of the form occurs in the music examined:

'A' E<sup>b</sup>A  
First melodic idea A<sup>b</sup>13 D<sup>7</sup><sup>b</sup>9<sup>b</sup>13 G<sup>13</sup><sup>b</sup>9  
etc

Bridge Second idea E<sup>b</sup><sup>7</sup>/A<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup>13<sup>b</sup>9 D<sup>b</sup>9/A<sup>b</sup> etc

### 3-13: "Quite candidly"

## Complex forms

On the other hand, many of the pieces played by both groups exhibit more complex forms in which the composed material and improvisations occur over different structures. Mostly, these consist of through-composed heads with open, formally 'un-pre-structured' solos. Compositions exhibiting this type of structure include "Ngu Makazi" which begins with an open, freely-improvised section, followed by a 12-bar melody and then an open improvised section over an ostinato bass pattern. "And them" works along similar lines as do "Sui Zen", "I drank my coffee and dreamt", "Mango picker" albeit in a slightly more elaborate manner. "Sui Zen's" structure may be represented as follows:

[open flute solo]; [("set-up" of groove) + head]; [open solos over bass ostinato]; [head out (+ coda)]; [(shorter) open flute solo]

"Give five" and "Siddharta" also work in a similar way, except that the open

solos are interrupted with short composed interludes. Short pre-composed fragments interspersed with open improvisations are also a formal feature of the first part of "Untitled", "Bass spirits", and "G force".

In a few of the pieces exhibiting complex structures, the solos occur over pre-structured, rather than open, forms. For example "Calistra's waltz" has a head of 23 bars but the solos occur over a cyclical 32-bar AAB harmonic progression. Similarly, "NMR 1964" has a 20-bar head, while the solos occur over a 4-bar I-IV-I<sub>c</sub>-V *mbaqanga* progression.

Other compositions, notably "Travel in peace II", "Gismonti", "A Tribute to my friends", "Child's play" and "Beaton Way" exhibit more elaborate forms typical of the contemporary big-band writing/arranging styles of Kenny Wheeler and Maria Schneider, for example. In these pieces, a combination of the approaches to form identified above, occur. For example "A Tribute to my friends" has the following structure:

[14-bar stop-time introduction]; [4-bar setup]; [40-bar ABA head];  
 [6-bar sendoff]; [16-bar chorus form]; [24-bar final solo form];  
 [open (unaccompanied) solo]; [40-bar ABA head]; [21-bar stop-time coda]

On the other hand, "Travel in peace II" (originally written for big band) eschews a large-scale cyclical conception altogether and exhibits the following structure:

[open (unaccompanied) solo]; [A: 4-bar chorus form]; [B: 4x4-bar riff]; [C: 4-bar interlude]; [D: 4x2-bar riff]; [E: open solo over 4-bar riff]; [F: open solo over 4-bar ostinato]; [G: 8-bar interlude]; [H: open solo]; [I: 16-bar interlude]; [J: 4x2-bar riff]; [K: 8-bar coda]

Importantly, these correlations (and differences) are not coincidental. I will argue later that they are revealing of interactive relationships between various musical elements and point to intimate relationships between musical and social processes.

## Pitch

My pieces run the whole gamut from very dense harmonic motion to very stretched-out, modal things. One thing I don't spend a lot of time reiterating is circle-of-fifths just because I feel that so many people have done it already, and do it much better than I could, that I don't see the point in writing another "Confirmation"<sup>7</sup>. (Chris Merz)

Merz's comment reads like a summary of the pitch formations that characterise much of the music examined: "dense", colouristic harmonies rather than functional tonal, "circle-of-fifths" chord progressions, and static, "stretched out" modal structures. I now turn to a detailed examination of these musical phenomena. As with my discussion of form, I briefly consider the use of these constructions in the broader jazz tradition before describing how they are deployed in the music examined.

### Tonality, modality, and atonality

#### *Tonality*

Shepherd (1991: 130) notes that "functional tonality is about the creation and resolution of harmonic tensions – the articulation through harmonic progressions of explicit and complex arguments which come to a firm and satisfying conclusion on the keynote." On the other hand, "Afro-American musics tend to adopt the basic harmonic framework of functional tonality but, instead of manipulating it in an outward and complex fashion, use it as a 'given' within which to work out inflected and improvised personal statements" (*Ibid*: 132). Shepherd (*Ibid*) identifies two main types of harmonic usage in African American musics:

On some occasions harmony can work functionally: the individual notes of the harmonic framework ... refer outside themselves in an explicit fashion to other notes in the development of a highly restricted harmonic-rhythmic argument. There is, in other words, some feeling for "key". On other occasions the individual notes of the harmonic

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<sup>7</sup>"Confirmation" was composed by Charlie Parker and like many other Bebop tunes, exhibits a sequence-of-secondary-dominants or cycle-of-fifths functional harmonic progression.

framework function colouristically, confirming the partials inherent in the melodic note ... there is little or no feeling for key.

The first approach is evident in older styles of jazz such as Bebop or Swing in which functional harmonies (for example, cycle-of-fifths or I-vi-ii-V progressions) derived from standard tunes act as a basis for improvisation. Although performances in these styles may be highly chromatic (often as a result of performers' improvising on the upper extensions<sup>8</sup> of the given chords) they are essentially tonal and exhibit a fairly strong sense of key. With the exception of "NMR 1964" and "Child's play" (which are based on I IV I<sub>c</sub> V mbaqanga progressions<sup>9</sup>) and "Calistra's waltz" (which – like Gershwin's "Lady be good" for example – utilises a succession of secondary dominant chords), functional harmonic progressions occur only rarely in the music examined. However, many of the compositions played by all three groups are characterised by the occasional use of dominant-tonic chord movement.

The second approach which Shepherd (1991: 132) identifies as "typical of the harmonic language of composers such as Debussy and Delius", is a feature of many post-bebop jazz compositions [Figure 3-14]. This colouristic use of harmony (with its weak feeling for key) also characterises many of the pieces played by Counterculture and Mosaic [Figure 3-15].

3-14: "Infant Eyes" – underlying harmonic structure

3-15: "All These Worlds" – underlying harmonic structure

<sup>8</sup>Jazz chords typically include (at least) the 7th of a chord. Thus the 'upper' extensions refer to the 9th, 11th and, 13th notes of a chord.

<sup>9</sup>As an aside, the particular rhythmic power of mbaqanga probably results from the use of this strongly *directional* progression in a *cyclical* fashion.

### *Modality*

Tonality and modality represent two fundamentally different systems of pitch organisation. Functional tonality is a teleological, harmonically-based system of pitch organisation marked by a strictly hierarchical ordering of pitches in terms of the “gravitational pull” of a controlling key-centre to which all other notes (more accurately defined as tonal *functions*) “irrevocably and necessarily tend” (Shepherd, 1991: 107). Modality, on the other hand, is a melodically-based system of pitch organization, and it is less hierarchically structured than tonality. Modality is characterised by a feeling of stasis rather than a sense of key-orientated forward motion.<sup>10</sup>

According to Kernfeld (1995: 67), it is this feeling of stasis – which he defines in terms of “slow harmonic rhythm” – which is “in practice, the key element of modal jazz.” The modal structures used by jazz musicians are most often borrowed from medieval church music as well as from various non-western musical traditions. Other commonly-used modal structures include the whole tone scale and ‘synthetic’ scales such as the diminished and diminished-whole-tone scales. Modal jazz compositions may be built on a single mode based in one key area (for example Gil Evans’s “La Nevada blues”), a single mode which is transposed to different key areas (Miles Davis’s “So what” or Herbie Hancock’s “Maiden voyage”), a series of different modes (John Coltrane’s version of “My favourite things” or Miles Davis’s “Milestones”) or a combination of modal and functional harmony (Wayne Shorter’s “Yes and no” or Miles Davis’s “All blues”).

Whereas the composed elements of modal jazz tunes often exhibit a strict adherence to the notes a particular scale, modal *improvisations* often display high levels of chromaticism. Thus, in his discussion of Coltrane’s improvisation on “My favourite things”, Kernfeld (1995: 147) notes that it is only pianist McCoy Tyner’s “chordal ostinato” accompaniment “that sounds over and over again

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<sup>10</sup>Most modal structures still exhibit a sense of pitch centricity. Consequently, the use of modality in jazz typically results in a *non-tonal* or *post-tonal* rather than an *atonal* pitch conception.

beneath Coltrane's freely chromatic improvisations" which remains truly modal. For this reason Kernfeld argues that "in 'modal improvisation' it is often the accompaniment, not the improvisation that is modal" (*Ibid*).

Similar approaches to modality occur in the music examined. For example, Mombelli's "Bass spirits" and "Nine-eight" sketch are based on B Aeolian, and C# harmonic minor, respectively. Likewise, several pieces played by Counterculture are built on a single mode which remains in one key area. These include "Ngu Makazi" (which is based on a hexatonic scale), "Sui Zen" (which Merz described as being based on the "fifth mode harmonic minor, which is also known as the Hebrew scale, I think"), and "And them" (E Dorian). As with Coltrane's improvisation on "My favourite things", the soloists treated the underlying modal structures in a freely chromatic way during their improvisations.<sup>11</sup>

Many of the pieces played by Mosaic are also based on a single mode. These include "Give five", and "Siddharta" (which are built on ragas) and the solo section of "Helloys" (based on a D diminished scale), the first section of "Untitled" (D Dorian) and "G force" (G diminished-whole-tone scale).

Unlike the members of Counterculture whose 'chromatic' modal conception exhibits a dualistic jazz-like sensibility, Mosaic's players generally avoided the use of chromaticism in their improvisations on these modal pieces. In this respect, the group's modal conception is closer to the monistic 'diatonicism' of Indian classical music which requires that performers adhere strictly to the notes of a raga.

Another raga-based composition played by Mosaic, is "Beaton Way". It is built on a pentatonic raga in F as well as F# Lydian. During solos, a *hexatonic* version of the raga which includes the flattened second of the scale is played. This diatonic, pluri-modal conception suggests a synthesis of Indian and jazz-

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<sup>11</sup> Earlier, I mentioned that Counterculture's composite sound was reminiscent of the Coltrane Quartet. In part, this was due to their using this Coltrane-influenced 'chromatic-modal' conception on pieces like "And them", "Sui Zen" and "Ngu Makazi".

influenced approaches to modality.

"Pentatonic" Raga                    "Hexatonic" Raga

### 3-16: "Pentatonic" and "Hexatonic" versions of raga

As with many post-bebop standards (for example "Yes and no", "All blues" and "Footprints") a few of the pieces played by Counterculture and Mosaic exhibit a combination of modality and functional harmony. For example, the first six bars of "Up and down" are based on a G-7/C vamp<sup>12</sup> which suggests the Dorian mode based on G, over a C pedal. The following two bars are based on an F-7/B-flat chord which suggests the same shape a tone below. On the other hand, the bridge of "Up and down" is based on a functional ii-V-iii-vi-I chord sequence.

#### 'A' section

**G**7 / **C**   . . . . .   . . . . .   **F-** / **B**flat

#### Bridge

**D**-7   **G**7+9   **E**-7   **A**-7   **D**-7   **G**7+9   **C**   etc

### 3-17: "Up and Down" - modality and functional harmony

"A tribute to my friends" and "The Midwest coast" exhibit similar combinations of modal stasis and harmonic movement.

### Atonality

In addition to its novel incorporation of *musique concrète* with jazz improvisation, a distinctive feature of Mombelli's music is its often atonal grooves and melodies. Because atonality is rare in jazz, soloists often find it difficult to improvise on atonal compositions:

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<sup>12</sup>Gridley (1988: 405) defines a vamp as "a short chord progression ... which is repeated many times in sequence."

A lot of [Mombelli's] grooves are very atonal. There's not a tonic to go to. Your ear doesn't tend towards any harmonic centre, [and] there you are, in the middle of nowhere, and you must create melodies that sound melodic and not just like a pile of shit. (Marcus Wyatt)

## Melody

African American musics often feature melodies which, in terms of their surface and underlying structures, stereotypically exhibit a binarism analogous to the "dual accentuation scheme" which distinguishes these musics' rhythmic makeup. Thus, Shepherd (1991: 131) notes that African American genres like the blues are characterized by the use of pitch inflections ('bent' notes) and a melodic deep structure "which often appears to be in tension" with an underlying diatonicism derived from or imposed by functional tonality. In addition, African-American melodies tend more towards the "fluid, continually bending pitch patterns of day-to-day human speech and vocalization" characteristic of African musics than to the "highly stylized" patterns of pitches typical of functional tonal music (*Ibid*). In the case of jazz, these principles are evident in a predilection towards the use of pitch inflection as well as in the phrasal, vertical (or harmonic) and linear (or scalar) construction of many jazz melodies. Using these subcategories as a point of departure, I now turn to an examination of melody in local jazz.

### *Inflected and tempered pitch*

[I am] wanting to bend the tones, wanting to not play a western pure A: you come to realise that there are various A's in the rainbow. (Stacey van Schalkwyk)

According to Shepherd (1991: 129-130), "the notes of functional tonal music *ideally* hold a discrete stable pitch before moving discontinuously to the next note [and] they are always strictly 'in tune'." By contrast, "individual moments of jazz often depart from this European-based notion and instead take up an African-American idea, that the pitch of a note may move in a subtle oblique manner" (Kernfeld, 1995: 162). Quoting interviewee Chuck Israels, Berliner

(1994: 322) cites the following striking instance of pitch inflection in Paul Chambers' sometimes "microtonally chromatic" playing:

Chambers would sometimes find notes in between the notes ... putting four pitches in a line in which there was only room for three. For example, if he had to get from D to F and he had to play four notes in there and he happened to be going chromatically, he would go from a D to a flattened E to a sharpened E to an E to an F.

This pitch conception similarly pervades the music examined. Besides the usual array of pitch ornamentations such as "scoops, bends, shakes, doits, drops [and] smears" (Gridley, 1988: 13) characteristic of mainstream jazz styles, the members of Counterculture and Mosaic (in particular Merz, Faku, van Schalkwyk and Naidoo) also drew on African, Indian and Japanese approaches to pitch inflection in their playing.

### *Phrasing*

*Phrasing*, that's the bottom line for me. How are you turning that phrase? How are you relating one phrase to the next? Are you playing 'Hallmark card' lines that are four bars long (you know start on the ii chord over to the I Major 7, stop; start on the next ii chord, go to the I Major 7) or does it have this organic nature whereby a phrase is as long as it needs to be to make musical sense? (Chris Merz)

Melodies in the jazz idiom (particularly in the case of bebop and post-bebop styles such as the music examined) are characterised by the use of irregular phrase lengths which often begin and end in tension with the underlying rhythmic and harmonic structure. This is immediately evident when one compares the phrasal structure of a bebop tune like "Ornithology" with that of the original Tin Pan Alley standard (in this instance "How high the moon") on which it is (harmonically) based.

The musical notation consists of a single melodic line on a bass clef staff. The line starts with a quarter note, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. Above the staff, the chords are labeled: G<sup>A</sup>, G-7 C<sup>7</sup>, and F<sup>A</sup>. The notation uses vertical stems for most notes and horizontal stems for others, creating a rhythmic pattern that contrasts with the harmonic structure.

3-18: "How high the moon"

**3-19: "Ornithology" – irregular phrasing**

A similar "organic", "speechlike" approach to phrasing occurs in much of the music examined:

**3-20: "Up and down"**

*Vertical structure*

I very rarely will have a melodic 3rd or 5th ... it's always the 7th or above. (Chris Merz)

There were very strange harmonies. [Merz] was using a lot of extensions, like he'd start with a 7th upwards. (Feya Faku)

Modern jazz styles often feature melodies based on the upper extensions of underlying harmonies. In terms of their harmonic makeup, these melodies often seem to exist in a dialectical tension with the chord structures that underpin them. Again, this is immediately evident when one compares the harmonic-melodic structure of bebop tropes such as "Ornithology" or "Anthropology" with that of the Tin Pan Alley tunes on which they are harmonically based.

The music examined similarly includes melodies that 'stretch at' their underlying harmonic frameworks.

**3-21: "All these worlds"**

### *Linear structure*

"Sui Zen" was written in two 'chunks'. The first chunk was the melodic chunk with the ostinato. I was thinking there about 5<sup>th</sup>-mode harmonic minor, which is also known as the Hebrew scale (I think), and I noticed at one point when I was listening to some Shakuhachi music, "Hey! You know, a Japanese scale will fit inside of that scale." So, I extracted the Japanese scale out of that for the beginning and the ending. (Chris Merz)

Many post-bebop tunes contain melodic material based on pentatonic, hexatonic and modal structures again, often in tension with an underlying harmonic framework (if there is one). For example, the melody of Wayne Shorter's "Mahjong" is based on an F minor pentatonic scale with an added D while part of the A section of his tune, "JuJu", is based on a B whole tone scale. Similarly, Chick Corea's writing frequently features pentatonic, hexatonic, or modal melodies against (often) rich and complex harmonies.

The musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff shows a melody line with six numbered notes (1 through 6) and harmonic labels above the staff: E/B, F#/C#, B7/D#, F#/E, F#7, F#7/B, E^A, and E/B. Note 6 is labeled 'etc' and 'passing note'. The bottom staff shows a harmonic progression with numbered dots below the staff: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

**3-22: "Morning Sprite"**

A similar predilection for pentatonic, hexatonic and modal structures occurs in the music examined. For example, the melody in the A section of "Up and down" is based on a 'hexatonic' version of C Major in which the leading note is omitted. This results in a somewhat "edgeless" C Major tonality. Similarly "A tribute to my friends" is based on a hexatonic version of E Dorian in which the third of the mode is omitted. Consequently, there is a subtle blurring of the 'minor-ness' of this mode.

### 3-23: "A tribute to my friends"

In addition, harmonic ambiguity is created through the use of melodies based on wide intervallic structures, most notably the perfect 4<sup>th</sup> and the tritone. Whereas intervals of a third often imply certain major or minor triads, fourths are typically devoid of such harmonic implications. Many of the pieces played by Counterculture, Mosaic, and the Prisoners include the use of melodic 4<sup>ths</sup> and other wide intervallic structures. These include "Sunlove", "Sui Zen", "The Midwest coast", "Blue thirteen", "A tribute to my friends", "G force" as well as several others.

### 3-24: "The Midwest coast" - melodic fourths

## Harmony

That [G7] sharp 9 chord that wants to go somewhere – I thought about it being a dominant of C but not resolving. (Mageshen Naidoo)

As mentioned, post-bebop jazz styles often exhibit static and/or non-functional harmonies. This post-tonal conception typically manifests itself in two main forms: 1) a modal conception characterised by the use of bass ostinati, pedal points and vamps, and 2) a colouristic harmonic conception in which cycle-of-fifths and dominant-tonic progressions are used either sparingly or avoided entirely. The harmonic writing that pervades many post-1960s jazz styles may therefore be broadly grouped in terms of these two categories.

### *Modal harmony*

Kernfeld (1995: 68) argues that “modal jazz [has] much more to do with harmony than with scales” and that “the key element of modal jazz is a single idea: slow harmonic rhythm … [which] is achieved through the use of drones or of weakly functional successions of two or more oscillating chords” (*Ibid*: 67). In the mainstream jazz repertoire, compositions of this nature include Miles Davis’s “All blues”, the first 8 bars of which are based on a bass ostinato; Eddie Harris’s “Jazz freedom dance” which is based entirely on a B 7 chord, (Berliner, 1994: 90); Wayne Shorter’s “Mahjong” (non-functional successions of two oscillating chords), and Herbie Hancock’s “Maiden voyage”, a 32-bar AABA composition based on just four chords.

Many of the compositions played by the three groups incorporate similar structures. For example, “Travel in peace II”, “Give five”, “Siddharta” the first part of “Untitled”, “Beaton Way”, “Sunlove”, and “I drank my coffee and dreamt” – like “All blues” – are built on ostinato bass patterns. As with “Jazz freedom dance” and “Mahjong”, other compositions like “G force”, “Ngu Makazi” and “Up and down”, and the solo section of “Bass spirits”, may be described as vamp tunes. Finally, compositions like “The Midwest coast” and “A tribute to my friends” are characterised by infrequent changes of harmony (whereby the same chord is repeated over a period of four or more bars) in the manner of “Maiden voyage”.

### *Colouristic harmony*

Post-bebop jazz composers like Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, and Wayne Shorter are noted for their tonally ambiguous, colouristic harmonic language. The main characteristics of this language are an avoidance of traditional cadential movements, the use of pedal points and/or chords with foreign bass tones (in jazz parlance, slash chords), quartal harmonies.

Chick Corea’s “Now he sings, now he sobs” (1968) is a virtual compendium of these devices. Firstly, whereas root movements of a minor 2nd, major 2nd and

minor 3rd pervade the composition, an F#-to-B descending 5th root progression which ‘marks’ the composition’s ‘B-centricity’, is used only occasionally [marked “X” in Figure 3-25]. Secondly, the piece incorporates a pedal section which occurs towards the end of the head in and again, before the head out [Figure 3-25 “Y”]. Finally, Corea uses quartal accompaniment chords extensively [Figure 3-25 “Z”].

Many of the compositions played by Counterculture, Mosaic, and the Prisoners exhibit a general avoidance of dominant-tonic chord movement. For example, “All these worlds”, “Duke’s lament”, and “Malunde” exhibit root movement of a major 2<sup>nd</sup>, while “The Midwest coast”, “Dr. Dave”, and “A tribute to my friends” display minor 3<sup>rd</sup> root movement. Pedal points occur in “Reuben” and “Child’s play”. Slash chords are a feature of “Ice nine”, “Duke’s lament” and “Child’s play”. As with the use of melodic 4ths, *many* of the pieces played by both groups exhibit quartal harmonies. These include “And them”, “Duke’s lament”, “Ngu Makazi”, “Blue thirteen” and “A tribute to my friends”. Chord clusters occur in “Sunlove”, “Ethical Sam’s cookery class”, “Gismonti” and the raga-based compositions “Give five”, “Siddharta”, and “Beaton Way”.

① March-Like Now He Sings, Now He Sobs 256  
 Chick Corea  
 ♩=210

Pn (Intro) N.C. G/Ab Bsus "z"  
 Bsus CMA<sup>7</sup> FMA<sup>7</sup>  
 F EMI<sup>11</sup> "2" DMA<sup>13</sup> BMA<sup>13</sup> APM<sup>9</sup> Gb<sup>13</sup> E CMA<sup>7</sup>  
 N.C. G/Ab Bsus 3)  
 (Jazz Waltz) fill  
 Bsus CMA<sup>7</sup> B<sub>M1</sub>(MA<sup>7</sup>) CMA<sup>7</sup> (2) (2)

continued on the following page

**A**

2.21

8.

minor 3rd root mut

11X''

"2"

Bm (MA7) Cm7 Bm (MA7) Cm7

Bsus Bbsus Asus Absus Gsus F#sus

"2"

Bm (MA7) Cm7 Bm (MA7) Cm7

**B**

minor 3rd root mut

Bm Ab F D C6/9 (no 3) Bsus

Bm11 A6/9 Gm11 F6/9 Eb7sus Db6/9 F#7sus Ap7sus

"2"

Ab13 A13 Ab13 A13

(Continued overleaf ... )

③

258

"2"

1. fill "X"

B<sub>M1</sub> C<sub>M7</sub> D<sub>B</sub> "Y" E<sub>B</sub> F<sup>#</sup><sub>B</sub> E<sub>B</sub> D<sub>B</sub> C<sub>M7</sub>/F<sup>#</sup>

C 2. B<sub>M1</sub> II (SOLOS) C<sub>M7</sub> B<sub>M1</sub> II

F<sup>#</sup>7(<sup>9</sup><sub>5</sub>) B<sub>M1</sub> II

B<sub>13</sub> A<sub>b13</sub> F<sub>13</sub> "X" F<sup>#</sup>7(<sup>9</sup><sub>5</sub>)

(On Cue) B<sub>M1</sub> C<sub>M7</sub> D<sub>B</sub> E<sub>B</sub> F<sup>#</sup><sub>B</sub> E<sub>B</sub> D<sub>B</sub> C<sub>M7</sub> "X"

piano fill - D.S. al Coda (w/repeat)

"Y"

B<sub>M1</sub> C<sub>M7</sub> D<sub>B</sub> E<sub>B</sub> F<sup>#</sup><sub>B</sub> E<sub>B</sub> D<sub>B</sub> C<sub>M7</sub> B(<sup>odd 9</sup><sub>no 3</sub>)

piano fill -

(6x's)

1-5. 6.

(6th x: rit./straight 18s throughout)

As played on Chick Corea's "Now He Sings, Now He Sobs"

This chart has been derived from the original score and the original recording by the editor with approval of the composer.

All rehearsal marks and verbal comments of any kind do not appear on the original score and have been added by the editor with approval of the composer.

### 3-25: Chick Corea's (1968) "Now he sings, now he sobs"

## Rhythm

### Beat, metre, and tempo

Kernfeld's excellent (1994) discussion of rhythm in jazz begins with an examination of beat, "the basic pulse underlying measured music and thus the unit by which musical time is reckoned" (1994: 85). He argues that "the beat, though not always sounded, is always perceived as underpinning the temporal progress of the music, and it is only the presence of the beat that allows rhythm to be established" (*Ibid*). As mentioned, the beat in jazz is a multifaceted phenomenon that is often perceived by experienced improvisers as a three-dimensional "physical object, a palpable force" (Berliner, 1994: 353) rather than an abstract 'musical number line' delineating "a series of evenly spaced points or regularly generated hits along a continuum of time" (*Ibid*: 150).

Thus, for the student of jazz, beat is a crucial concept, and it is fundamental to an understanding of the genre's "two grand rhythmic systems: swing rhythm and duple rhythm" (Kernfeld, 1995: 12). According to Kernfeld (*Ibid*: 19), "duple rhythm circumscribes a grab bag of styles [including certain] early jazz styles, Caribbean and Brazilian styles and fusions with popular music" and is characterised by a subdivision of the beat "into two equal parts, usually played strictly" (Kernfeld, 1994: 86). Swing rhythm on the other hand is a feature of "much early jazz, music of the swing era, bop, and modal jazz" and exhibits an unequal subdivision of the beat "in a lilting fashion that implies three, rather than two subunits, though the subdivision is executed with such flexibility and variety as to give only an impression (and not an exact statement) of these values" (*Ibid*).

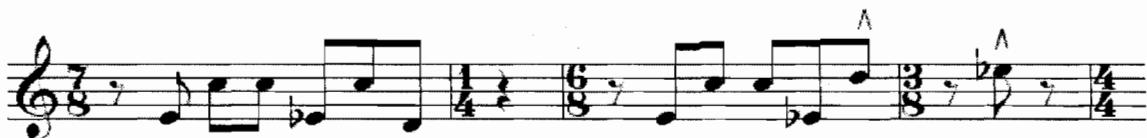
Kernfeld (1994: 85) defines metre as "the grouping of beats in a regularly recurring pattern (the bar or measure) defined by accentuation. At a higher level than the beat and in more complex ways, metre (whether explicitly marked or only sensed) provides the temporal framework of the music within which rhythm is established and perceived." He notes that "until the mid 1950s, nearly all jazz

was in duple metre" (in other words, two-four or four-four). Later, innovators like Sonny Rollins and Kenny Dorham began using metres such as three-four and six-eight (for example Rollins' "Valse hot" and Dorham's "Tahitian suite"). Since the Dave Brubeck Quartet's use of additive metres such as five-four and nine-eight on their album *Timeout* (1959), these have also appeared occasionally in the post-bebop repertoire (*Ibid*). However, in the main, jazz remains "overwhelmingly dominated by pieces in 4/4 time" (Kernfeld, 1995: 6).

By contrast, many of the pieces played by Counterculture, Mosaic, and the Prisoners use metres other than four-four. In addition to "Quite candidly", "Dr. Dave", "A thought", and Calistra's waltz" which are in three-four, and "Ngu Makazi" and "Blue thirteen" (six-four), pieces based on *additive* metres include "Give five", the first part of "Untitled" and "Sui Zen" which are in five-four, "Nine-eight sketch" (predictably, nine-eight); "Ice nine", "Bass spirits", "Mango picker" (seven-four) and "Siddharta" which is based on *rupak tal*, a seven-beat north Indian rhythmic cycle. Furthermore, a few of the compositions played by Mosaic and the Prisoners are characterised by time signature *changes* in which the beat remains constant but is reconfigured in terms of various metrical schemes during the course of the composition. For example, the introduction to "A Tribute to my friends" is in four-two; the head is in seven-four with a five-four bridge, and the solos occur over a four-four groove. Similarly "Child's play", is based on alternations between five-four and six-four, and thirteen-eight. The piece concludes with an irregular metrical structure somewhat reminiscent of Stravinsky's rhythmic language:

3-26: "Child's play" – irregular rhythmic structure

Section E of "Mango Picker" also features an irregular metrical structure:



### 3-27: "Mango Picker"

In addition, many of the pieces incorporate subsections based on different tempi. Often, these take the form of (a-rhythmic) free solo introductions – like Bill Evans's introduction to "So what" (Davis, 1959) – in which a steady, uniform beat is avoided. This approach is a feature of "Give five" and "Siddharta" which begin with *alap*-like introductions<sup>13</sup>, and "Travel in peace II", "Helloys", "Sui Zen", "NMR 1964", "The Silence of a storm", and "Untitled prayer" which begin with free introductions.

A few pieces played by Mosaic also exhibit tempo changes *within* ensemble sections. These include "Green piece" (which begins with a slow Latin groove, before breaking into an up-tempo section, one-and-a-half times as fast, in which swing and Latin grooves alternate), the Mosaic version of "And them" (which is introduced with a ballad-like section before the piece "proper" begins), "Child's play" (in which the introduction ends with a *rallentando* and the rest of the piece continues over a different tempo) and the Mosaic version of "Give five" which is based on a medium-fast five-four groove but then breaks into a fast eight-beat cycle over which the flute solo occurs.

More radically, "Bass spirits" includes rhythmically free playing against a background of in-tempo loops, while "I drank my coffee and dreamt" involves the juxtaposition of two completely different tempi against one another:

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<sup>13</sup>As mentioned in Chapter 2, *alap* is an Indian classical musical term which refers to the a-metrical introductory section of a performance in which the mood and melodic essence of the raga on which the performance is based, is introduced.

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is for the Trumpet, starting at  $J = \pm 60$  with a 3/2 time signature. The second staff is for the Trombone, with a dynamic of *mf* and the instruction "Rubato". The third staff is for the Bass, also in 3/2 time with *mf*. The bottom staff is for the Drums, showing a continuous pattern of eighth notes. A tempo change to  $J = 160$  with "In Tempo" is indicated. The score ends with the instruction "(Drums enter Groove)" and "Groove Continues" followed by a series of eighth-note strokes.

### 3-28: "I drank my coffee and dreamt"

Beneath this ostensibly unconventional rhythmic surface structure however, almost all the compositions played by all three groups are based on either an "equal duple" or "lilting triple" subdivision of the beat. In other words, each of these compositions may be neatly categorised in terms of the "two grand rhythmic systems" Kernfeld identifies. The only exception is "Green piece" in which two four-bar phrases (bars one-four and five-eight of the bridge) based on a swing rhythm alternate with the Latin-influenced duple rhythm which underlies the rest of the composition<sup>14</sup>.

In addition to this general similarity with the mainstream repertoire, many of the pieces include the following rhythmic devices which, according to Kernfeld (1995: 5), "occur unsystematically" throughout the jazz repertoire: "four-beat, two-beat, backbeat, double-time, break, and stop-time" (*Ibid*). Using these as a point of reference, I continue my discussion of rhythm in local jazz. As with the preceding discussions on form and pitch, I first consider the use of these devices in the mainstream jazz tradition before describing their occurrence in local jazz.

<sup>14</sup>Here again there are precedents in the mainstream jazz tradition. For example, John Coltrane's version of "The Night has a Thousand Eyes" is played over a Latin groove in the A section, while the bridge occurs over a swing groove. Similarly, when most jazz musicians play Cole Porter's "Night and Day", they often use a duple feel in the A sections and then switch to a swing feel on the bridge.

## Four-beat; two-beat; backbeat; double-time; break; stop-time

### Four-beat

Kernfeld (1995: 6) notes that "countless performances have not merely a steady beat but an explicit steady beat known as a four-beat, because jazz is overwhelmingly dominated by pieces in four-four time." Four-beat is characterised by a "lilting triple" subdivision of the beat, (predominantly) quarter-note based walking bass lines, syncopated comping (usually by a guitarist or pianist), and ride cymbal ostinato (timekeeping) patterns which typically emphasize the "triplet" feel on beats two and four. These techniques are evident in Berliner's (1994: 681) full band transcription of the Miles Davis Quintet's (1956) recording of "Bye-bye blackbird":

The musical score consists of four staves. Staff 't' at the top has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns, some with grace notes. Staff 'p' in the middle has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It shows harmonic chords: FM⁹, FM¹³, Gm⁹, C¹³(⁹), FM⁹, Gm⁹, C+⁷(⁹), and FM⁹. Staff 'b' at the bottom has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. It shows a walking bass line with quarter notes. Staff 'd' at the bottom has a common time signature and a key signature of one flat. It shows a ride cymbal pattern with 'x' marks and dynamic markings 'sfz' and 'mp'.

**3-29: "Four-beat"**

"Up and down", "The Midwest coast" and "Russ Morgan Orchestra: Dead on arrival" which were played by Counterculture display a four-beat feel and a rhythmic texture similar to Figure 3-20. Interestingly, even though Mosaic uses *tabla* rather than drums, several of the pieces we played are also based on a four-beat feel. These are "NMR 1964", "To Carl and Darren", "Reuben" and

"Green piece" which as mentioned earlier incorporates a brief 8 bars of swing within its 48-bar structure.

### *Two-beat*

According to Kernfeld (1995: 6-7) two-beat entails an emphasis on beats one and three (of a four-four bar) and "is anchored mainly by bass playing." In addition to its occurrence in many early jazz styles, the two-beat also functions as a "standard device for ballads" in modern jazz styles (*Ibid.*). Thus, as Berliner (1994: 709) notes in his analysis of the Miles Davis Quintet's (1964) recording of the ballad "I thought about you", "for the most part, [bassist Ron Carter] drives the group with a highly rhythmically embellished, two-beat style":

3-30: Two-beat bass-line<sup>15</sup>

This standard rhythmic device also occurs in the music examined here. Thus Futshane, Sokhela, and Mombelli (respectively) accompanied Counterculture's performances of "All these worlds", Mosaic's performance of "Duke's lament", and the Prisoners' performances of "Malunde" and "Untitled prayer" using (mostly) a two-beat style.

### *Double-time*

Kernfeld (1995: 8) notes that "double-time involves a doubling of tempo in the rhythm section, a doubling of the general speed of the melody line, or both." However, although the tempo is doubled, the harmonic rhythm remains the

<sup>15</sup>Figure 3-30 has been copied from bars 1-8 of the bass part which appears in the first 8 bars of Berliner's (1994: 713 - 714) full band transcription of the Miles Davis Quintet's performance of "I thought about you".

same (Berliner, 1994: 300). Like two-beat, double time frequently functions as a standard device in improvisations on ballads. Bars 15-22 of Berliner's (1994: 717-718) full band transcription of the Miles Davis Quintet's (1964) recording of "I thought about you" traces the group's unexpected break into double time in bar 19 of the form. Notice as well the transition from a "crotchet = 54-56" two-beat rhythm (which I've tried to underscore visually with a broken line between beats 3 and 4 of the bar) to a more "interwoven", "crotchet = 108-112" four-beat rhythm which (as the broken line shows) does *not* lend itself to an even subdivision of the bar [Figure 3-31 and 3-32].

Musical score for Figure 3-31. The tempo is indicated as  $J = 54-56$ . The score consists of four staves labeled t, p, b, and d. Staff t (top) has a treble clef and includes dynamic markings *mf*, *mp*, and *f*. Staff p (second from top) has a bass clef and includes dynamic markings *mp*, *mf*, and *mp*. Staff b (third from top) has a bass clef and includes dynamic markings *mf* and *f*. Staff d (bottom) is a blank staff. The score features vertical dashed lines at the beginning and end of measures, and horizontal dashed lines between the second and third measures. Measures are divided into three groups by vertical dashed lines. The first group contains chords Am<sup>13</sup>, Ab<sup>13</sup>, Gm<sup>9</sup>, and B<sup>9</sup>. The second group contains B<sup>9</sup> and B<sup>b</sup>m<sup>13</sup>. The third group contains B<sup>b</sup>m<sup>13</sup>. Measure 3 is subdivided into two groups by a horizontal dashed line, each containing a three-note cluster. Measure 4 is also subdivided into two groups by a horizontal dashed line, each containing a three-note cluster.

Musical score for Figure 3-31. The score consists of four staves labeled t, p, b, and d. Staff t (top) has a treble clef and includes dynamic markings *mf* and *f*. Staff p (second from top) has a bass clef and includes dynamic markings *f*. Staff b (third from top) has a bass clef and includes dynamic markings *mf* and *f*. Staff d (bottom) is a blank staff. The score features vertical dashed lines at the beginning and end of measures, and horizontal dashed lines between the second and third measures. Measures are divided into three groups by vertical dashed lines. The first group contains chords Am<sup>11</sup> and D<sup>7(59)</sup>. The second group contains D<sup>7(59)</sup>. The third group contains D<sup>7(59)</sup>. Measure 3 is subdivided into two groups by a horizontal dashed line, each containing a three-note cluster. Measure 4 is also subdivided into two groups by a horizontal dashed line, each containing a three-note cluster.

3-31: Two-beat

*J = 108-112*

### 3-32: Double-time four-beat

Double time is used in similar ways in the music examined. During Counterculture's performance of "All these worlds" at the Rainbow Restaurant, Merz played a chorus in double-time, over the ballad feel being maintained by the rhythm section. During Peters' piano solo, the entire rhythm section shifted to a double time feel. Similarly, the bridge sections of Faku and Van Schalkwyk's solos on "Duke's lament" were played over a double time rhythm.

#### *Backbeat*

According to Kernfeld (1995: 8), "strong accents on beats 2 and 4 constitute a backbeat." A striking example of the technique occurs in the Bill Evans Trio's

(1961) performance of "Milestones" where bassist Scott LaFaro accompanies the B section of the head with strong accents on beats two and four.

Perhaps because the groups discussed played very few four-four swing tunes (ten out of a total of 44), a strong backbeat occurs only on one piece: during Counterculture's performances of "Travel in peace II", drummer Pavitt accompanied Merz's tenor solo with strong two and four accents on the snare drum, while for the entire duration of his accompaniment of Faku's solo, he emphasized two and four on the hi-hat.

### *Break*

Kernfeld (1994:148) defines the break as "a brief solo passage occurring during an interruption in the accompaniment, usually lasting one or two bars and maintaining the underlying rhythm and harmony of the piece." He notes further that the break is "often used to introduce a solo chorus" (*Ibid*). Many bebop improvisations, for example Charlie Parker's solo on Dizzy Gillespie's "A night in Tunisia" (Parker et al., 1953) begin with a break.<sup>16</sup>

The break is used in a similar manner (in other words, to introduce solos) in the music examined. The device occurs in "Up and down", "Reuben", and "Calistra's waltz" (which has an unusual 3-bar break).

### *Stop-time*

According to Kernfeld (1994: 1164) stop-time is "[a] technique used to focus attention on a singer or an instrumental soloist [whereby an] ensemble or pianist repeats in rhythmic unison a simple one- or two-bar pattern consisting of sharp accents and rests while the soloist takes command." Furthermore Kernfeld (1995: 11-12) notes that "[like] the break, stop-time supplies textural contrast

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<sup>16</sup>On the particular performance cited, *The quintet: Jazz at Massey Hall* (1953) there is a shout of applause as the rhythm section re-enters and Parker concludes his break.

and presumes the continuation of an implicit steady beat." The A section of "Autumn leaves" is traditionally played against a stop-time accompaniment.<sup>17</sup>

In the music examined, a clear-cut example of stop-time rhythm occurs in the introduction to "A tribute to my friends" where a simple "jabbing" rhythmic figure played by bass, piano and tabla alternates with a flashy flute/piano unison melody. The device is also used, less starkly, in the A section of "Up and down".

## **Timbre and texture**

### **Timbre**

My whole mission in life is to get a bigger sound: every time I play I'm looking for a warmer and bigger sound. (Marcus Wyatt)

Walser (1993: 41) notes that "[of] all musical parameters, timbre is least often analyzed, but its significance can hardly be overstated." Using a few simple examples, he neatly illustrates the centrality of timbre in the construction of musical meaning (*Ibid*):

Scan across radio stations, and a fraction of a second will be sufficient time to identify the musical genre of each. Before any lyrics can be comprehended, before harmonic or rhythmic patterns are established, timbre instantly signals genre and affect. Imagine this text being done by AC/DC, with raucous screaming and pounding: "I hear footsteps and there's no one there; I smell blossoms and the trees are bare." Now compare Frank Sinatra crooning it, backed by strings. The musical cues create very different effects: one is the frantic agony of paranoia; the other is the delicious disorientation of bourgeois love.

In a similar vein, Deepak Ram remarked that when he played *bansuri* with Tananas, a popular South African fusion group, he noticed that in addition to the group's usual fans, many people who frequented his Indian classical recitals began attending the Tananas' concerts. He attributed this to the significance that the flute has for Hindu people (because of its association with Lord Krishna)

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<sup>17</sup>See for example Oscar Peterson (1965) or Chick Corea (1989).

and surmised that these audiences were responding primarily to the timbre of the flute, over and above the musical context (Indian classical or western) in which it was used:

It's the sound quality of the instrument – no matter what I play. I mean, I can play *Rag Tarbhani* and mix it with *Rag* [unclear] and change it and play "My funny valentine" in between. That doesn't matter: it's the sound of the flute that they come for.

However, despite its undeniable importance, of all the musical elements, timbre is the most resistant to technical description. This is because timbre, while semantically rich in extra-musical connotations, does not possess a syntactic dimension. Thus, whereas our recognition of form, melody, rhythm, harmony and texture may be described in terms of "the structure of concatenated sound events" (Feld, 1984:6) or patterns of sound along a continuum of time, our perception of timbre is non-temporal and 'pre-logical' and therefore, immediate and instinctive.

In terms of an analytical account of jazz, the difficulty of describing timbre is compounded because, as mentioned earlier, the genre is characterised by a pliable and personalised timbral conception (Kernfeld, 1995: 159). However Kernfeld's notion of "an instrumentarium" – defined as a characteristic "body of instruments" (Ibid: 166-167) – provides a useful means of beginning to chart the "galaxy of instrumental tone colors" (Ibid: 168) which characterises the music. Traditionally, this instrumentarium has included the trumpet, saxophone, piano, bass and drums. However many post-bebop styles exhibit an expanded instrumentarium including various electronic instruments, "orchestral winds and strings ... such as the flute ... french horn, and cello" as well as instruments from non-western musical traditions (Ibid).

As mentioned, many of the pieces played by Counterculture and Mosaic fuse aspects of Japanese music ("Sui Zen"), Indian classical music ("Give five", "Siddharta" and "Beaton Way" as well as the rest of Mosaic's repertoire because of the group's use of tabla) and African music ("Ngu Makazi", "Child's play" and "NMR 1964") with jazz. Consequently, in addition to a pliable and

personalised timbre conception, the music examined exhibits a pluri-cultural timbre conception. This is in part facilitated by the use of an expanded instrumentarium including the flute (which occurs in many of the world's musical cultures), guitar (which has been adopted/adapted by several non-western musical traditions) as well as the *tabla*. The Prisoners' 'experimental' sound is, in part, the result of their use of various 'found' objects, from kids' toys to Harley Davidson exhaust pipes, hubcaps, and metal sheets as 'instruments', and their exploration of alternative instrumental techniques:

At one stage, [Wyatt] was even playing trumpet in water: he took on stage a metal ice bucket, and he put his trumpet horn into the water and utilised the sound going through the water. It was fantastic! It was like an aquatic mute. (Lloyd Martin)

### **Texture**

The term texture refers loosely to "any of the vertical aspects of a musical structure, usually with regard to the way in which individual parts or voices are put together" (Sadie, 1981: 709). As mentioned, jazz typically exhibits four-part contrapuntal textures consisting of 1) a "solo" line or melodic layer comprising of one or more parts which typically (though not necessarily) occur in rhythmic unison; 2) an accompanying harmonic layer; 3) a bassline, and 4) a percussion layer. Typically, as Berliner (1994: 354) notes, improvisers work towards "a collective transparency of sound in which each part is discernable" by exploring "complementary space[s] within the music's texture" (*Ibid*)<sup>18</sup>.

However, as Marion Dall notes with regard to Mosaic, "You hear a range of different textures through the different combination of instruments." Thus, while many of the pieces played by all three groups exhibit the four-part, contrapuntal textural format described above, others explore less conventional textural formats.

Often, these take the form of unaccompanied, improvised, introductory sections

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<sup>18</sup> Berliner's (1994: 681) full band transcription of "Bye-bye blackbird" (Figure 3-9) presents a classic example of this approach to texture.

or solos in the manner of Bill Evans' (1959) introduction to "Someday my prince will come". Thus "Quite candidly" and "All these worlds" begin with solo piano introductions; "Sui Zen" begins with an unaccompanied flute solo; "Helloys" and "NMR 1964" begin with solo guitar, while "Travel in peace II", "Malunde", and "Untitled prayer" begin with unaccompanied bass solos.

'Percussion-less' textures are a feature of "Duke's lament", the second movement of "Beaton Way", the introduction to "Helloys" and the bridge of "A tribute to my friends". Almost all the Prisoners' repertoire lacks chordal comping: notable exceptions are "Gismonti" and "Nine-eight sketch" where Mombelli plays two and three-note chords on the bass. Textures lacking chord accompaniments also occurred during Faku's trumpet solo on "Travel in peace II" (accompanied only by drums), as well as during the guitar and flute solos on "Siddharta", and the piano and flute solos on "Give five", which were all accompanied by just bass and *tabla*. In addition, flute and piano textures are a feature of "A thought", the introduction to "Give five", the introduction to "Child's play" and the flute solo on "A tribute to my friends": Full band unison textures occur in parts of "Give five" and "Siddharta".

Both Neil Gonsalves and Darius Brubeck commented on Mosaic's texturally 'experimental' nature. Gonsalves noted that because Mosaic's sound involved a *tabla* rather than a drum kit, the group projected less of a "jazz sensibility" than Counterculture:

It's interesting trying to compare the Mosaic version and the Counterculture version [of "Give five"]. You get two very different sensibilities about each band. [In] the Counterculture version ... because there's a kit involved, you're dealing with a different *texture*. It's much fuller because the kit gives you a pad off which to work. In contrast, [in] the Mosaic version there is no kit involved and the texture is a lot more sparse but what that serves to do is to highlight each of the other instruments especially the instruments that are more out of the range of the bass and the *tabla* which are fairly close together - so for example the piano and the flute - you just kind of have more sparkle if you will because there's no cymbals in the same register ... The Counterculture version has more of a jazz sensibility.

Similarly, Brubeck observed that whereas most jazz as well as many other

musics occur against a backdrop of continuous sound (or as Gonsalves put it, "a pad off which to work"), Mosaic was unusual in its use of pitch and *silence*:

You don't have a drum (and this is not a covert suggestion that you get a drummer) but we're used to hearing some sustained percussion texture. We're used to hearing some *noise* in the technical sense. There's no noise in Mosaic: everything is pitch which throws *silence* into high relief. When you talk about Miles Davis's use of silence, nonsense! It's Miles Davis not playing so that you hear the rhythm section: there is no silence.

As mentioned, the present chapter maps the 'musical terrain' represented by local jazz. Towards this end, I have musically located local jazz in terms of an inventory of characteristic musical features. I have argued that although many of the pieces played by all three groups exhibit unconventional surface structures (unusual forms; pitch constructions and timbre conceptions involving *musique concrète* or drawing on Japanese, African, and Indian musics; rhythmic constructions incorporating additive metres, time signature changes and even tempo-changes; juxtapositions of different tempi against one another; an expanded instrumentarium, and unusual textural formats), their underlying designs reveal compelling deep-level similarities with the mainstream jazz tradition as described by jazz scholars like Berliner (1994), Kernfeld (1994 and 1995), Monson (1996), and Gridley (1988).

Thus, as with the mainstream jazz repertoire, the pieces played by Counterculture, Mosaic, and the Prisoners (collectively) incorporate the following: call and response structures; pitch inflections against an equal temperament framework; combinations of modal stasis with a non-hierarchically-constituted (and non-teleological) 'colouristic' harmonic conception; melodic structures which appear to exist in a dialectical tension with their underlying harmonic-rhythmic structures; dual accentuation schemes which synthesize additive and divisive metrical principles; a personalised and pliable timbre conception; contrapuntal textures marked by "a collective transparency of sound in which each part is discernable" (Berliner, 1994: 354), and so on.

These similarities may be broadly contextualised in terms of the “duality of African American culture” (Wilson, 1996: 43). Importantly, this duality is not a dichotomy constructed in terms of a hierarchy of positive and negative terms. It is instead a dialogism involving – in the case of jazz – the operation of “Signifyin(g)” (Gates, 1988) musical practices that deconstruct the hierarchically-constituted binarisms and centricisms characteristic of functional tonality. Thus, unlike (for example) the traditional western classical repertoire, where the central and monological authority of ‘The Composer’ dictates the form and content of the musical output, jazz is dialogically conceived by improvising musicians who negotiate, as (relatively) equal partners, the form and content of the music in a dynamic and ongoing process of interaction. Moreover, the improvisation processes themselves involve a deeper dialogism. As such, jazz musicians re-situate instances of musical ‘otherness’ ('outside' notes or 'dissonant', 'non'-chord tones; 'weak' harmonic movement, 'off'-beats, 'behind' the beat playing, 'out'-of-tune-ness, etc.) and re-constitute such instances as socially and aesthetically integral to the music.<sup>19</sup>

Figure 3-33 (on page 127) offers a visual summary of the preceding arguments. Whereas Figure 1-1 on page 21 depicts local jazz as being embedded within a cumulative succession of contextual layers, and presents an overall view of the formal structure of the present study, Figure 3-33 is a smaller-scale detailed map of the present chapter that ‘zooms-in’ on the ‘musical texts area’ presented in Figure 1-1.

As a discursive phenomenon – and a *living* network of interactive relationships – local jazz is not just an aggregate of isolated musical features any more than the people who performed and listened to it are a mere assortment of so many nerve-endings, muscles, and bones. As mentioned, social meanings do not ‘reside’ in musical texts and cannot be ‘prised out’ through analysis. Music is process, and musical details express meaning by virtue of their dual occurrence

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<sup>19</sup>Monson (1996: 98 - 121) examines this dialogism under the headings “Bakhtin, Du Bois, Cakes, and Signifying” and “[John Coltrane’s] My Favorite Things” while in his article “Cultural Dialogics and Jazz: A White Historian Signifies” Gary Tomlinson (1991) explores this dialogism with reference to Miles Davis’s fusion work in the late 1960s and ‘70s.

within systems of intra- and inter-textual relationships, and processes of dialectical interaction between texts and social contexts. The present chapter has focussed on local jazz as a system of intra- and intertextual relationships. In the next three chapters, I additionally explore how the production and reception of local jazz is multiply inscribed by an array of idiocultural, spatiotemporal, and political dynamics.

### African American musical culture *The duality of African American culture*

- an interactive participatory musical conception
- a concept of music in which the rhetorical strategies of speech as music and music as speech are shared
- predilection for rhythmic contrast
- call and response formats
- cyclical musical structures
- stratified, percussive musical textures
- a heterogeneous timbre and sound ideal

### Jazz *"Signifyin(g)" practices that deconstruct instances of musical "otherness"*

- improvisation as a principal feature
- the notion of improvisation as conversation
- chorus forms and 'complex' combinations of linearity and cyclicity
- 'organic', speech-like phrasing
- duple or lilting-triple subdivisions of the beat
- dual accentuation metrical schemes
- four-beat; two-beat; double time; backbeat; break; stop-time
- 'colouristic' and/or 'static' harmonies
- 'elastic' melodies that stretch at their underlying harmonic-rhythmic frameworks
- 'transparent' contrapuntal textures
- a personalised and pliable timbre conception

### Local jazz *Unconventional surface structures*

- unusual forms
- pitch structures and timbres drawn from various world musics, and *musique concrète*
- additive meters, time signature changes, tempo changes, - and juxtapositions of different tempi against one another
- an expanded instrumentarium
- unusual textural formats

## 4. Local jazz as idiocultural discourse

Music is a social game where every member of a tribe has a place of his own, and that's the purpose of the game, to find one's place in society. (Ray Lema in Ewens, 1991: 9)

I feel an outsider to much classical music. I don't feel an outsider in the same way when it comes to jazz. These are people *my age* or younger who come from different communities in *my city*. I can identify with it all that much more and I feel more at home in a concert like this than I would if I had to get dressed up differently and go off to listen to that music which in my past was seemingly the more prestigious music. This was a more inclusive kind of experience and there are resonances in the music of where I am and who I am. (Ralph Adendorff)

Thus far, I have mapped the 'musical terrain' represented by local jazz by 1) situating local jazz within the wider socio-musical context of "African American musical culture" (Wilson, 1996: 43); 2) outlining the characteristic musical-technical features of the pieces played by Counterculture, Mosaic, and the Prisoners of Strange, and 3) generically locating their music in relation to 'jazz' as a horizon of expectations and a field of aesthetic possibilities. From here on, I draw attention to the socially constructed nature of this terrain.

The present chapter explores Walser's (1993: 28) observation that "subjectivity is constituted ... through musical discourses" by describing how individuals meaningfully engage with music and assimilate it within the context of personal experience. More specifically, it considers how musical meaning emerges and evolves in relation to the distinctive identities and biographies – or idiocultural contexts<sup>1</sup> – that specific makers and listeners bring to the processes of text production (music composition and performance) and reception (making interpretive sense of the music as an audience member).

My investigation of local jazz as idiocultural discourse focuses separately on

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<sup>1</sup>As explained in Chapter 1, the term "idiocultural" refers to those dimensions of taste and identity preferences which – although socio-cultural in nature – are peculiar to specific individuals. As such, 'the idiocultural' may be described as a particularised manifestation of 'the socio-cultural'.

production and reception, and is structured around the following questions:

- 1) Who are the musicians, the individuals who created the local jazz texts examined in the previous chapter? Why do they play jazz? In what ways does the music they produce index the unique biographical contexts they bring to the processes of improvisation and composition?
- 2) Who are their audiences, the individuals who attended the concerts? Why did they attend those concerts? How do their readings of the music they heard reference the unique agendas that *they* bring to the reception process?

In my analysis, I search for relationships of conflict and cooperation between text and context, and describe these in terms of relative social consonance and dissonance<sup>2</sup>.

Underlying my discussion is the assumption that the ‘feeling’ of musical meaning is a socially-written process involving the intuition of metaphoric coherences between musical and extra-musical experience. As such, I argue that the meanings we ascribe to music are not simply arbitrary. Rather, they pertain to the sound patterns we perceive in ways that are personal, subtle and fluid, but coherent, socially-shared and therefore communicable. Importantly, this communicability exists not just in the “feelingful” (Feld, 1984: 16), here-and-now of the musical experience; it is indexed via lexical and discourse metaphor in speech about music, which acts as a window out to more fundamental metaphorical musical processes (*Ibid*). Consequently, I base my analysis of the discursive relationships among texts and contexts on the ‘evidence’ of ideas expressed by the various interviewees.

At the outset, I would like to note that a detailed exploration of local jazz and its idiocultural contexts would require a separate full-length study. Moreover, ‘musico-subjective’ processes are transient and slippery, and thus particularly

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<sup>2</sup> This musical metaphor is deliberate and is meant to suggest that, as with musical sound, (social) consonance and dissonance are *both* integral, interdependent components of a broader social polyphony.

resistant to linear, academic description. Therefore, I consider only a few of the ways in which idiocultural processes inhere in musical processes. Drawing primarily on my interview data, I present an episodic account of local jazz's idiocultural contexts, focused around 'dissonant' and 'consonant' instances, that index (transitory) relationships of conflict and complementarity between (aspects of) text and context.

My discussion consists of two interrelated subtopics: "generic space as idiocultural space" and "textual space as idiocultural space". The arguments made in both sections are based on the following premises: 1) "Musical structures and experiences are intelligible only with respect to [genre categories]" (Walser, 1993: 27); 2) Genres are "historically developing discursive systems" (*Ibid*) and therefore, are never static, but fluid, and 'always-emergent'.

The first section re-examines the notion of genre as a metadiscursively-constituted "horizon of expectations" (*Ibid*) by describing the unique agendas that specific musicians and listeners bring to their interest in, and subsequent participation within, the discursive, socio-musical realm encompassed by 'jazz'. The second section revisits the notion of genre as an intertextually-constituted field of aesthetic possibilities, and explores how the jazz text functions as a vehicle of feelingful inter-subjective interaction. Taking Bourdieu's (1984: 231) observation that "[a] cultural product ... is a constituted taste" as a point of departure, it considers the unique preferences and perspectives that musicians and listeners bring to their engagement with the jazz text. Thereafter, my discussion explores how the jazz text is perceived to metaphorically index individuals' extra-musical experiences. Figure 4-1, below, outlines the bifurcated structure of this chapter:

Generic space as idiocultural space		Textual space as idiocultural space	
On being 'into' jazz	Genre as a subjectively defined horizon of expectations	Genre, text and musical taste	Text as metaphor
Production	Reception	Production	Reception

4-1: Overview of chapter

## Generic space as idiocultural space

Genres are never *sui generis*; they are developed, sustained and reformed by people, who bring a variety of histories and interests to their encounters with generic texts. (Robert Walser, 1993: 27)

Chapter 3 noted that genres “arise from metadiscursive discourse ... [and] function as horizons of expectation for readers (or listeners) and as models of composition for authors (or musicians)” (Walser, 1993: 29). Drawing on the interview data, this section considers the heterogeneity of this metadiscursive discourse. I observe that in their interpretive engagement with music, individuals typically strive to assimilate the sounds they hear within the context of personal experience. I note that they accomplish this appropriation by locating the sounds they perceive in relation to a fluid field of similar and dissimilar experiences (largely) unique to their subjective realities. In other words, individuals evaluate their musical experiences in terms of interpretive filters and frames of reference that are peculiar to their socio-historical locations. Arguing that the horizons of expectation that individuals bring to bear on their musical experiences are thus idioculturally-constituted, I highlight the subjectively-defined character of ‘jazz’ as a genre category.

My account of generic space as idiocultural space is in two parts. The first part notes that individuals play/listen to jazz – and thus enter its discursive spaces – for reasons unique to their specific biographies. The second part is focused around five interview excerpts, and explores Simon Frith’s (1996: 91) observation that “to hear music generically (hearing this as punk, this as hard core ... this as techno) means organizing the sounds according to formal rules [which] can be very loose or very tight.” As such, I investigate the polysemous character of the ‘jazz arena’ as it is (re)defined in relation to various “formal rules” emanating from its idiocultural contexts. Echoing Frith (1996: 5) who notes that “cultural judgements ... are not just subjective [but] self-revealing”, I argue that this process of redefinition is seldom arbitrary. Rather, it is a strategy through which listeners and musicians (consciously or unconsciously) position themselves in relation to the broader socio-historical worlds to which they belong, and equally importantly, do *not* belong. As such, the interview data

points to the socio-political character of genre categories. Moreover, the data suggests that music consumption is as much an act of social performance (and hence self expression) as musical performance, albeit in different ways.

### **On being 'into' jazz**

#### *Musicians (Production)*

I play jazz because I like it. (Feya Faku)

I just have a passion for the music. (Melvin Peters)

Jazz is the music I relate to. It really does something to me. (Bongani Sokhela)

Paul Berliner (1994: 21-35) observes that individuals become jazz musicians for reasons that are largely idiocultural. According to Berliner (*Ibid*: 31), "in the face of the diverse musical options around them, learners decide to pursue jazz for reasons that are as diverse as their ultimate individual contributions to the field." He then observes that "many prospective players are simply overwhelmed when they first hear jazz" and notes that this encounter is often one of "love at first sound" (*Ibid*).<sup>3</sup>

In a similar vein, when I first heard 'straight-ahead' jazz (as played by Oscar Peterson), I immediately 'fell in love' with the music. Likewise, Mageshen Naidoo's first experience of Pat Metheny's music was, for him, a powerfully moving experience:

It was like, "Whoof! This is what I wanted to sound like all along! I can't believe this guy - he's feeling the same way I'm feeling." There were times when I thought it would be corny to [play] those guitar inflections but there was somebody 'up there' doing it. I thought, "Ooh! This is what I wanted all the time."

Similarly overwhelmed the first time he heard Jaco Pastorius's playing, the

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<sup>3</sup>This phenomenon (of "love at first sound") is not peculiar to jazz musicians. For example when Deepak Ram, listened to Ravi Shankar's *Portrait of a Genius* (1965) for the first time, he could not "describe what attracted [him] to it, but it did something inside him which was like, 'Okay. This is it.'"

sixteen-year-old Carlo Mombelli promptly stopped taking classical piano lessons and poured all his energies into learning the bass guitar. Marcus Wyatt cites his first encounter with Dizzy Gillespie's music as the defining moment that ignited his interest in jazz improvisation:

I remember the first jazz CD I ever I bought [back when I] was in the navy band: it was Dizzy Gillespie's United Nations Big Band [with] Arturo Sandoval and all those cats. When I first listened to it, I thought, "Sheesh, that's a bit hectic!" but something about the music really appealed to me. I suddenly found playing all these [military] marches wasn't comfortable [whereas when] playing these big band things, I started to feel more alive, more free. I thought, "Ah let me go and check this out"; so when I left the navy band, I went to UCT<sup>4</sup> and [enrolled] in the jazz programme.

On the other hand, for some musicians, the appeal of jazz is not necessarily as visceral and immediate. Rather, their interest in the music may reflect "a variety of considerations, from the precise artistic challenges of jazz to such fluid issues as the personal identity of individual musicians and their relationship to society" (Berliner, 1994: 32). For example, Stacey van Schalkwyk (who initially played only classical music) developed an interest in jazz because she felt that, as an improvised music, jazz "appeared to be ... a good way of expressing [herself]." Magandiren Moodley's first love is *Karnatic* music. For him, playing jazz (with Mosaic) involved the "challenge [of] venturing into a different avenue of music" and represented a means of exploring the "versatility" and "adaptability" of Indian music in a "cross-cultural" context.

When Darius Brubeck took up the country's first lectureship in jazz at the (then) University of Natal, Melvin Peters, who was a third-year classical piano student at the time, began taking jazz lessons "as an experiment". Until then Peters

had no interest in jazz, quite honestly. I didn't know what jazz was; however, I could improvise a little bit on pop tunes and that kind of thing, so I thought, "here's an opportunity that I might not have ever again." I just went for it and the rest is history.

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<sup>4</sup> University of Cape Town

### *Listeners (Reception)*

Like musicians, different listeners enter into, and become participants within, jazz's discursive space for reasons peculiar to their personal circumstances. Michael Blake, for example, discovered jazz by accident when he was at high school:

I discovered jazz in a very strange way. I accidentally turned on the radio one afternoon and tuned into Radio Bantu. About five o'clock every afternoon, they had the most stunning jazz programme and it was a whole mixture from John Coltrane and Miles Davis (that whole school) and then also South African jazz. There was the Jazz Epistles and Dollar Brand as he was known then, Chris McGregor and the Castle Lager Big Band. I think my attraction to it was because it was so different from the very dry world of classical music I was studying at school.

Kreesan Chetty gave the following reasons for his frequent attendance of Mosaic's concerts:

What you were doing, I found very exciting – the fusion bit. At that stage, everyone was really getting into this whole "New South Africa" vibe ... Fusion was becoming fashionable and to an extent, fashion's important to me. Also, the Indian component was a very important attraction.

The point of my coming to that concert was by that stage you'd become a friend, and friends are important to me. Besides the fact that I began to enjoy the music, I enjoyed your company: we could do things afterwards, or before, or whatever. Usually, after you play a concert, you're on a high and you're a lot more fun to be with than normally.

As mentioned, Ralph Adendorff attended Counterculture's farewell concert because, at R10 a ticket, it was "phenomenally cheap" and afforded him an opportunity to share "a little world of [his]" with his son:

It was another concert and the concerts are phenomenally cheap. You're getting good quality for very little. [Also], my son had expressed interest in going to a concert. I'd told him about the various ones that I'd been to during "office [university] hours". He was at school during all of those, so he couldn't attend and he put pressure on me and I thought, "Well why not!" So in part, it was a way of taking him into a little world of mine.

Thus far, my account of generic space as idiocultural space has considered the diverse reasons musicians and listeners enter the discursive realm represented by 'jazz'. From here on, I contemplate the subjective texture of that realm by exploring the unique histories that individuals bring to their encounters with jazz.

### **'Jazz' as a subjectively-defined horizon of expectations**

Each jazz musician, critic, and listener tells a slightly different story of the music's past and present, emphasizing this participant, ignoring another. In this way, we should see that jazz does not simply entail a smoothly evolving series of musical styles but rather an array of individuals and communities engaging with diverse, often-times conflicting, actions, ideals, and attitudes. (David Ake, 2002: 5)

A recurring theme in this present study is the notion that jazz is *not* "a distinctive 'pure,' autonomous, strictly defined genre that can be distinguished from the musics surrounding it" (Monson, 1996: 133-137). Rather, as Ralph Adendorff and Graeme Ewens observe, jazz is a "multifaceted" and heterogeneous musical form:

What stands out for me is a heightened sense about what is special about jazz music for me. This probably sounds clumsy [but it's the] 'multifaceted-ness' of it and the multiple strands that seem to be drawn together to yield a music which is for me very, very pleasing. (Ralph Adendorff)

Jazz ... is arguably the most important development in the history of music, establishing a context for improvisation in which musical instincts of all persuasions can find a space. Through the spectrum of the jazz rainbow anything from uninhibited primal screams to the most artful scored compositions can be worked in alongside each other. In the middle ground the sound of Africa is always evident. (Ewens, 1991: 30)

As such, 'jazz' justifiably means different things to different people depending on which aspects of its "multifaceted-ness" they acknowledge in their engagement with the music. Thus, for Lex Futshane, jazz (or "improvised music" to use his preferred term) is an "African music" and a "protest" music:

I identify with it partly because it is African music. (You know how it became ... the African slaves [etc.]) Another thing, it is protest music: it

was created by the Black man, the African American ... Yah, so that's why I play it: I completely identify with it; it's next to me.

On the other hand, for Mageshen Naidoo, jazz and *Indian* music form part of the same musical 'family':

With jazz – and Indian music – it's about how you're feeling inside, what you wanna say, *how* you want to come out with the music. Jazz brings out the best, what I'm feeling inside ... Indian music as well ... it's the same thing ... It's also improvisation ... So yah, it comes out in the form of jazz and Indian music. It's just the way I want to make music; the way I'm feeling music.

Simon Frith's (1996: 5) observation that "cultural judgements ... aren't just subjective [but] self-revealing" may be usefully applied to the above statements. By emphasizing those aspects of jazz that are 'consonant' with their particular social locations, both interviewees (consciously or unconsciously) use its multifaceted-ness to strategically locate themselves and the musics with which they identify in relation to the broader socio-historical worlds to which they belong. In both cases a complex, centripetally-orientated 'socio-political calculus' seems to be at work. In Lex Futshane's case, this calculus may be hypothetically illustrated as follows:

I like jazz. I enter into and feel included within its discursive realm. I am African and therefore immersed in the discursive spaces peculiar to that socio-cultural universe. Jazz is African music ("It was created by the Black man"). Therefore my identifying with jazz is resonant with my being African.

Likewise, Naidoo engages in a similar process when he relates jazz and Indian music ("it's also improvisation").

On other occasions, a centrifugally-oriented strategy of emphasizing the ways jazz differs from other musics (or other experiential fields) may be brought into play. Darius Brubeck uses this strategy when he defines jazz as the unique and absolute embodiment of a particular musical ideal:

For me, [jazz is] the only music that really has everything from the completely emotional or even physical (if you talk about rhythm and movement) to highly articulated intellectual structures if that's what you want. It's the only style of music that encompasses, for me, everything that music can be. Indian classical music has even more improvisation; western classical music has even more elaboration ... but almost without improvisation. If you look at all the music in the world and try to fit bits of it into something, you can only come up with jazz. There's nothing else you can come up with.

Chris Merz employs a similar strategy when he compares rock music with jazz. Furthermore he wonders "if we are predisposed to be jazz listeners whether we play it or not." As such, Merz's comments more directly point to the capacity of musical discourses to function as vectors of social identity:

All there is to most Rock 'n' Roll and popular music – *most* now, not all – is this veneer. It's just how they're going to put their veneer over the same shit that everybody else is doing. With jazz, it goes so much more *deep* than that: there are stylistic considerations and phrasing considerations and just a whole emotional content that Rock 'n' Roll doesn't have. It's funny because I find this complaint typically levelled by anybody who plays another kind of music against any other kind of music that they don't like ... I've heard so many classical pianists say, "Jazz? Oh well that all sounds the same! Why don't they have more variety?" Well, when I listen to Haydn, I think, "What's the big deal? Symphony number 25 or Symphony number 78? What difference does it make? You know, insert gimmick A in slot B and here's a new Symphony." But, that's even my learned response to Rock 'n' Roll ... that *really*, at the groove of it – while there is some more intellectual than others; some [that] is more interesting – basically, it's just what colour the veneer is; what's your particular flavour. With jazz, there's so much more to hear and we're not capable of hearing that when we've been force-fed this steady diet of junk music. Then, when we become free-thinking individuals, it dawns on us that this is what we're missing. I wonder sometimes if people can be predisposed to that ... to be jazz listeners whether we play it or not, and what triggers that.

Finally, in drawing a set of parallels between structural linguistics and western classical music on the one hand, and sociolinguistics and jazz on the other, Ralph Adendorff brings both strategies into play. I quote Adendorff at length because – in addition to its relevance with regard to the preceding arguments – his monologue underscores several issues raised in this study: 1) the idea of genre as a socio-politically constituted horizon of expectations; 2) the notion that jazz is dialogically conceived by improvising musicians who negotiate – as equal partners – the form and content of the music; 3) the concept of jazz as a

participatory musical discourse; and 4) a conception of jazz as a form of "dialogical" knowledge (Tomlinson, 1991: 263) which may be understood as deconstructive of the hierarchically constituted binarisms and centricisms characteristic of (common practice) classical music discourses<sup>5</sup>. According to Adendorff, the relationship of jazz to classical music has an

equivalent – or what strikes me as the equivalent – in Linguistics. Twenty or thirty years ago, *syntax* was the high prestige area of academic linguistics. If you were anybody, you were a syntactician [and more] particularly, you were in one fold within syntax and that was TGG: transformative generative syntax. Access to the club was not easy: the power figures were all students of Chomsky; so when the centre moved, it moved into *particular* universities where past students of his were the dominant features. I was struck by some of those features of syntax when I studied both syntax and sociolinguistics concurrently in America. [One] entered very different worlds: [syntax] was [a] highly abstract, de-contextualised area of study; [sociolinguistics] was just the opposite [in that] one always felt guilty minimising in one's thinking, the extent of contextual influences. Now access to syntax was very hierarchical – you had to be up with the most recent version of Chomsky – whereas sociolinguistics is far more accessible to the outsider the first time up and there's less of a sense of somebody looking over your shoulder and finding you wrong because you're not talking the right terminology.

It seems to me that jazz music is more like sociolinguistics than it is like syntax in that respect. It's not making a deliberate appeal to any particular constituency and it's not ruling out anybody. Also, jazz programmes, as I understand them, frequently feature – for extended periods – each constituent member of the band. It's as much as to say, "What you hear is the product of all of us." I sense – within the discourse of the music itself, the 'sociolinguistics' of the jazz – ready resonances from the voices of all the people and the histories of all the people in the bands: you can have China coming in and Kwa-Mashu and Chatsworth and Westville<sup>6</sup> and none of it is more important than the rest. And, if you look at audiences, they're far more representative of the spectrum of society: black and white; young and old are there. And, they can express themselves. There's no kind of reserve: [they] can go for it; [they] can applaud. If the person in front of you is gyrating in some way that's not offensive, its part of the experience; you wouldn't tell them to stop moving.

[On the other hand], it seems to me that in much classical music, you've got the equivalent to the *canon*: you've got the heroes of the past and

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<sup>5</sup>According to Tomlinson (1991: 263) "Dialogical knowledge ... is the building of a precarious discourse that never fully displaces the other discourses around it." Moreover, he notes that as a form of dialogical knowledge, jazz is expressly vernacularist, non-teleological and non-transcendental (*Ibid*).

<sup>6</sup> Kwa-Mashu, Chatsworth, and Westville are, respectively, African, Indian, and white residential areas in Durban.

they are restricted in number; then you've got those who've interpreted the music and of the multiple interpretations there's the restricted number that really matters and you measure your performance against those (if you get that far [and] haven't been knocked out of being a musician or aspiring to be one). With jazz, by its very nature, you're not looking for that hierarchy and that paring down to the select few that really matter.

Drawing on the notion of genre as a horizon of expectations, I have explored the polysemous character of jazz and considered some ways in which this genre category is metadiscursively defined and redefined in relation to its idiocultural contexts. Furthermore, I observed that in and through this metadiscursive engagement with jazz, individuals identify themselves as variously assenting and/or dissenting participants within a range of socio-cultural narratives. In the next section, I revisit the notion of genre as an intertextually-defined field of aesthetic possibilities, and extend these arguments to the text, which I define as a historically specific, sonically-embodied instance of the generically possible.

### **Textual space as idiocultural space**

Genres ... are developed, sustained, and reformed by people, who bring a variety of histories and interests to their encounters with generic texts. The texts themselves, as they are produced by such historically specific individuals, come to reflect the multiplicities of social existence. (Robert Walser, 1993: 27)

The present section explores the polysemous character of the jazz text by examining how its musical structure and social meanings emerge and evolve in relation to its idiocultural contexts. Focusing separately on production and reception, it notes that specific compositions, musical details, or sequences of musical events are apprehended as meaningful (or not) within the context of subjectively-defined experiential fields (largely) unique to specific makers and listeners.

My analysis of local jazz's production is based on the assumption that musicians "reproduce in the basic qualities of their music, the basic qualities of

their own thought processes" (Shepherd, 1991: 12). Drawing on Shepherd's (1991), Monson's (1996), and Berliner's (1994) arguments, it notes that jazz is especially rich in aesthetic resources which facilitate the expression of musical individuality during music-making. Importantly, this (expression of individuality) is not an arbitrary process whereby musicians, willy-nilly, "pick notes out of thin air" (Calvin Hill in Berliner, 1994: 1). Rather, as Wynton Marsalis asserts, jazz "is a very structured thing that comes down from a tradition and requires a lot of thought and study" (Ibid: 63). As such, the processes of text production involve a subtle, dialectical synthesis of generic *and* subjective considerations. Consequently – as particular, subjectively-constituted instances of the generically possible – specific texts may be understood to document (in highly specific and/or general ways) the idiocultural contexts that individual musicians bring to jazz composition and performance.

My discussion of local jazz's reception explores Feld's (1984: 7) assertion that "any musical object embodies and provokes interpretive tensions." Noting that "a production code and producer's intention are complexly related to the consumer's interpreted messages" (Ibid: 3), I consider how the meanings of texts evolve in relation to the idiocultural contexts that different listeners bring to their musical experiences. In its ability to provoke and accommodate an array of interpretive responses, the jazz text is more "writerly" than it is "readerly" (Selden and Widdowson, 1993: 134). As such, the text functions as an open narrative which mediates (in live or recorded performance, in the memories of listeners, or in the context of speech about music) a complex dialogue between specific musicians and listeners. Consequently, as a dynamic register of its idiocultural contexts and as a vehicle of feelingful inter-subjective interaction, the text is at once reflective of, and *constitutive* of, "the multiplicities of social existence" (Walser, 1993: 27).

As with my discussion of generic space as idiocultural space, my exploration of textual space as idiocultural space is in two parts. The first part draws on Bourdieu's (1984: 231) observation that "[a] cultural product ... is a constituted taste", and considers the jazz text in relation to the unique preferences that musicians and listeners bring to their musical experiences. The second part

considers how individuals apprehend the music they play/hear as metaphorically expressive of (aspects of) extra-musical experience. Figure 4-2 below outlines the bifurcated structure of the argument presented in the present section:

Textual space as idiocultural space	
Genre, text, and musical taste	Text as metaphor
Production	Reception

#### 4-2: Overview of present section

##### Genre, text, and (musical) taste

###### *Production*

Everybody puts his<sup>7</sup> own personal style to the music ... if he doesn't, then he just ain't a musician. (Eubie Blake in Berliner, 1994: 144)

You get two musicians playing the same raga: the one guy will paint mountains, [a] stream, a couple of trees; the next guy might paint the same thing, only the stream will be broader, he might have taller trees and his mountain might be darker. You'd get a third guy who'd come and paint the same thing but instead of the stream, he'd put a highway in there. So he's either a bad musician or he doesn't have enough experience playing the raga. (Deepak Ram)

Chapter 3 observed that genre categories are the structured and *structuring* ideational entities that musicians and listeners use to conceptually locate and make sense of particular musical encounters. It then described jazz as a kind of *langue* or a trans-historical repertory of generative musical principles and aesthetic conventions which manifests itself as a particular field of aesthetic possibilities. This section observes that the socio-musical field thus represented by jazz is characterised by aesthetic resources which facilitate, and often necessitate, the expression of musical individuality during the music-making process. It argues that jazz's textual instances are often deeply reflective of their producers' unique socio-historical locations.

Shepherd (1991: 137) observes that western classical musical genres are

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<sup>7</sup> The male chauvinism that pervades jazz culture is interrogated in chapter 6.

characterised by compositional processes which prioritise extensional, architectonic musical development and which result in the generation of large-scale musical arguments. On the other hand, African American musics typically incorporate aesthetic processes which engender inflectional (or intensional) musical development. As such, the "harmonic-rhythmic frameworks" (*Ibid*: 136) which underlie African-American idioms such as the blues or jazz typically function as

conceptual scheme[s] within which [performers] make personal, immediate statements. Such individuality and immediacy is expressed through inflectional devices (reminiscent of the immediacy, individuality and power of the human voice in day to day discourse), improvisation (which can only occur in the immediacy of the here and now) and 'dirty' timbres (which clearly mark off one performer from another), as well as through other devices such as pentatonicism and colouristic harmony. (*Ibid*)

Similarly, Monson's (1996) examination of the improvisational processes which generate the jazz text emphasises that jazz is conceived through face-to-face musical interaction. Furthermore, she observes that "interacting musical roles are simultaneously interacting human personalities" (*ibid*: 7) "[and] not merely [interacting] instruments or pitches or rhythms" (*ibid*: 26). This notion is colourfully illustrated in Carlo Mombelli's description of the process by which he composes music for the Prisoners of Strange:

I play the spring and Lloyd goes, "Pfshff"; I hear some long notes from Sidney: "wooo".

Extending such notions to 'jazz' as a whole, Berliner (1994: 59) describes jazz as a musical language and a community of individual "speakers". He observes that in learning to "speak" jazz, improvisers do not simply "absorb" jazz's "varied conventions" and generative principles. Rather,

they interpret and select them according to personal abilities and values, formative musical experience and training, and dynamic interaction with other artists. Ultimately, each player cultivates a unique vision that accommodates change from within and without ... from the outset an artist's ongoing personal performance history entwines with jazz's artistic tradition, allowing for a mutual absorption and exchange of ideas.

In short – working *within* the trans-historical field of aesthetic possibilities represented by jazz – individual jazz musicians develop unique “voices” (*Ibid*) or idiolects which they then bring to the dialogical processes of text production. Consequently, as the collective expression of its producers’ idiolects, the jazz text may be described (at the site of production) as the sonically embodied expression of its idiocultural contexts. As such, the jazz text is typically a poly-vocal and historically multifaceted entity:

I sense – within the discourse of the music itself, the ‘sociolinguistics’ of the jazz – ready resonances from the voices of all the people and the histories of all the people in the bands. (Ralph Adendorff)

Complementarily, Chris Merz observed that Counterculture represented a coalition of discrete musical personalities. As such, the group’s music represented a confluence of different musical histories:

These guys really inject their personality which is not to say they don’t in the US but the aesthetic is different because their background is different. These guys are all coming from varying backgrounds: Lex is always asserting his Xhosa roots; Vince is a club drummer ... Melvin is like straight out of Oscar Peterson.

Importantly, this musical-historical confluence involves a dialectical synthesis of musical values and experiences that are shared by the jazz community at large, and “idiosyncratic musical perspectives” (Berliner, 1994: 59) which are peculiar to specific musicians. Thus, in composing and playing jazz, and, in making aesthetic choices which may be variously conventional or esoteric, individual musicians contribute an array of socially centripetal and/or centrifugal tensions to the socio-musical arena encompassed by jazz. Consequently, jazz’s textual spaces echo with numerous ‘dialogues’ among different histories which may exist in variously complementary and/or conflicting relationships to one another. Moreover, as a dynamic confluence of consonant and/or dissonant socio-historical tensions, jazz’s textual instances are alive with the capacity to affirm, contest, and transform the social spaces in which they circulate.

In the interview excerpts below, Merz, Peters, and Ram explain how their compositions "Sui Zen", "Quite Candidly" and "Give five" came into existence. To me, all three accounts suggest that – as a means of drawing together a range of complementary histories – the text production process acts (in part) as a socially centripetal force within the context of its producers' subjective realities:

Yusef Lateef structures his lessons around whatever he's interested in at [any particular] time. He'll show his students the materials he's been working with and say, "Okay, now you work with these." At the time I was [a student of Lateef's at the University of Massachusetts], he was experimenting a lot with the modern Japanese scale which is G A-flat C D F. (It's like an A-flat Major seven #11 chord from [the] 7th to [the] 13th.) [This] left me thinking about that sound and different applications for that sound. ["Sui Zen"] was written in two chunks. The first was the melodic chunk with the ostinato. I was thinking there about 5th mode harmonic minor which is also known as the Hebrew scale (I think). I noticed at one point when I was listening to some Shakuhachi music, "Hey! A Japanese scale will fit inside of that scale." I [then] extracted the Japanese scale out of that for the beginning and the ending [Figure 4-3]. (Chris Merz)

*5th mode harmonic minor*

#### **4-3: "Sui Zen" – 5<sup>th</sup>-mode harmonic minor and Japanese scale**

I really got into Bill Evans when I was working towards my Masters concert and I kind of just fell in love with [the tune] "Waltz for Debby" ... More importantly, I liked [Evans'] approach to composition and so I set about trying to write a tune in that mould. That, initially, was how "Quite Candidly" came about. Somehow my style of writing is in that vein: it's very subdued. [Also], I'm very attracted to jazz waltzes: it seems to come naturally; even improvising on a jazz waltz feels very comfortable. I think I was also trying to incorporate a bit of George Shearing into [the piece]: I've got all those superimposed chords over an A-flat pedal. (Melvin Peters)

"Take five" is one of the most popular jazz standards amongst 'non-jazz people'. Everybody knows "Take five". [Now in the Indian classical tradition], there's a raga called "Jog" [Figure 4-4] and [one day] just

messing around with the characteristics of "Jog" I got this idea and I said, "That sounds something like ... it's got this 'Take 5' feeling." Subsequently I just added a few lines and that was the story of "Give 5". (Deepak Ram)

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled "Jog" and consists of a single line of notes in common time, starting with a quarter note and continuing with eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is labeled "It's got this 'Take 5' feeling" and starts in common time with a quarter note, then changes to 5/4 time. It features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes. The notation concludes with an ellipsis "etc." at the end of the staff.

#### 4-4: "Give five"

On other occasions, the text embodies a range of centrifugal tensions. As such, Merz's exploration of extended forms and colouristic harmonies in his writing may be understood as relatively dissonant within the context of jazz as a field of aesthetic conventions:

Nothing's more boring for me than to go into a concert where people play 32-bar tunes, head-in, solo-solo-solo-solo, head-out ... that's a *drag* – it's become so clichéd and predictable that I've not gotten time for it. I like a certain number of tunes like that in a concert but a whole concert of that really, really bugs me.

One thing I don't spend a lot of time reiterating is circle-of-fifths just because I feel that so many people have done it already, and do it much better than I could, that I don't see the point in writing another 'Confirmation'... I still love to play Bebop but it's more of an intellectual challenge than an emotional exercise [and] while I don't think I'll ever abandon playing hierarchical [functional] chord changes, it's not ever going to my personal choice.

#### *Reception*

Different circumstances, different needs make you relate to the music differently. (Dinga Sikwebu)

Simon Frith (1996: 273) observes that "in responding to a song, a sound, we are drawn ... into affective and emotional alliances." When these alliances are successfully forged, a range of centripetal or consonant social forces are

engendered. On the other hand, when this alliance *cannot* be forged (because of factors peculiar to specific texts and/or listeners) a range of centrifugal or dissonant social tensions are engendered. As various interviewees' differing appraisals of the music played by Counterculture and the Prisoners of Strange attest, the reception process is criss-crossed by variously dissonant and/or consonant tensions.

For example, Chris Merz felt that jazz musicians and audiences in Durban were often unable to see 'eye-to-eye' because of the conflicting horizons of expectation that each group brought to their musical experiences:

The musicians are all into something else ... there's no real 'down the middle' musician in town. Well, there are some ... but the ones you hear about and the ones that are *good* are the ones that are getting into other areas. I don't know which came first – the audience reaction or this interest in other kinds of improvised music – but the audience and musicians in this town seem to be at odds. I think our music (well like a lot of other music, your music for example too) is very demanding of the audience and a lot of people just don't wanna work that hard. You know, they've come to be entertained and by God they don't wanna have to think about it.

Darius Brubeck and Neil Gonsalves also referred to the differing expectations of Durban's audiences and musicians, but unlike Merz, who blamed the 'laziness' of listeners, they recognized the role that "demanding" musicians have played in creating this dissonant interaction. For both interviewees, Counterculture's exploration of an "unfamiliar", "challenging", and relatively esoteric aesthetic, meant that their audiences were typically limited to the more adventurous members of the local concert-going public:

Counterculture earned a reputation for being very, very good musically but demanding on the audience because it played unfamiliar material, not unlike Mosaic. It was frequently loud – which I don't think is something a member of the audience would consciously say – but it would help make up your mind whether you were in the mood to hear Counterculture or not. It was a loud group, not by pop music standards but for a jazz group; a lot of activity in the music always; *long* tunes. So these are things that ... put demands on an audience. (Darius Brubeck)

Listening to Counterculture is fairly challenging from a listener's point of view. You have to be open, especially if you haven't listened to that kind of music before. Now obviously, Chris is influenced by a lot of music

that we haven't heard before ... so it would obviously take a certain amount of time for that kind of music to grow on an [essentially] limited audience. (Neil Gonsalves)

Interestingly (in the light of Brubeck's comments) Ralph Adendorff mentioned that he did not stay for the second half of Counterculture's Howard College concert because his eight-year-old son (who accompanied him to the concert) was tired and was finding the music uncomfortably loud:

Loyalties were split at interval. He wanted to go home. It was "very big" the music he said, and it was a lot louder clearly than what we'd ever played music at home.

By contrast, Adendorff was disappointed to miss the second set as he really enjoyed Counterculture's unapologetically modernist aesthetic:

It ... compels you to think deeply somehow; it's the 'T. S. Eliot of music' if I tried to place it.

Mombelli, whose music persistently subverts expectations (it flirts with, but ultimately avoids conventional approaches to timbre, texture, harmony, melody, form, and groove), has often encountered musical xenophobia on the part of listeners and other actors on the jazz scene. For this reason, he came up with the ironic name, The Prisoners of Strange, for his band:

I don't intend it to be that way; I'm not trying to be strange: what I'm hearing I'm scoring. But other people have this preconceived idea of what I do; when they think 'Carlo Mombelli', they don't realise that I can actually play four beats to the bar or something. They've already put me somewhere: *they have made me a prisoner of strange [and]* that's why [my band] is called the Prisoners of Strange. You understand what I'm saying?

NR: You're prisoners of other people's 'strange'.

CM: That's it.

Nevertheless, as Kerryn Scott's comments make abundantly clear, this irony is hardly self-evident, and for her, listening to the Prisoners was a genuinely 'strange' and irksome experience:

The first time I heard them I hated it: I hated it; I hated it, I hated it. No, I didn't like it at all ... It's the name, you know, "The Prisoners of Strange": he makes a lot of that and when he speaks to the audience, he tries to emphasize the avant-garde nature of what he's doing: "Is it jazz?" he says in the programme notes, "Isn't it jazz? What is it?" [Trying] very hard to be different, he infuses it with all this electronic stuff, but it just doesn't fit. Then he [uses] bells and boards and springs and it's just too much! To have her scream a lot is also to accentuate the strangeness and to make it difficult: it gets tedious and silly.

It's about objectifying the strange through his compositions and it becomes self-indulgent: you listen, and it's the trumpet and the sax; everything, everything, everything, everything, and then suddenly, you get this twee little bell that goes off in a corner, or a spring. It doesn't gel.

Scott's comments got me thinking about parallels between Mombelli's music and absurdist theatre, and recalling Adendorff's view of Counterculture as "the T. S. Eliot of music", I asked whether she had encountered Beckett or Pinter during her undergraduate studies in English:

I hate Beckett. *Waiting for Godot* annoyed the living shit out of me: you get the sense that he's got some idea of theatre that he's trying to challenge, so he creates this post-modern theatrical experience, then he tries to make it weird ... But this is just how I think about things: things are supposed to be accessible. I don't come from a very intellectual background either, so this is probably where this is coming from. [The Prisoners of Strange] is about [Mombelli] making sense of his talent and fuck it, it doesn't matter what anybody else thinks [or] whether they get it or not. He's not trying to give me anything to take home.

Like Scott, Dinga Sikwebu often finds the Prisoners' music "jarring" and not "easily digestible", but he also recognises that Mombelli's music constitutes a valuable reminder that

the world is not one nice melodic whole: it has dissonance and if you want to mirror the world, it cannot be just nice soothing music.

Moreover, fascinated by the relationships between "music and the spoken word", Sikwebu appreciates Mombelli's ability to explain his approach to music-making in terms that are understandable to lay people:

I like a musician who has a philosophy. Now I understand that musicians like to 'talk' with their instruments and they may not be able

to use the words that I use, but I find a joy when I get a musician who can say, "When I did this, this is what I was trying to do" or "this is what I'm trying to communicate." I found Carlo one of the few musicians able to put across to an ordinary person what he's trying to do. And the way I understood his thing is that [he's] wanting to paint colours with music. That's his important metaphor.

Finally, Sikwebu enjoys the challenge of music that demands intellectual engagement, and, in this respect, his response to the Prisoners is akin to Adendorff's response to Counterculture:

Carlo's music is not my cup of tea but I'll go to his things and buy his albums [because] he's trying to stretch boundaries; [he's] very innovative and he can talk about those innovations. I listen to it as if I'm reading a book; it's a bit of a struggle to assimilate, and its challenging. [But] I don't think that we should just be given things that taste good for us. There must be that intellectual stimulation, and that's what I like about him. You've got to listen carefully: "now *what* instrument is that?" It's not so obvious.

For Seena Yacoob, a self-proclaimed fan of 'difference' who describes herself as "naturally subversive", the Prisoners are very much her "cup of tea", and as her various comments reveal, her enthusiasm for Mombelli's music exists on several levels:

I like the fact of a band fronted by a bass player. I also like the 'texturality' of it: I prefer things that have a lot of different things happening [in] parallel that are not necessarily too together with each other ... It gives you more to listen to and I like being able to follow lines.

NR: Do you enjoy the fact that her voice is used so differently?

SY: YES! Oh yes absolutely! I think that's wonderful and the way the trumpet and the voice double each other and all of that, I just love that. I find it very exciting.

NR: Why?

SY: Because it's different and it works.

NR: Why are you so into things that are different?

SY: [Long laugh] ... is that "laughing back?"

NR: I'm going to put it in exactly like that!

SY: I think I'm just naturally subversive: that probably comes from

growing up in a ‘struggle’ background<sup>8</sup> and always being told to question authority (I never questioned that command but anyway) and being told that just because [something] is expected of you by the legitimate society, it’s not necessarily what you should be expecting of yourself. I suppose from there, it’s a short step to preferring difference.

A similar set of centripetal and centrifugal tensions attends the reception of individual pieces. For example, Ralph Adendorff explained that he found Counterculture’s performance of “Ngu Makazi” difficult to engage with:

I’m in the habit of listening to jazz music in many different ways. One of the ways is while I’m typing something onto a word processor and what I’ve fallen back on in those circumstances has been things like MJQ and Thelonious Monk. (I’ve got a little subset of tapes that are good for that because I can type and I can appreciate the music and I’m not *challenged* by that music in those circumstances.) On other occasions I don’t concentrate on anything else. I just listen to the music. I turn up the music and close my eyes and there I am: *in* the music. That first piece [“Ngu Makazi”] was one of those sorts for me, where I had to enter into that music fully. I didn’t feel that I had quite the equipment to take the music apart because it seemed to need the kind of sorting that didn’t come readily to me.

On the other hand, Adendorff really enjoyed the group’s performance of “Give five”:

[“Give five”] was good. This will probably be a crude characterisation but I think there’s something in what I would see as the Indian influences [which] ... touches me and renders me vulnerable when I’m listening to it. You believe – you *know* – that you’ve been rendered vulnerable but you quite like it. I just found it at an emotional level that’s totally satisfying.

Scott conceded that there are a few of Mombelli’s pieces that she *does* enjoy:

I like “Malunde”: that’s my favourite but that’s because she sings on that and it’s a lot softer.

Finally, Bongani Sokhela’s, Kreesan Chetty’s, Stacey van Schalkwyk’s, and Magandiren Moodley’s respective comments on “Child’s play” are interesting examples of how the same piece of music can provoke a range of different evaluative responses from performers and listeners. For example, Sokhela felt

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<sup>8</sup> Through the 1980s, Yacoob’s father, an advocate, was legal counsel for the ANC and other

that the effectiveness of the piece (which is based on a I IV I<sub>c</sub> V *mbaqanga* progression) was in part due to soloist Mageshen Naidoo's fluency in the *mbaqanga* idiom:

One person that really gives the music its richness is Mageshen ... I think he really makes the music feel African. It really brings colour to the music.

By contrast, when I asked Chetty whether the composition's African flavour held any significance for him, he responded as follows:

To tell the truth, the 'Africanness', the African element – although I enjoy it to an extent – is not the most important part of the music for me. It doesn't really hold any significance probably because I can't personally identify with it. For me, it's the 'personalness' of the music that's appealing and the Indian component and the fact that it's fusion.

Flautist Van Schalkwyk explained that "Child's play" is "not [her] favourite piece to play because it's incredibly difficult to play in tune."<sup>9</sup> Finally, when I asked Moodley (a tabla player) to comment on the piece, he responded as follows:

The piece is enjoyable in the sense that it has different rhythmic structures within it. There's a nine and thirteen [beat structure]. I enjoy that but sometimes, it becomes difficult to improvise within it because [one] become[s] restricted by [that structure].

Thus far, my investigation of textual space as idiocultural space has examined the micro-politics of taste by exploring the centripetal and centrifugal tensions that attend the production and reception of local jazz. From here on, I extend my account of how jazz reflects and constitutes "the multiplicities of social existence" (Walser, 1993: 27) by considering how specific texts metaphorically reference the unique worlds that their producers and receivers inhabit.

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anti-apartheid activists.

<sup>9</sup>Because the tone holes on Van Schalkwyk's (open-hole) flute have been undercut, it becomes fairly difficult to play certain passages in tune.

## Text as metaphor

[Music] resonates powerfully within the lived corporeal and somatic experience of the listener. To hear a voice, a musical sound, is to 'have knowledge' of the corporeal and somatic state which produced it. (Shepherd and Wicke, 1997: 180)

I think every human being has in some way or the other cried inside. When [a musician] plays [a particular] note and he's crying, you know that you've heard it before: in yourself. You know, and you can just lock into that. (Mageshen Naidoo)

Focusing on six interview excerpts, this section considers how musicians and audience members apprehend the music they play/hear as metaphorically expressive of (aspects of) extra-musical experience. This exploration of text as metaphor is based on the following premises:

- 1) Musical details express meaning by virtue of their dual existence within systems of intra- and inter-textual relationships, and processes of dialectical interaction between texts and social contexts.
- 2) Ultimately, musical meaning emerges within the context of subjectively-defined experiential fields largely unique to historically-specific makers and listeners.
- 3) These meanings are indexed in speech about music, which acts as a window out to more fundamental metaphorical musical processes (Feld, 1984: 16).

Echoing Walser (1993: 33) I then acknowledge that ultimately, "music is not just a symbolic register for what really happens elsewhere [but] is itself a material, social practice, wherein subject positions are constructed and negotiated, social relations are enacted and transgressed, and ideologies are developed and interrogated." As such, when musicians and listeners engage in the processes of text production and reception and make aesthetic judgements or intuit metaphoric coherences between musical and extra-musical experience, they are engrossed in a complex social game at once affirming and contesting their participation within a range of socio-cultural narratives.

The notion of music as a material force, ‘alive’ with affective power emerged particularly strongly in my interview with Mageshen Naidoo:

Music creates atmospheres and feelings [and] can evoke emotions in a person. That’s what it does to me. Like if I’m very sad, I can hear myself crying inside with the music and the music can make it more aloud inside for me ... or if I’m generally just contemplative, the music just makes it more loud in me.

NR: It’s almost like resonance.

MN: Yah, that’s what it does. It’s important, as a human being, to feel those things. That’s what music really does to me: it’s not so much that note or that instrument as much as it’s how the music speaks to me inside and what it evokes in me.

Importantly, music’s affective power is socially constituted and thus always functions non-arbitrarily (though flexibly) *within* particular social contexts. As mentioned, “musical sound structures ... exist through social construction and ... mean through social interpretation” (Feld, 1984:7). Consequently, music-making and listening are deeply informed by generative principles and interpretive conventions that are socially-written. As such – during the here-and-now of musical experiences – jazz’s ‘affectively-alive’ textual instances may be said to function as socially-shared narrative spaces (or contexts) that mediate processes of meaningful interaction among specific makers and listeners.

Musicians often consciously harness music’s affective power, using it to give voice to a range of emotions and (real or imaginary) experiences. Mageshen Naidoo’s comments on “G force”, for example, are especially revealing of the ways the jazz text thus functions as metaphorically expressive of extra-musical experience:

With “G force”, I knew that I wanted a sound that wasn’t entirely stable ... that someone couldn’t hold onto. I don’t know if you’ve experienced this in [playing] “G force” [but] it’s always like it’s very unsettled.

NR: That’s probably because it’s built around a diminished-whole-tone scale.

MN: I guess so, but [it’s] also [because] of that [G7] sharp 9 chord that

wants to go somewhere. I thought about it being a dominant of C but not resolving. And, it doesn't ever resolve. That's one of the reasons I called it "G force" [because of] this pulling effect. It was also a personal thing in my life 'cause I was going through some personal hassles. There was this big fight and this personal issue [began to affect] everything that I used to do in church. It became such a problem that I considered stepping down from my duties in church. I found myself doing things that I wouldn't ordinarily do, like not going to church and stuff like that. So, the "G" in "G force" is also God: there was this pulling between the force that the Church and God had on me and where this problem was taking me.

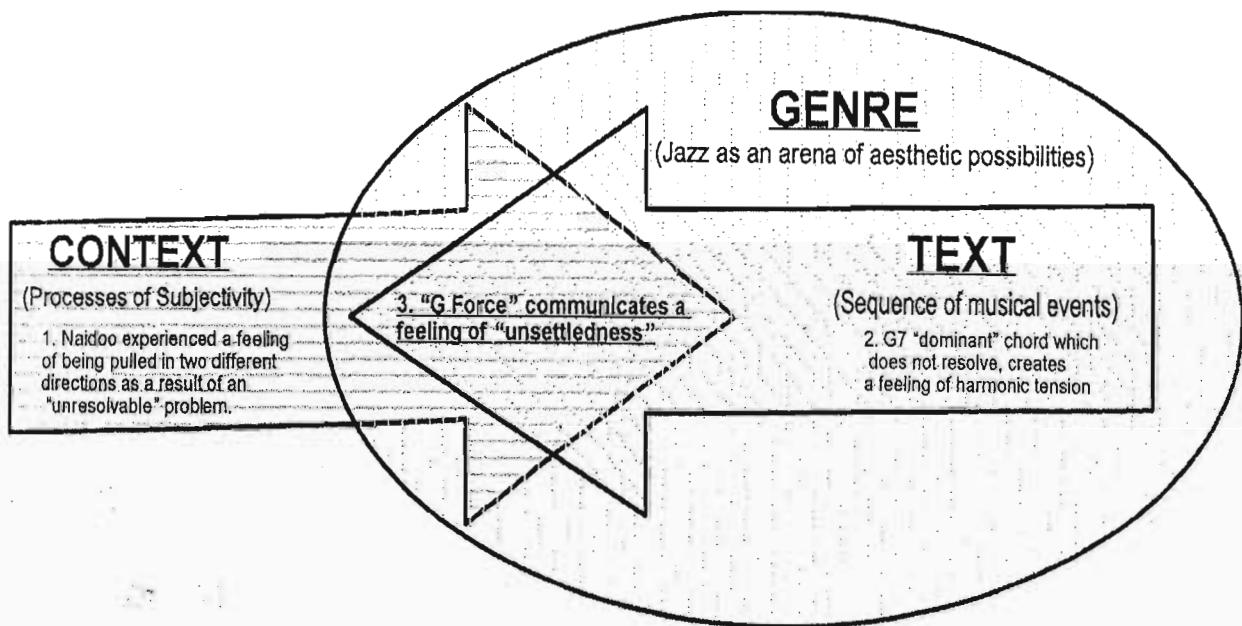
Moreover, the melodic, rhythmic and formal structures on which "G force" is based, underscore this feeling of 'unsettledness'. First, because the melody is based on a (G) diminished whole-tone scale, it includes the altered extensions of the (G) dominant 7th chord on which the composition is based [Figure 4-5]. As such, the melody is rich in harmonic tensions. Second, the piece moves unpredictably between 16th and triplet subdivisions of the beat [Figure 4-6, overleaf]. Finally, the two-bar phrase with which each of the solos ends (it is marked "on cue" in Figure 4-6) shatters the momentum of the groove, and also contributes to the piece's feeling of unsettledness. Figure 4-7 offers a visual analysis of how "G Force's" underlying harmonic structure functions as metaphorically expressive of Naidoo's feeling of unsettledness.

The musical notation consists of two parts. On the left, a G7 chord is shown in its altered form, labeled  $G^7 \text{ Alt } (\#9\#11\flat13)$ . On the right, a G Diminished Whole Tone scale is shown on a single staff. The scale notes are: G, B-flat, B-flat, D, E, G. Below the staff, the notes are labeled with Roman numerals: I, b9, #9, 3, #11, b13, 7, (1). The staff begins with a sharp sign indicating the key signature.

**4-5: G7 Altered chord and G Diminished whole-tone scale**



4-6: "G force"



4-7: The musical text as metaphor

To the extent that it is (at least partially) amenable to academic analysis, Naidoo's "G force" represents a relatively simple instance of music as metaphor. However, as the remaining interview excerpts show, musical metaphors typically operate in ways so complex that they are enormously difficult to account for within the context of academic argument. This is not surprising. Ultimately, different expressive forms such as the visual arts, dance, music, or academic discourse exist precisely because they address – in their own distinctive ways – different facets of our participation in the world. Therefore, I do not try to analyse the following excerpts but rather let the

interviewees 'speak for themselves'. I title each excerpt after the name of the composition that each interviewee refers to.

### *"Ngu Makazi"*

"Ngu Makazi" is "aunt" in Xhosa. *Ngu Makazi* – that's my aunt, my mother's sister. Okay, now my mother's sister always has stories. I stayed with her for a while [and] she [would] always tell stories about the olden days and sing songs and stuff – so that [tune] came out of those stories and some of the songs she used to sing. If you listen to that melody it's very like a Xhosa folk song. Then I had to come up with some accompaniment or complements to conform to the norms of making it a song. Okay, normally what happens – I would use a blanket statement and say in the African tradition – as far as song goes, is that one starts a song and then the others respond to what [the] one is singing about. Normally it would be about telling a story. In this particular case, my aunt was telling me that this man had invited all the people to a ceremony at his place. Apparently this one [guest] arrived earlier than expected and [the host] hadn't yet placed his baboon in the ceiling (that's where it used to stay). Okay, there is a myth that Man used baboon for witchcraft. So when [the guest] came, he saw [his host] was a guy that [kept] the precious animal. But then, [the host] shoved [the baboon] in the ceiling and the understanding was that nothing was going to be said about it. Now [later] when they started drinking [the guest who had arrived early] remembered that there was something [in the ceiling]. Now he started coming up with a melody [sings melody]. That means, "I will tell the people: I will tell them about that thing." [The host] responded, [sings melody] meaning, "Please don't do that to me my friend!" Okay, now the whole house started singing but only two people knew what they were communicating about! (Lex Futshane)

### *"Up and down"*

I must pay tribute to my aunt. "Up and down" was conceived also in that house. I was practising in my room and [at the time], my aunt was moving house. So she came [into the room while I was practising] and well that's one person who would never disturb me when I was practising and stuff like that. She always encouraged me. So she came to me and said, "Are you very busy?" Then I knew that she needed some help and I said "No, no, no, no, I am not busy" and yet I was very busy. "No, no, no, just trying out these things." [She] asked me if I could take some stuff to the other place. Now her husband had left earlier for the place. I took the car; I drove there; I arrived at the place; the house was locked; no one was there. "Huh? What is happening? Maybe this guy is gone home." So I came all the way back home. When [I] got there [I] got the message that he had just left for the place. Then we went to the other place: so "Up and down".

NR: [sings melody]

That's it; that's it "Up and down". That's how it became. (Lex Futshane)

*"NMR 1964"*

NR: I really love what you do on the mbaqanga solos: What are you thinking about?

MN: I told Bongani [Sokhela] this: "It's four o'clock in the morning in Soweto and this woman's carrying water on her head. The<sup>10</sup> fowl is sitting on the broken down car and the sun is just rising and you have this guitar going. And Bongani says, [imitating Bongani] "Ay brother, ay brother, ay brother. This is home. This is where I am." (Mageshen Naidoo)

*"Child's play"*

"Child's Play", I find I sort of get lost in it every time I hear it.

NR: A good kind of lost; a bad kind of lost?

KC: A good kind of lost. My mind sort of – I mean, it's the music that sort of carries me – but I sort of lose a sense of time and space when I hear "Child's play" probably because you said to me once you wrote it with [your nieces] Calistra and Liria in mind. When I listen to "Child's play" I always think about [laughs] – this is going to sound hilarious – but I imagine Calistra and Liria running around your passage between the bedrooms and all of a sudden I grow really small like Alice in Wonderland. It's almost like I become a little mouse and I see everything huge. Anyway, I suddenly shrink and I see these huge blocks. It's like [the movie] *Honey, I shrunk the kids*. Everything becomes larger and a *game* and it's almost like I'm scampering around a room filled with coloured blocks and toys in the form of a Tom Thumb or something. For the duration of that song, it's like being a child and playing this game. I almost feel like a little mouse scurrying around during that song and yah, I totally lose myself and play this game with myself every time I hear that song. (Kreesan Chetty)

*"Give five"*

"Give five" is just so him [Deepak Ram]: Sophiatown; the accent; the person; everything that he stood for; everything that we joked about. It's all in that piece. (Stacey van Schalkwyk)

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<sup>10</sup>Naidoo's ostensibly incorrect use of the definite article "the" suggests that this 'imaginary' scene is in fact very real to him.

To summarise: revisiting notions of genre outlined in chapter 3, the present chapter has investigated how jazz's meanings emerge and evolve in relation to its idiocultural contexts. Focussing on genre as a horizon of expectations, I argued that through their meta-discursive engagement with 'jazz', individuals identify themselves as assenting and/or dissenting participants within various socio-cultural narratives. Focussing on genre as a field of aesthetic possibilities, I described the jazz text as a historically-specific instance of the generically possible, and argued that in producing and receiving music, musicians and listeners similarly affirm and/or contest their participation within various social narratives.

In short, I have argued that ultimately, musical space *is* socio-historical space.

## 5. Local jazz as spatiotemporal discourse

Music's effects are generated by a describable addition, whose sum is greater than its parts: music, plus the ways that the recipient ... attends to it, plus the local circumstances of consumption. (Tia DeNora, 2000: 43)

As mentioned, my exploration of jazz as discourse focuses on four themes that recurred in my interview data. Addressing notions of jazz as musical discourse, chapter 3 mapped the musical terrain represented by local jazz, and argued that the music examined may be usefully located vis-à-vis 'jazz' as a horizon of expectations and field of aesthetic possibilities. Focussing on notions of music and identity, chapter 4 then described how the textual materiality and social meanings of the music examined are (in part) shaped by a mosaic of idiocultural dynamics collectively constituted by local jazz's musicians and listeners. The present chapter expands this account of text/context interaction by exploring the role of place as another contextual force that impinges on the production and reception of local jazz.

Defining place in terms of 'architectural space' (venue as context), and 'locale' (Durban and Johannesburg as context), my discussion of local jazz as discourse of place addresses two key questions: 1) How do the meanings ascribed to local jazz emerge and evolve in relation to the venues in which it is performed and heard? 2) In what ways do environmental, demographic, political, and economic factors peculiar to Johannesburg and Durban shape local jazz's textual landscapes?

Expanding on notions of text and context developed in chapter 4, I argue that, like the text during the 'here-and-now' of musical performance, local jazz's venues and locales function as shared socio-historical contexts that mediate interactions among musicians and listeners, and variously enable and constrain different kinds of music-making. Again building on ideas explored in chapter 4, I argue that just as listeners and musicians contribute an array of centripetal and/or centrifugal

tensions to the music communication process, so too do the dynamics and particularities of place set into motion various consonant and/or dissonant social tensions. Further, I note that these operate within a framework of dialogical interaction with the text *and* the participants in the musical experience. Depending on the combined effect of these interacting forces, variously centripetal and/or centrifugal social tensions may be generated.

Ultimately, a detailed analysis of the interrelationships of music and place would warrant a separate full-length study and, as such, exceeds the scope of this present thesis. Thus, as with my exploration of jazz as idiocultural discourse, I offer an episodic, subjectively-textured account of music and place that centres on dissonant and/or consonant moments of text-context interaction indexed in the interview data.

## **Architectural space**

It's all about the vibe that people want to experience which is obviously different in the Jazz Centre as opposed to the Art Gallery. Even if it's the same audience, I think it would be a different experience. (Mageshen Naidoo)

In this section, I consider how music venues function as socio-historical contexts that contribute a range of centripetal and/or centrifugal tensions to the processes of musical performance and reception. I organise this account of venue as context around two interrelated subsections. First, drawing on Stockfelt's (1997) and Middleton's (1990) arguments as well as interviewees' comments, I observe that as listening contexts, venues are not just inanimate physical spaces but 'historically-alive' symbolic environments that perceptibly influence musical performance. Taking Stockfelt's notion of "genre normative listening situations" (1997: 136) as a point of departure, I then consider the dynamic interrelationships between genre, text, idiocultural context, and venue. Noting that the performances examined embody various musical and social complexities that hamper theoretical description, I first formulate a stereotypical account of the interrelationships of

genre, text, and context based on a set of hypothetical scenarios. I argue that when genre, text, and listening context exist in centripetal relationships to one another, moments of social consonance are engendered. Conversely, socially dissonant moments occur when these contextual forces exist in centrifugal relationships to one another. Moving beyond these hypothetical scenarios, I then extend these arguments to local jazz by examining interviewees' experiences of the various venues in which they heard or played the music examined. On the basis of this evidence, I argue that the richness of live musical experiences is, to a significant degree, a function of their existence as palimpsests of concurring and/or competing socio-historical tensions.

### **Venue as socio-historical space**

[Sighs] The sound in the [Bauer] studio was just unbelievable. You walk in there and it's just [this] energy of all these musicians that have been there [before]. (Carlo Mombelli)

Ola Stockfelt (1997: 136) observes that different musical genres are "shaped in close relation to a few environments." For example, "symphonies developed in relation to the concert hall" both as an architectural space and "social environment" (*Ibid*). In a similar vein, Middleton (1990: 94 & 238) makes the following observations about western classical music and jazz respectively:

The bourgeois concert form is ... a means of *limiting* music, in time and space, of *framing* sound stimuli in a clear producer-consumer spatial hierarchy and an equally clear transmitter-receiver communicative chain. The social arrangements of the concert – professional performers, bourgeois listeners, entrance by ticket, aesthetic function – and its spatial arrangements – orchestra at the front, audience sitting, in rows, facing the sound source, composer either conducting or absent, a controlling deity – are inseparable; and they are not 'natural', nor even 'settled' for long, but part of a continuous process of historical change.

[An] ... example addressing particularly the 'social' structure of musical 'voices' would be the evolution of form in early jazz. Starting in New Orleans as open-ended collective improvisation, related to the functions of dance and parade, and reflecting the public social life of the socially mixed pre-industrial (mercantile) city, the music tended in late 1920's Chicago to turn into a string of solos, each man having his turn, the string opened and closed by a formal collective statement. This form relates to a more

localised listening function (in club and bar) and more individualised social relationships, reflecting the changed circumstances of the industrial city.

In other words, the constellation of socio-musical traits encompassed by specific genres in part emerge and evolve in relation to the listening situations in which these musics are predominantly heard. Complementarily, specific venues may become closely associated with particular musical styles over time, and, like genres, may function as horizons of expectation for listeners and musicians. Moreover, within specific social contexts, venues may be inscribed with certain extra-musical meanings because of their immersion within larger socio-historical spaces and processes. Stacey van Schalkwyk's and Deepak Ram's comments on the Jazz Centre and The Playhouse illustrate how venues thus symbolise various loci in social and historical space:

People ... don't identify musicians and music but they identify venues, and venues have the strength to control the audience. The [University of Natal's] Centre for Jazz is not about music: it's about being there and being seen there. So, if you are 'somebody' in Durban, you certainly do not want to go to a venue that all the '*nobodies*' go to. You have to go to a venue where all the *somebodies* are. The University of Natal has been associated as *the* institution for intellectuals in Natal. Therefore, if you are 'intellectual', if you are 'cultured', that's the place to go. (Stacey van Schalkwyk)

Certain people hang out at different venues but also, you can't separate it from the political situation: UDW<sup>1</sup> stands for something, it's an apartheid-based university originally for the so-called Indian people and although it's not now, people still have that in their minds and that will take long to conquer. Lots of people [of colour] still won't go to The Playhouse<sup>2</sup>. The first time I went to The Playhouse was 1991 and I'm a musician! The first time I listened to an orchestra was in New York at the age of 26 (and here I am hoping to write for them!) But that shows you because I wasn't white I couldn't just go to an orchestral concert. I had the financial means but it

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<sup>1</sup>The (former) University of Durban-Westville, now merged with the (former) University of Natal and named the University of KwaZulu-Natal. (The politics of nomenclature in post-apartheid South Africa is a discourse study in its own right.)

<sup>2</sup> A performing arts complex in the Durban CBD opposite City Hall; presently privatized, it was owned by the Natal Performing Arts Council (NAPAC) which was one of apartheid South Africa's four provincial arts councils. Predictably, given the politics of the time, it was a Eurocentric body dedicated to the presentation of western art music and theatre.

just didn't feel *right* – at that time – going to the Nico Malan Theatre<sup>3</sup> or NAPAC. (Deepak Ram)

Ram has frequently performed at the post-apartheid Playhouse, and as his qualification “at that time” implies, the larger spatiotemporal contexts that venues symbolise are not static, but dynamic and changing. Darius Brubeck’s, Melvin Peters’ and Gisele Turner’s collective description of the changing fortunes of the Rainbow Restaurant are especially revealing of how a single venue may be inscribed with rather different social meanings over the course of its existence:

What was this heaven [the Rainbow Restaurant in the 1980s] like? There was intense bonding of musician and audience, nearly constant and even disruptive applause, shouts of encouragement, ‘requests’, dancing whenever there was room to dance (though no dance floor as such), long solos in long numbers in long sets, often excessive drinking, collective euphoria and finally a gradual dissipation of musical focus and attention and exhaustion. During breaks one risked being button-holed by one or another of the adult males present who felt it their right or duty to shout passionate and often incoherent praise into the faces of the musicians as they retreated through the kitchen and out the back door for some breathing space. Musicians were appreciated and respected, but there was relatively little difference in economic status (not in favour of the musicians anyway) between them and their chiefly working-class and student audience, so there was a casual and natural relationship between them. It would have been at best ironic to impute ‘stardom’ to someone who might ask for a lift home. Political enemies sat on hard benches sharing quart bottles of beer and ‘race’ was not just tactfully set aside, it was part of the fun. The gritty cinder block hall with iron-bar security grates on every opening was no setting for ‘flower-power’ and no-one ever put it this way, but in this little club surrounded by violence and political upheaval, a certain kind of love was in the air. (Darius Brubeck, 2002: 2-3)

A couple of years back, the Rainbow was *the* venue. The reason for that is it was very consistent. People knew they could go there every Sunday and hear decent music: it wasn’t always jazz but it was of a reasonably good standard. The moment that fell away, people said, “Well that’s the end of the Rainbow.” So [in 1994], if you try to advertise a concert on a one-off basis, people are not really going to be too interested in going. [Well known Pretoria-based guitarist] Johnny Fourie had the same problem there [and] he had to cancel his gig. So, to me, that says it doesn’t matter who’s playing: in their minds, the venue has actually crumbled; so that’s it unfortunately. (Melvin Peters)

[By the early 1990s,] Ben [Pretorius, the owner of the Rainbow] had lost interest in the music side of the Rainbow. Jazz-for-the-struggle and the-struggle-for-jazz was long since over and the restaurant was doing so well

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<sup>3</sup> Performing arts complex in Cape Town previously owned by the Cape Performing Arts Council

(just by being right next to a taxi rank) he didn't need to put music in on a regular basis in order to enhance his image or to make any extra money. [The restaurant's subsequent owner] Neil Comfort, who's very interested in music and was wanting to establish a fresh dimension at the Rainbow, started a regular Sunday gig [as well as] a Thursday and Friday gig [in 2001]. Their resident band plays Township jazz, a lot of popular South African standards and a bit of R&B ... with a bit of township thrown in. So, there's Zwakhele in place Thursdays and Friday nights from 5 o'clock in the afternoon: just the little temptation that if somebody's thinking, "Should I go and have a beer at the Rainbow or shouldn't I?" would say, "Hey, let's go have a beer because beers are on special; there is some live music for the next couple of hours; and, I'll still be able to catch my taxi at 7 o'clock and be home in time for dinner." So, the Rainbow has re-established itself as an ignited area. (Gisele Turner)

Thus far, I have considered how individuals experience music venues as historically-alive social environments that index the broader contexts they occupy. In the discussion that follows, I investigate how this 'historical-aliveness' finds expression in the production and reception of local jazz.

### **Genre, text, idiocultural context, and venue**

It's a jazz band so you have these stereotypes in your mind – whether you like it or not – of what that is supposed to be: not the music, 'cause I don't know anything about that, but what space it is supposed to be in, and how it's supposed to be received, and where it's supposed to be heard. (Kerryn Scott)

According to Stockfelt (1997:136), "For each musical genre, a number of listening situations in a given historical situation constitute the genre-specific relation between music and listener. These determine the genre-defining property and the ideal relation between music and listener that were presumed in the formation of the musical style – in the composing, the arranging, the performance, the programming of the music." He refers to these contexts as "genre-normative listening situations" (*Ibid*). Within the realm of mainstream jazz, a venue such as the Village Vanguard would represent a genre-normative listening situation whereas the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge or Wembley Stadium would be non-genre-normative listening situations. For Kerryn Scott and Marcus Wyatt, the Bassline (where the Prisoners performed the first Sunday of every month) was the 'perfect' jazz venue:

The Bassline in Melville [is] small and intimate and smoky; the lights are dim; it's *hot*; everybody's on top of everybody else; the furniture is like nasty, and that's somehow what it's supposed to be like. It's a very mixed audience. You hear [the band] clearly because they're close to you. (Kerryn Scott)

The Bassline was 100 per cent a jazz club: smoky, noisy, dodgy, toilet flushing in the middle of your song ... 'abusive'<sup>4</sup> club-owner; all the things that you want in a jazz club. It was a place that always felt like home and you'd find musicians there every night even when they weren't playing, hanging out, checking out the other bands. (Marcus Wyatt)

On the other hand, all the interviewees agreed that Queenies in Newtown (where the Prisoners played their November concert) was not conducive to jazz performance. Whereas Carlo Mombelli, Marcus Wyatt, and Lloyd Martin conceded that the venue could be made to work if it were redecorated, Kerryn Scott and Siya Makuzeni were unreservedly negative in their assessments of the venue:

[Queenies] in Newtown is naff. It's like a big cafeteria: it's very spread out, with these plastic-looking tables [and] chairs; the lighting is wrong, almost bright; the stage is bigger so there's more room for them (I'm sure that makes life more convenient for them) but the atmosphere is not the same, so it doesn't feel as good, even though the music itself probably hasn't changed. Somehow [at the Bassline] it sounds better, more authentic. (Kerryn Scott)

Queenies? Impersonal, cold and everything was not working in that place: it just doesn't look or feel like a live venue. It didn't gel with me; I really didn't enjoy playing there. (Siya Makuzeni)

Extending Stockfelt's notion of genre-normative venues, we may argue that there are also genre-normative or 'ideal' texts. As consonant instances of the generically possible that 'obey' the rules of a particular genre and thus confirm (rather than problematise) its socio-musical assumptions, 'ideal texts' contribute predominantly centripetal tensions to the socio-musical field symbolised by a genre. In a mainstream jazz context, an Oscar Peterson Trio performance of "Autumn Leaves" would represent an ideal text whereas a solo flute improvisation on a tone row would be a decidedly 'non-ideal' text.

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<sup>4</sup> Wyatt explained that the owner had a penchant for expressing friendship with musicians by throwing pretend 'insults', and swearing at them.

Extending Stockfelt's concept even further, we may also argue that there are 'ideal listeners' who bring appropriate horizons of expectations to their listening experiences, thereby contributing socially-centripetal tensions to a genre's socio-musical domain. In terms of the Oscar Peterson example, another mainstream jazz performer would constitute an 'ideal listener' whereas someone who enjoys only Gregorian chant would be a 'non-ideal' listener.

In Figure 5-1, below, I outline a set of hypothetical scenarios in which an ideal (or non-ideal) jazz text is performed to a group of ideal (or non-ideal) listeners in a genre-normative (or non-genre-normative) listening situation. For each instance, the dissonant elements appear in italics:

Genre	Text	Venue	Idiocultural Context
Jazz	Oscar Peterson Trio performing Autumn leaves	Village Vanguard	listeners familiar with mainstream jazz
Jazz	Oscar Peterson Trio performing Autumn leaves	Village Vanguard	<i>listeners familiar with choral music</i>
Jazz	Oscar Peterson Trio performing Autumn leaves	<i>Chapel of King's College</i>	listeners familiar with mainstream jazz
Jazz	Oscar Peterson Trio performing Autumn leaves	<i>Chapel of King's College</i>	<i>listeners familiar with choral music</i>
Jazz	<i>Hubert Laws solo flute improvisation on a tone row</i>	Village Vanguard	listeners familiar with mainstream jazz
Jazz	<i>Hubert Laws solo flute improvisation on a tone row</i>	Village Vanguard	<i>listeners familiar with choral music</i>
Jazz	<i>Hubert Laws solo flute improvisation on a tone row</i>	<i>Chapel of King's College</i>	listeners familiar with mainstream jazz
Jazz	<i>Hubert Laws solo flute improvisation on a tone row</i>	<i>Chapel of King's College</i>	<i>listeners familiar with choral music</i>

#### 5-1: Variously consonant and dissonant instances of text/context interaction

As the following three interview accounts attest, musicians typically strive to avoid situations of potential dissonance by taking audience expectations into serious consideration before they play certain tunes, and even, in more drastic cases, certain gigs:

If people don't hear the music, you can't force them. It's one of the things that I learned from playing with Winston [Mankunku]. It's very important to check who you are playing for. How are these people educated in terms of listening? Do they really dig the kind of stuff [you want to play]? The programme must be flexible. That's why [the Winston Mankunku Quintet] used to play *mbaqanga*, mainstream, you name it. (Feya Faku)

I'm just very cautious about playing particular tunes at certain venues. Generally, the audiences at the Rainbow are into bebop or music which creates a certain vibe: it's very difficult to play a ballad or anything that's remotely soft because people just do not know how to listen. Certainly, the audiences we've had at the Rainbow are just not into that kind of music. I know you're thinking [this situation] is kind of sad because we should be allowed to play whatever we want. And of course, this [ballads, soft pieces] is a part of jazz as well and [we should play] all kinds of jazz in order to present [a] holistic view of jazz. But quite honestly, it just doesn't work. So, rather than go through the torment of trying to stretch out on a ballad, we had to say, "No, leave it out." (Melvin Peters)

[The organisers] were trying to send us to Behind the Moon which we just flat rejected because we've been in that experience before where [the] audience [is] there to *disco* and you're there to play some serious music. You're at odds and it really is better just to not go on in a situation like that. (Chris Merz)

As a precocious but naïve teenage musician, Carlo Mombelli learned this lesson the hard way on his very first gig:

We got our first gig at the Hotel Hellenic which is a heavy, heavy, hotel in Pretoria: it was an escape [for] boozers [and] prostitutes ... heavy place, heavy place. We pitch up there, nervous and excited (it was our first gig). So here we are, playing Chick Corea and Billy Cobham. Now the people are there to dance hey, and we're playing this shit but we are totally oblivious of what's happening: we are just into the music. So we get off the stage really excited: we've just done our first set ever played live! So I go [up to] this guy sitting at the bar: I remember he's got his elbows on the bar, his beer in front of him; heavy cat. I come up to him, tapped him [on the shoulder] and said, "What do you think? Tell me what do you think of the band? He turned like this, [without moving his elbows from the bar], looked at me, and said, "Kak".<sup>5</sup>

Sometimes, however, situations fraught with a range of potentially dissonant tensions (generically 'problematic' texts, 'non-ideal' audience, non-genre-normative performance context) turn out surprisingly 'consonant'. Mosaic's Art Gallery concert was one such instance. As mentioned in chapter 2, the gallery is

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<sup>5</sup> An Afrikaans word that also occurs in colloquial South African English, "kak" (pronounced "cuck")

an awkward performance space: the room is circular, with a hole in the centre of the floor which overlooks part of the natural science museum on the floor below. Also, the gallery's acoustics are over-lively and 'boomy'. Because of the hole in the floor, the audience had to be seated on opposite sides of the room. Moreover, as Marion Dall observed, the audience consisted mostly of people more familiar with classical music than jazz:

There were people who were normally a classical crowd and who go to hear classical things and thought - seeing as this was a 'Friends of Music' thing - it must have been of quite a high standard, but they were still expecting it to be jazz. And, when they got there, and it wasn't their idea of what jazz should be and it wasn't quite their idea of just what *classical* should be, they didn't *quite* know how to categorise it, and they weren't sure how to receive it themselves.

Still, in spite of these ostensibly dissonant dynamics, Dall enjoyed the group's performance:

I thought it was a very focused concert in terms of what you were playing and how the audience was receiving it as well ... I quite enjoyed the kind of mix of what is well-I-suppose jazz happening in quite a formal context because it made it pretty focused.

For Marcus Wyatt, this "focus" made their Wits Theatre performance especially enjoyable, while Lloyd Martin felt that this relatively formal performance context suited the 'theatricality' of Mombelli's music:

The Wits [Theatre's] perfect for Carlo's music; perfect for the kind of music that you don't necessarily have to talk. (Marcus Wyatt)

I think the most rewarding performance was the Wits Theatre: it's got to do with the acoustics; it's got to do with the proximity of the audience. That amphitheatre vibe [works] because a lot of the band is communication; it's 'theatrical' music. (Lloyd Martin)

Unlike Martin who enjoyed the feeling of "proximity" to the audience at the Wits

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mono-syllabically condenses the semantic force of "lousy, awful, and crap".

Theatre, Kerryn Scott felt more cut-off from the band at this venue than she did at the Bassline or Queenies:

The theatre was very nice and the lighting was lovely but that was a very 'us-and-them' vibe, far more than it was in the other places: you're much more removed because you are in darkness in the theatre. [At the other venues,] you're involved because the lighting allows you to be whereas [at the Wits Theatre] it keeps you very much closed off.

Martin's and Scott's contrasting experiences of the Prisoners' Wits Theatre concert are characteristic of the often incompatible horizons of expectation that musicians and audiences bring to musical performances. In a similar vein, Kreesan Chetty's explanation of why he enjoyed Mosaic's Art Gallery performance challenged a range of deep-seated assumptions about music-making and listening that I had absorbed over the course of my musical training. As my numerous interjections reveal, I was taken aback by his comments:

KC: I thought [the Art Gallery] was a wonderful venue because the acoustics were good.

NR: *You really thought the acoustics were good?*

KC: Well yes! It had a certain richness.

NR: You didn't find it 'boomy'?

NR: Maybe that's what I like, "Boomy".

NR: *Honestly?*

KC: [Emphatically] Uh. When I think of music that's spiritually uplifting, the environment that this music is performed in has a lot to do with that. For instance, monks in a monastery singing chant I would find spiritually stimulating and uplifting; listening to [Mosaic] in that kind of environment gave me the same kind of feeling. Maybe it was the art, [or] the high domed ceiling but yah, it lent a new quality to the sound that for me was ... enjoyable, uplifting.

Thus far, I have considered how the meanings ascribed to local jazz emerge and evolve in relation to the venues in which it is performed and heard. From here on, I explore how environmental and social dynamics peculiar to Johannesburg and Durban shape the production and reception of local jazz.

## Geographic space

[Mosaic's] got a sound that it would not have [had] if you'd grown up in Jo-burg for example. (Marion Dall)

In lay, journalistic, and scholarly discourse about music, commentary that interlinks notions of music and geography is commonplace, even "legion" (Connell and Gibson, 2003: ix). Thus, for Ray Pratt (1990: 30) – and indeed, most consumers of western popular culture – "the sound of accordions can be said to symbolise France, bamboo flutes Japan or China, aboriginal instruments the 'real' Australia, bagpipes Scotland ... and so on." Recalling another familiar set of music/place couplings, Keith Negus (1996: 181) observes that music is "constantly 'placed' as it [is] produced, promoted and listened to, whether as the sound of Strauss's Vienna, Elgar's England ... the sound of merengue from the Dominican Republic or grunge from Seattle."

Recognising that the interrelationships among musical sounds and geographical contexts "raise a number of intriguing but often theoretically vague questions about how the meaning of a place might be created, constructed and conveyed", Keith Negus (*Ibid*: 185-6) suggests a two-pronged approach to this problematic that explores "1) how the material conditions of musical production in a specific locality provide the possibilities for a particular sound to be produced and circulated; 2) and how particular instruments and musical elements signify meaning." Implicit in Negus's dyadic formulation is a potential bi-directionality whereby considerations of place inform our understandings of music, and music, our understandings of place.

Perhaps because material factors and causal relationships are more readily described than the rather complex processes by which musical sounds evoke extra-musical meanings, the first approach is better represented than the second in the music literature. For example, introductory jazz texts will typically discuss that music's beginnings in terms of environmental and social factors peculiar to turn-of-the-century New Orleans. Similarly, world music textbooks may argue that

the respectively verdant and semi-arid landscapes of east and southern Africa favoured the development of instrumental musics in the former region whilst hindering their development in the latter.

Not surprisingly – given the reach of apartheid social engineering – examples of the first approach appear in much South African musical scholarship. For example, Allen (1993; 2000), Ballantine (1993), Byerly (1998), Coplan (1985) and Erlmann (1991; 1996) describe the enabling and disabling effects of apartheid legislation on local music-making and show how the aesthetic and social characteristics of various South African musics from *isicathamiya* and *kwela* to Afrikaans popular music and jazz register its influence. On the other hand, I can think of no South African research that explicitly theorises notions of musical sound as a signifier of place in the local imagination.

In this section, I try to move beyond this bias by exploring the interstitial space framed by Negus's questions. Drawing on interviewees' comments on Durban, Johannesburg, and other locales as musical spaces, my discussion examines the environmental, demographic, economic, and political factors that are perceived to shape, and find expression in, local jazz.

### **Locale as socio-historical space**

I think Durban is a very strange place. The musicians are all into something else: there's not a real 'down the middle' musician in town. Well there are some, but the ones you hear about – and the ones that are good – are the ones that are getting into other areas. (Chris Merz)

In mid-1990s Durban, there was a relative scarcity of mainstream jazz performance in the city; rather, groups like Mosaic and Counterculture, playing fusions of jazz with local and world musics seemed to predominate. Chris Merz offered the following reasons for this "strange" state of musical affairs:

I could put forward a couple of possibilities: one possibility in Durban is, "Hey there's no work anyway, so we may as well try something. We're not going to get any smaller crowds by trying something that we [would] not

ordinarily do." Another possibility might have to do with the university situation, although, it was a very conservative scene when I got here [and] I would have a hard time thinking that the music department has fostered much creative thinking in itself. Another possibility is just the broad variety of cultures that are here. I haven't spent a lot of time in Jo-burg or Cape Town but it seems to me that they're typically a bit more homogeneous than Durban. I think [that] at any time you've got a lot of different kinds of people together, all these cross influences are going to happen and you're gonna come up with some interesting things.

Merz's impromptu analysis neatly affirms Street's assertion that "locality is crucial in structuring the business of making and enjoying music" (Street, 1997: 102).

According to Street:

Music does not simply 'happen'; there have to be arrangements which enable it to exist. These arrangements can be viewed as the product of a local network or 'scene'. Where no such arrangements or connections exist, there will be silence. What is more, the shape of the local network – where it leads, whom it connects – will affect the type of music being heard and played. What this means is that when people talk of the 'Manchester sound' or the 'Seattle scene', they are not evoking some mystical connection between place and aesthetics – it is not something in the air, or in the 'nature' of the people. It is, in fact, the consequence of particular arrangements which allow music to be made in one way rather than another and which encourage one set of aesthetic judgements to take precedence over another. (*Ibid*: 101-2)

Articulating a contrasting perspective, Darius Brubeck voiced his scepticism of analyses linking musical outcomes to the defining effects of the kinds of place-specific, economic and demographic factors described by Merz. For Brubeck, Durban's crossover jazz scene was entirely authored at the level of individual action:

I think people are consciously looking for very different things to hear: really as simple as that. I've an intellectual bias for wanting to appeal to the cultural atmosphere and so forth but I wouldn't really express that as a critical opinion because I think the musicians themselves know what they're looking for. It's not something that just happens. I know every member of both groups that you're talking about and I know that, if [they] wanted to, [they] could play [a jazz standard like] "Confirmation" [but] have made a choice not to do it. So, it's appealing – but rather intellectually dishonest – to say, "Well, it's because of the concentration and merger of cultures that happen; Durban's a great port" and so on.

While I fully endorse Merz's and Street's ideas (and therefore ultimately disagree

with Brubeck's emphasis on the exclusive influence of individual agency on music-making), the latter's remarks constitute an important reminder that localities do not produce music; people do. Nevertheless, as I was reminded by several other interviewees, localities are *peopled* spaces, which therefore can, and ultimately do, enable and constrain different kinds of music-making. For example, Gisele Turner emphasized the crucial role of individual agency in the development of Durban's lively rock scene:

If you look at the rock scene in Durban, it developed because of some very dedicated media people like Russel Wasserfall [and] Theresa Owen who made it their babies to actually promote [rock].

As host of a series of monthly soirees at her home, Turner herself played an important role in facilitating live jazz performance in Durban in the mid-1990s:

I saw that there were a lot of interesting people writing interesting music and doing interesting things but nobody knew about them and there wasn't a scene basically. Frustrated by the fact that venues in Durban seemed to be a problem, I just opened my house: that seemed to be the most practical thing to do; if I can't find a venue then I'll just use my house. As you know I ran it for two and a half years.

While these instances highlight the significant influence that autonomously-acting individuals can have on music scenes, individual agency is more typically enabled and constrained by more powerful environmental and social factors. As Marion Dall remarks, the influence of these forces may be difficult to account for with any accuracy; nevertheless, they are indelibly inscribed in the spatiotemporal contexts that surround and subtend daily life:

Every place does have a specific vibe – even just the *climate* – and it all makes a big difference without people even being aware of it. [Durban's] not a go-go-go place, so there's time to feel the leaves, and talk about what the waves look like.

Like Dall, Neil Gonsalves implicitly constructs time and space as intertwined and co-informing entities. As his evocative analogies attest, places have paces and these may colour experience and frame social interaction in important ways,

sometimes having a vivid and even visceral impact on the rhythm of individual behaviour:

I can only experience some things from my ‘inner workings’ if you will. Now I don’t know how fast the blood in my veins flows, but I think that in terms of how I react to things, it probably flows [relatively slowly] because I like to take things in my stride: in my own mind, that’s when I can work most efficiently.

Just because Jo-burg is so much bigger (and I’m not just talking geographically) somehow things have to happen much faster. There’s a lot of the bullshit that just gets cut completely out and you just get down to doing [things] or making [them] happen.

When I go to Jo-burg, as I drive into the city, I feel myself getting ready in a way like you go to war or something [laughing]. It’s like changing gears – literally – it is about stepping into that speed. Now I have more than one speed; so when I come back to Durban, as I drive down from Hillcrest into Westville, it’s the opposite: I open my window and I *feel* that heat and humidity, that saturation. I breathe. It literally does feel like slipping back into a lower gear.

Gonsalves’ interlinking of notions of tempo and place will ring true for most people familiar with Johannesburg and Durban, but while music may represent a useful vantage point from which to read place, trying to produce geographical readings of music is more complex. As my exchange with Christopher Ballantine (a Durbanite for three decades and an experienced scholar of music and society) revealed, trying to specify the influence of general, environmental factors on actual music is a difficult proposition:

NR: Is there anything that comes to mind – ‘offhand,’ without my prompting anything specific – about Durban as place with regard to music?

CB: It’s easier to answer that if you just stopped after the word place.

When geographical locations are conceptualised in political, rather than exclusively environmental or social terms, it becomes significantly easier to posit plausible music/place equivalences. As mentioned, apartheid had the effect of politicising most aspects of South African life including music-making, which sometimes functioned as a means by which individuals indirectly expressed acquiescence or resistance to apartheid ideology. For example, during apartheid,

politically conscious people of colour, like Ram, refused to patronise state-supported provincial arts council venues:

Lots of people [of colour] still won't go to The Playhouse. The first time I went to The Playhouse was 1991 and I'm a musician! ... I had the financial means but it just didn't feel *right* – at that time – going to the Nico Malan Theatre or NAPAC.

Physical geography also frames – and thus facilitates or hinders – different kinds of social interaction, and in Ram's view, Durban's multicultural milieu was, in part, made possible by a 'compact' topography that tended to facilitate intercultural contact despite the apartheid state's policies of enforced racial separation:

Jo-burg also has a cultural mix; so does Cape Town but [in] Durban, it's visible: the city is smaller than Jo-burg [and] people live closer together. The Group Areas thing didn't quite manage to keep people as much apart as was successful in Jo-burg. Jo-burg is a bigger city [and] people were pushed farther apart [in Johannesburg] than they could have been pushed in Durban because of logistical problems. The way people were separated is purely by valleys and hills in Durban. For example, I lived in Lens<sup>6</sup> for about 29 years of my life and I hardly got to the centre of [Johannesburg]. I've played more in Durban, in every other city in this country, than I've played in Jo-burg. I've given concerts in Jo-burg *proper* - "downtown Jo-burg" as Americans would say – about twice. Getting to Jo-burg from the place I grew up in Lens with one bus every three hours wasn't very easy ... the physical distance was more effective in [keeping different race groups apart in] Jo-burg. Durban is not quite the same: we had group areas but then some melting pot with people in town and that happened across many levels [from] business to artistic things like music.

Neil Gonsalves' and Melvin Peters' recollections of bi-racial social interaction in the early 1970s and 1980s support Ram's description of Durban as melting pot. Christchurch, Overport, a church to which Peters belongs is in a historically white area, but also very close to the respectively coloured and Indian areas of Sydenham and Asherville. According to Peters, the congregation in the early 1980s was predominantly coloured and Indian. More surprisingly, in Port Shepstone (100km south of Durban) in the early 1970s, Gonsalves and his family were members of a white/Indian congregation:

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<sup>6</sup> Lenasia, a formerly Indian 'group area' south-west of Johannesburg

The church was fairly integrated: I'm saying that not from recollection of having been there but when I look at photographs. [For example], I'll see a photograph [taken] in the church hall on my dad's surprise birthday and well, it's not multiracial but bi-racial in that there are lots of Indian people and lots of white people.

For Christopher Ballantine, the Durban beachfront, (a free, easily accessible, public place of play and relaxation directly adjacent to the city's central business district) has become, in the post-apartheid era, a 'post-racial' space – a harbinger of more widespread social interaction<sup>7</sup> unfettered by race politics:

I think what's special about a zone like the Durban beachfront is its openness, its gentleness, its sociability ... If one has to take seriously the question of how we get beyond thinking about race and how we undermine the notion of race and race thinking ... it seems to me that the Durban beachfront is one of those liberated zones where this can start to happen; does in fact start to happen. A lot of people who've been down to the beachfront in the last few years [have] commented on the way people meet each other as humans: rather than meet each other as 'Other', they meet as 'Same'.

Counter-examples (and further examples) abound. On the one hand, Gisele Turner says that many music venues remain racially segregated and that the minority of black people who patronize the wealthier, white-dominated venues are almost inevitably middle-class and private-school educated. On the other hand, Desai (2002) describes how impoverished Indians and Africans in the township of Chatsworth have moved beyond racial differences to fight water and electricity cut-offs often violently imposed upon them by a profiteering city council. "We are not Indian; we are not African: We are the poors," they claim.

However, while there can be no objective 'measurement' of racism, non-racialism, or post-racialism in a city, post-apartheid Durban can, especially with regard to its expressive culture, lay claim to greater levels of intercultural awareness than are typically found in other areas in the country. The arts homepage on the city's official website boldly claims that, "If cultural diversity were the criterion for

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<sup>7</sup> These interactions are rarely consciously sought, but it is safe to say that the Durban beachfront is characterized by greater levels of interracial coexistence, than might be found in many other comparable public spaces in South Africa.

choosing the capital of the new South Africa, then Durban would be the only city in the running.”<sup>8</sup> In a similar vein, many of the city’s artists often cite Durban’s distinctively tri-cultural (Zulu/Indian/English) heritage as a significant influence on their creative work. For example, notions of Durban as multicultural ‘soundscape’ emerged repeatedly in my interview with Mageshen Naidoo:

If you’re in Durban, even in Chatsworth<sup>9</sup> with all the Indian people, the African music gets to you with the sound.

I think if you played *Maskanda* guitar to some person who lives in Durban, who works in an office, has a 9-5 job, and doesn’t really care about the arts, I’m sure they would [nevertheless] recognize [the] sound.

When I think about me playing *Maskanda* guitar, I think, “Where did I learn that? How did I learn all those inflections that can even cause a black man to say, ‘Hey, that’s good?’” There again, it’s just being in KwaZulu-Natal; being around black people; experiencing the music, the culture. And, it happened in the ‘old’ days [of apartheid].

In the context of a different train of conversation, I asked Naidoo to comment on the surprisingly favourable reception<sup>10</sup> of Mosaic’s ‘Indo-Afro-Jazz’ sound by the Friends of Music audience at our Art Gallery concert; I include the remark I made so as to properly frame his commentary:

NR: All these people were [regular] Friends of Music [listeners] and along we came, and they thought it was going to be a jazz thing. Afterwards, they came up to us and said, “You know, we don’t normally like jazz, but we liked what you were doing.”

MN: I think what Mosaic[’s ‘Indo-Afro-jazz’ sound] is telling people is, “Yah, this is something that you enjoy because you’ve always enjoyed it but you never said it. This is what has been happening all along. Yes, you do enjoy it because it’s always been here if you only consciously looked.”

Later in the interview, Naidoo and I spoke about “Child’s play”. To me, Naidoo’s comments on the composition are suggestive of the ways in which the dynamics of place find expression, musically, at the level of specific textual details:

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.durban.gov.za/eThekwini/Tourism\\_and\\_Leisure/the\\_arts](http://www.durban.gov.za/eThekwini/Tourism_and_Leisure/the_arts)

<sup>9</sup> Chatsworth is the older of Durban’s two Indian townships.

<sup>10</sup> As mentioned in the previous section, the performance was fraught with a range of potentially dissonant tensions.

You can't help but smile to yourself – and I think the audience does – and you say, "Oh yah right. This is it. This is South Africa. This is Durban. There's the *Charous*<sup>11</sup>. Oh yah, I see these people." You hear all those things, and what's amazing, is the way it comes out. You have this *mbaqanga* groove backed with tablas. To me, that's really great because it's not in its exact social setting. [Also] it's in five [5/4 time]. On many levels, there's this crossover because, musically, you have all these elements that come across and they're so nicely interwoven. Then, also you have the musicians like us Indian guys trying to play *mbaqanga* and sound African and you have this Baroque part [Figure 5-2]. On all those levels, [there's this] crossover.

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for Flute, the middle for Guitar, and the bottom for Rhythm section (bass, piano, tabla). The score is divided into two main sections: "The 'Baroque' part" and "Mbaqanga in 5".

**Flute:** The flute part is mostly silent, with a single note at the beginning of the "Baroque" section and a short melodic line at the start of the "Mbaqanga" section.

**Guitar:** The guitar part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth-note pairs. It starts with a melodic line in 3/4 time, followed by a sustained note in 5/4 time, and then continues with a melodic line in 3/4 time. The chords indicated are B<sup>b</sup>, E<sup>b6</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>/F, and F<sup>7</sup>.

**Rhythm section (bass, piano, tabla):** The rhythm section provides a steady bass line and harmonic support. It includes a bass line, a piano line, and tabla-like patterns. The chords indicated are B<sup>b</sup>, A<sup>b</sup>, G<sup>b</sup>, F, B<sup>b</sup>, E<sup>b6</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>/F, F<sup>7</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>, and A<sup>b</sup>.

**Chords:** The score indicates several chords: B<sup>b</sup>, E<sup>b6</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>/F, F<sup>7</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>, A<sup>b</sup>, G<sup>b</sup>, F, B<sup>b</sup>, E<sup>b6</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>/F, F<sup>7</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>, and A<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> A colloquial term which refers to South Africans of Indian origin

The musical score for 'Child's play' at measure 14. The top staff is in G major (B-flat) with a dynamic marking of 'very baroque'. The middle staff is in F major (B-flat). The bottom staff shows harmonic changes between G major (B-flat), F major (B-flat), and B major (B-flat). Measures 14 through 17 are shown.

### 5-2: "Child's play"

Constructing a "thick description" (Geertz: 1973) of the piece, Naidoo (consciously or unconsciously) traces how meaning emerges out of an interplay of intertextual processes ("This *mbaqanga* groove backed with tablas"; "the 'Baroque' part") as well as various processes of text-context interaction ("this is South Africa"; "this is Durban"; "us Indian guys trying to sound African"). Naidoo's reading is premised upon the following vernacular assumptions about contemporary South Africa and its musics:

- 1) Just as the sound of bagpipes signify 'Scottish-ness', the *mbaqanga* or 'township jazz' sound signifies 'South African-ness'.
- 2) Because of its large 'Indian' population, Durban is often described as South Africa's 'Indian' city.
- 3) As such, a simultaneous presentation of 'Indian' and 'township jazz' sounds may be said to signify Durban.

Music/place equivalences may also be premised on economically-informed readings of place. Marcus Wyatt's respective comparisons of Johannesburg and Cape Town, and South Africa and Europe – as economically and musically different spaces – are a case in point:

[In] Cape Town, they have a lot of small club gigs and a musician down there can be working four times a week playing small gigs which just doesn't happen [in Johannesburg]. There's that whole culture down there (which we don't have up here) of jam sessions and what-what. Because of the [University of Cape Town's jazz programme] and because the recording industry isn't based over there, you get a lot of musicians doing

projects that are non-commercial [and] more creative.

[In South Africa] there's no public grants like [one finds] in Europe [where] there's so much music but a lot of it, like I say, [is] up its own arse because they're not struggling.

Similarly, his comments on the increasing commercialisation of post-apartheid South African jazz posit direct correlations between musical culture and economic context:

It's something that we are losing and that worries me. I've sat round with [jazz musicians] in Europe and they said to me, "What's going on? We've heard a lot of the recordings that are coming out of South Africa now in the last few years and it sounds like American smooth jazz." There was a sense that what 'made' South Africa – that put our music on the map and that [earned] us respect out there – was the rawness and the soul and the passion. Now, we've got all these record companies that are trying to make money and because of what the radios are playing, everything has to be matched to American R&B. The records coming out are just smooth – too smooth – and in the long run, we're actually shooting ourselves in the foot. Gradually, overseas interest is going to die because if anyone really *is* interested in smooth jazz, they may as well just get it in the States.

Guys are just so obsessed with radio play and hits that the whole shape of South African music – since the industry suddenly exploded five years ago – [has] become watered-down.

Often, music-making is affected by an intersection of economic *and* political factors. As described by Gisele Turner, the changing fortunes of two venues – Funky's, a restaurant-bar on the Durban harbour front, and the Rainbow – foreground the personal, political and economic dynamics that frame music-making:

Funky's changed hands a number of times and it died a million deaths. It was a very sad situation until Nisa Malange got on board as the director. She sits on the National Arts Council committee and she also had access to municipal funds and she recognized the need for there to be some regular jazz things. So she organised sponsorship: at the end of the day that's what [made] it work.

Ben had lost interest in the music side of the Rainbow. Jazz-for-the-struggle and the-struggle-for-jazz was long since over and the restaurant was doing so well (just by being right next to a taxi rank) he didn't need to put music in on a regular basis in order to enhance his image or to make any extra money. [The restaurant's subsequent owner] Neil Comfort, who's

very interested in music ... started a regular Sunday gig [as well as] a Thursday and Friday gig [and] ... the Rainbow has re-established itself as an ignited area.

Likewise, as described by various interviewees, the changing character of the Durban jazz scene over the past ten years reveals how music-making is buffeted and buoyed by a confluence of political and economic flows. In the mid-1990s, there was no venue in Durban that consistently hosted jazz performance on a regular basis like Kippies or the Bassline in Johannesburg, the Village Vanguard in New York, and so on. The Centre for Jazz and Popular Music at the (then) University of Natal had recently inaugurated weekly sun downer concerts on Wednesday evenings, but because these were only held during term times, during the holidays – when Durban is especially vibrant and abuzz with tourists – things were quiet. As Melvin Peters observed, the jazz scene at the time was thus mostly fragmented, un-integrated into the economy, and poorly supported:

The problem is that there is no stable jazz venue. People would go to a venue for a couple of weeks, the venue would close down and then they're left in the lurch. Then another venue starts up and they go to that venue and the same thing happens. The actual jazz scene is very unstable in Durban.

I always believe that if you've got one consistent venue where people know they can go every Sunday or whenever for the whole year, it's great: you'll find them all coming out in their numbers.

While this meant that there was generally very little money to be made from jazz performance, the upside was that jazz musicians were mostly unconstrained by commercial pressures and were, as Chris Merz remarked, free to play what they wanted:

Hey there's no work anyway ... we're not going to get any smaller crowds by trying something that we [would] not ordinarily do.

Echoing Merz, Deepak Ram remarked that this economic non-viability helped foster a climate in which aesthetic considerations could take precedence over monetary concerns:

I think the atmosphere of the listeners and the musicians in Durban is not as financially motivated as Jo-burg. It's unfair to say that but I think, [in] Durban, the motivation is a *little* bit more aesthetic.

For Neil Gonsalves, this 'freer' climate ultimately found expression at the level of musical sound:

Jo-burg is recognized as the commercial marketplace of jazz: that's where all the studio musos are; that's where all the work is; but at the same time, it means that is sometimes at the cost of being more ambitious creatively. So, you won't find as many seven-four tunes in Jo-burg as you might for example in Durban. The musicians here aren't under the same kind of pressure as musicians in Jo-burg to make it commercially.

However, Johannesburg's powerful economy (the city boasts the largest concentration of wealth in sub-Saharan Africa) has also been an enabling environment for 'creative' music-making, and many musicians living there (like the Prisoners) use the money they earn in commercial contexts to subsidise their less commercially-viable projects. Moreover, because of the greater numbers of people with higher levels of disposable income in Johannesburg, even a "fringe band" (as Mombelli describes the Prisoners) can attract fairly sizeable paying audiences and be seen to earn its keep in the eyes of venue owners. Additionally, the economy is better able to support hosting international acts than cities like Durban; because of this, Johannesburg can be an artistically stimulating environment for musicians:

In Johannesburg, you get all the international names coming down. I saw Terence Blanchard playing with local guys [like pianist] Andile [Yenana] and I thought, "Wow!" That kind of opportunity we probably won't have in Durban: really, really big names of the calibre of Terence Blanchard just won't come to Durban. (Melvin Peters)

Thus, while mostly agreeing with Gonsalves' and Ram's view that the Johannesburg music scene is, as Lloyd Martin put it, "all about the money", Marcus Wyatt also recognizes that the city is home to some of the most creative and interesting improvised music in the country:

Generally that theory is right because it *is* commercial up here. *But* (I've

thought about this a lot actually, because I lived in Cape Town for eight years) the stuff that, for me, is sitting on the cutting edge of creativity, is here. There's not *more* creativity up here but the *really* creative stuff, I would say, is here, in Jo-burg.

In any event, economic forces play a crucial role in enabling and constraining different kinds of music-making, and by December 2003, when I conducted further interviews with Gonsalves, Peters and other participants on the Durban scene, the situation there had changed dramatically. Following the country's re-entry into the global economy, large-scale international investment in the city had seen the erection of a Hilton Hotel and an International Convention Centre (ICC) on the northern edge of the central business district. Partly through Gisele Turner's interventions, Rivets, the ground-floor bar at the Hilton, began hosting weekly jazz performances on Thursdays evenings:

'Rivets' has now been going for six years – so that's Central Business District – five-star hotel, six years, every single Thursday without fail. It's created a sense of firmness (it wasn't fly-by-night: open a club; close a club; change the nature of a club). It just started off as a jazz club and it continued to be a jazz club. (Gisele Turner)

Conferences and corporate events hosted at the International Convention Centre also generated work for jazz musicians. According to Neil Gonsalves:

In Durban at the moment, everyone is doing a lot more corporate gigs than ever before. To an extent that's because you've got the ICC here, and you've [got] that information centre and there's gigs.

Increased media interest in jazz also helped stimulate the market for live jazz performance in the city. Recognizing that regular reportage had helped enliven the Durban rock scene, and hoping that the same would hold true for jazz, Gisele Turner persuaded the *Daily News*, in late 1995, to host a weekly jazz column. Her timing was fortuitous in that jazz's image as a multiracial – but mostly black – music resonated with the politics of the Rainbow Nation and later the African Renaissance. Moreover, widespread recognition of jazz's popularity with the new regime's political elite bolstered the music's status. Turner explains:

I started writing 'Jazz Eye' about eight years ago. When I approached the newspapers to write a jazz column, they laughed at me and said that there was no jazz, why did I want to write a column? I said, "The reason there's no jazz is because there's no media pushing; there's nobody there to introduce the people to the musicians; there's nobody pushing any of the venues; there's nobody reviewing any of the jazz events that are happening and it's just going into a limbo." And if you look at the rock scene in Durban, it developed because very dedicated media people like Russel Wasserfall and Theresa Owen made it their babies to promote [rock]. Anyway, I had to trade my very popular vegetarian column which was called 'The Green Kitchen Report' for a jazz column, (they wouldn't let me have two columns as a freelancer which I thought was rather sad) but at the time, I was quite fired up, so I started 'Jazz Eye.' And it was a very long slog: when the university closed for three months, there wasn't a single gig that I could talk about. All the photographs I took were in retrospect: "so-and-so played at the last thing." It was un-tilled ground [but] as time went on, there was growing interest in it and people started to recognize that most important that they were accessing a middle-class black market with jazz. There was a hook in that jazz didn't seem to have too much of a generational thing [and] you could still access youngish people, quite a lot of Coloured and Indian people and even some white people. Suddenly it seemed as though jazz could be the universal language of Durban, a meeting place for everybody. *Maskanda* was too black; R&B was too you know; *Kwaito* was this; rock and blues was that. There was an uncomfortable sense that music has been divided into the four [racial] corners and especially as jazz is such a *broad* term for such a *lot* of different music, it seemed to kind of cover the bases and people were getting excited about that.

Jazz musicians have benefited economically from this process in that they are increasingly hired to entertain at business functions hosted by wealthy corporate clients who astutely use jazz's newfound political cachet to claim an appropriately post-apartheid identity for themselves:

There's a sense in the corporate world that they have to 'go African' because so many of their clients are African. Because of the media, jazz is in the air and everybody's saying [in derisive tone], "Oh, we *love* jazz". They haven't a clue what they're saying and what they're listening to but "We *LOVE* jazz." PR people – who are very quick to catch onto what is trendy so that they can look good in the eyes of their clients and their bosses – will hook into jazz, especially Afro-jazz. And they pay; that's where the money is. If there's been any real spin-off in terms of money for musicians, it's been that the corporates are climbing onto the jazz bandwagon and the musicians are basically able to say what they want to be paid and they're paid well. (Gisele Turner)

Similarly ensnared in an image-centric political economy, the city's more upmarket restaurants and cafes also started hosting live jazz on a regular basis in order to

boost patronage:

So now, we have a situation where people are thinking jazz is the flavour of the month: "Let's start encouraging people to come to our restaurant and not just have a drink and go but linger longer and drink a little bit more and we're gonna create something which they're going to enjoy." (Gisele Turner)

Everything is slicker and you open up a restaurant and it's not just a couple of tables and chairs; it's a whole décor and design and music becomes part of that. Guys are literally gigging three or four nights a week. (Neil Gonsalves)

However, jazz's tighter integration into the economy has exacted a steep price – the occlusion of the mid-1990s climate of creative freedom by a more commercially driven and aesthetically impoverished scene. As Melvin Peters laments:

It's changed now; we've lost that whole experimental bit. Maybe we'll get it back soon, but right now, there's nothing really interesting going on musically with jazz musicians.

For Turner and Gonsalves, jazz musicians have been corralled into ambience-production and restricted to the more accessible, even Muzak-like, spectra of the jazz rainbow:

Like R&B is the soft side of true gospel, Café jazz is the soft serve of jazz. What it involves, is people who play only well-known tunes in a very unobtrusive way, and who don't take solos, or do anything innovative. (Gisele Turner)

These are just background music gigs at Zack's or down at the wharf. But you can't call that jazz if it's background, right? Or is that me being a jazz snob? (Neil Gonsalves)

More worrying, in an almost textbook example of neo-liberalism's monopolistic impetus, the live jazz market in Durban has been cornered by just three bands. This process occurred in three stages. First, the owners of Zack's, a restaurant at the upmarket Musgrave Shopping Centre on the Berea, gained ownership of five other restaurants at Wilson's Wharf – a new multimillion rand restaurant and

shopping complex on the Durban harbour-front. Second, these restaurant owners engaged the services of just three bands: playing easy-listening classical music and/or jazz, these bands presented a mini-circuit of Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday performances at three of the restaurants. Finally, these same bands were called on to do gigs at the newly-built casino complex near North Beach, at the Trans African Express (a restaurant at the BAT Centre, an arts and crafts complex at the northern edge of Durban harbour) at Rivets, and less regularly, at the Wild Coast Sun resort at the southern edge of KwaZulu-Natal. Hampered by transport problems and unreliable equipment, bands from poor township areas, especially, lost these gigs to the better-resourced trio of bands on the Zack's circuit. Gisele Turner's theatrical account of these events is incisive, detailed, and evocative; I therefore quote her vivid monologue at length:

Zacks decided that they wanted to have jazz: they didn't want jazz that was going to be too innovative or too in your ear because that was going to chase their diners away; they wanted what we would call background jazz. They accessed three or four different bands who were prepared to put down a commercial bag. Jazz at Musgrave at Zacks started taking off on a Sunday afternoon: outside area, beautiful Durban weather. Wine has become more of a thing than beer; so, 'wine and jazz': people were starting to think they were actually a bit cultured – and the fact that they really didn't know too much about either is neither here nor there. They knew the tunes, and they could say, "Oh Summertime, yay!"

Then the people from Zack's did a coup: they managed to snuff Wilson's wharf.

I am against monopolies; I made some nasty comments about the need for healthy competition in such an environment but the developers saw, "We've got one person renting; we don't have to collect from five different people; we've got one person talking responsibility; it makes it easy for us. Package deal: right, there you go, over to you." And they started jazz on a Saturday afternoon at Zack's on Wilson's Wharf. Then, they decided that they would also have a semi-classical thing on a Sunday there and then, they realised that all they needed to do was have three bands and they could just move them around and it would be a lot less work. So they started up a little circuit and exactly the same people play at Zack's in Musgrave as play at Zack's on Wilson's Wharf on Saturday afternoon. Some of those musicians can play a bit of semi-classical music, so they could be used for the Sundays as well. [Thereafter], they started a Wednesday night at Zack's [Musgrave] to try and pick up their clientele in the middle of the week and they use the same bands. So they started a little mini circuit and they never have shifted in the three years that it's been going; the same bands have been playing those [venues]. They give them each two weeks, [then] move them around.

Worse still, is that you get people from the Sun Coast Casino who would think, "Oh Jazz! That's the flavour of the month, so we need to get into [that]." And they pick up the phone and get hold of a PR person and say, "Organise us jazz" and the person at the PR would think, "Oh flip! I don't know any jazz bands." Then they think, "Oh no ... there's a jazz band that plays at Zack's on a Sunday." So they'll push themselves along there on a Sunday afternoon and speak to the jazz musician and say, "Are you available?" The person will [say], "Actually yes: I've got a gap here and I've got a gap there." So they'll say, "Ok fine, you can take that; do you know any other jazz musicians who might be available?" The jazz musician will say, "Yah sure, these are the other guys" and before you know it, those are the jazz musicians that are playing [a] circuit including the Sun Coast Casino.

Meanwhile, add the fact that the Trans African Express is always looking for good musicians that they can rely on, who are going to pitch up, who've got cars [and own] decent equipment: as it happens, these are the same people that they can rely on 100 per cent to do the job well, deliver the goods, not mess around and give the people a good time. They're not gonna miss their buses from Umlazi [township]; they're not gonna bring clapped-out guitars; they not gonna do a *jam* on stage because they're already so practiced from what they're [constantly] doing, they're basically polished. So they pull in, and they start doing the gigs at Trans African Express.

Now at Rivets there's also that situation [of] "How can we ensure that the quality of the jazz is going to be up to standard [and] we're going to get bands who know what they're doing?" So then we're not just talking about three little venues: we're talking about most of the venues and that starts narrowing things down.

As socio-historical contexts, Durban and Johannesburg affect local jazz on three interrelated levels. First, the music examined is collectively shaped by an array of individuals brought together on the jazz scenes in the two cities. Second, these individuals' musical activities are variously enabled and constrained by political and economic dynamics peculiar to the two cities. Third, the political and economic profiles of Johannesburg and Durban are perceived to be complexly defined by their distinctive geographies. There is seldom a linear flow of influence from physical environment to political economy to musical sound, but as the voices of the various interviewees reveal, geographical context – that spaghetti bowl of personal, political, economic, and environmental energies – powerfully stamps its presence on local jazz.

## 6. Local jazz as political discourse

I mean by the political no more than the way we organize our social life together, and the power relations which this involves. (Terry Eagleton, 1983: 194)

Discourse as a political practice establishes, sustains and changes power relations. (Norman Fairclough, 1992: 67)

As mentioned in chapter 1, the term discourse describes a multifaceted conceptualisation of expressive practice in which textuality, subjectivity, place, history, and power function as interdependent parts of a complex social ecology. Thus far, my examination of local jazz as discourse has considered the dialogical interrelationships of genre, text, idiocultural context, venue, and locale. Chapter 3 mapped the musical terrain represented by local jazz and argued that this sound world represents a “coherent ... universe of significant sonic options” (Walser, 1993: xiv). Chapters 4 and 5 then considered how local jazz’s idiocultural and spatial contexts influence its production and reception. This final chapter extends these arguments by investigating ways in which the music examined operates within and (explicitly or implicitly) refers to a larger social context characterised by uneven distributions of power. As with chapters 4 and 5, I begin with a set of theoretical propositions, and then frame my analysis around episodes recounted in the interview data. I read the centripetal and centrifugal social tensions which these episodes index as power relations.

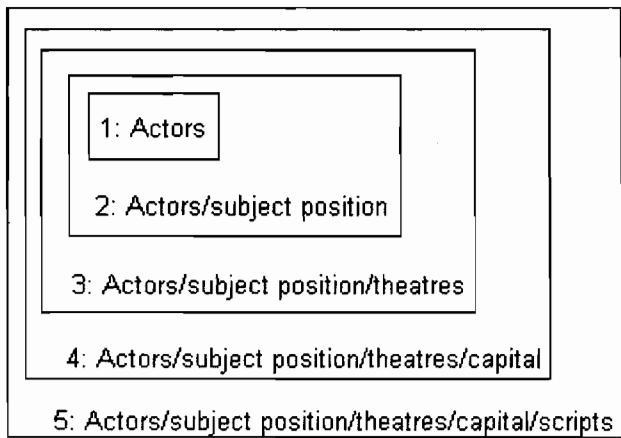
Drawing on various popular music scholars’ and cultural theorists’ writings on power, I describe power’s operations in terms of a theatrical trope involving three terms, ‘actors’, ‘theatres’, and ‘scripts’. As in social science discourse, ‘actors’ refers to individuals, who enact power relations; ‘theatres’ refers to social domains such as homes, schools, churches, etc, where power dynamics play out, and ‘scripts’ refers to meta-narratives like apartheid or capitalism that often underwrite power’s operations. Respectively, these terms highlight the performative, spatial,

and ideational dimensions of power relations. Recognising that power dynamics are materially grounded – they are impacted upon by factors such as race, gender, class, etc, and typically index unequal distributions of physical and symbolic resources – I deploy two further key terms, ‘subject position’, and ‘capital’ in my exploration of local jazz as political discourse. Initially, I describe a hypothetical situation<sup>1</sup> that sketches how these elements (actors, theatres, scripts, subject position, and capital) operate as an ensemble of consonant and dissonant forces that enact and refract power relations. Thereafter, drawing on the interview data, I offer a five-part account of local jazz as political discourse that uses each of these key terms as a vantage point from which to explore different facets of jazz/power.

Focussing, at first, on actors and subject positions, I describe local jazz’s idiocultural contexts as a system of power relations. Additionally factoring theatres, capital, and scripts into my analysis, I then identify ways in which power pervades local jazz’s spatiotemporal contexts. This arrangement corresponds to a socio-politically focused rereading of the arguments presented in chapters 4 and 5 respectively. As such, I propose that local jazz’s idiocultural and spatiotemporal contexts and, ultimately, its textual instances are inseparable from the political energies which shape most human activity. In short, music performs power and ‘the musical’ is political. Recalling the layered construction of the thesis as a whole, Figure 6-1 overleaf outlines the accumulative structure of this chapter:

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<sup>1</sup> See Figure 6-2



### **6-1: Overview of chapter**

If musics are discourses, then power, as a key facet of discourse (Eagleton, 1983: 210; Easthope, 1983: 31, 37; Gandhi, 1998: 77; Hutcheon, 1987: 175, 178, 188; Weedon, 1987: 108) is fundamentally inscribed in music. Not surprisingly, numerous writers address issues of music and power. "Scratch the surface of any piece of music," notes Edwin Prévost (1995: 93), "and you will find a system of power networks, allegiances and controls." Expressing a similar sentiment, George Lipsitz (1990: 68) observes that "every work of art contains within it past, present and future struggles over culture and power." Likewise, Keith Negus (1996: 70) asserts that "no music will ever simply 'reflect' a society but instead be caught within, arise out of and refer to a web of unequal social relations and power struggles." For David Coplan (1994: 247) "the power relations in which performance is embedded and out of which it emerges are crucial to its analysis", while Robert Walser (1993: 30) ultimately hears music's instances as "traces, provocations and enactments of power relationships".

Power also intersects with music in another important sense. As a pervasive presence (Gandhi, 1998:14), power permeates the "situational and structural" (Shepherd, 2003: 77) and points to "the continuity of the so-called microsocial and macrosocial" (Berger, 1999: 278). Treating power as pivotal to musical analyses may thus be a useful way to address the structure-agency problematic that both John Shepherd and Gary Tomlinson posit as a central concern for music research:

If there is a new, emergent paradigm for the cultural study of music, then it may be important to ensure that the situational and the structural, in both life and music, do not get obscured from view. (Shepherd, 2003: 77-78)

The challenge facing musical scholarship is to feel its way toward a set of intuitions about music making that ... surround[s] the opposition of history and ethnography. (Tomlinson, 2003: 43)

Although the word 'power' isn't used, Harris Berger's (1999: 49-50) reflections below implicitly construct power as the commonality subtending and linking local and global dimensions of musical experience:

Social structure informs present practice, not as an abstract formal system, but as a context for action, as a material and social history mediated into the present. American capitalism impinges upon musical performance, not as a cultural style of individualism or a formal structure, but as a concrete context of wealth and poverty, of hard-to-come-by jobs and low wages, of messages of consumerism endlessly repeated in the mainstream media and voices of agreement or resistance spoken in bars and bedrooms.

Cued by these ideas, and moving from the situational (local/micro-social) to the structural (global/macro-social), I therefore consider jazz's existence within a historically 'glocal' field, charged, in myriad ways, by an array of power dynamics. Since power is central to this analysis, I first formulate a description of power that constructs a theoretical synopsis of the themes voiced in the interviews.

Occupying an uneven field of variously egalitarian and/or hierarchical relationships, and asymmetrically experienced as capacity or constraint, 'power' refers to the centripetal/centrifugal processes of compulsion/autonomy and acquiescence/resistance set in play wherever an individual or group (subtly or forcefully)

facilitates or restricts the access of another to instances of 'capital' such as land, water, money, goods, services, information, personal/group time and space, etc<sup>2</sup>. Often trans-historically informed, and 'scripted' at a macro-social level by concurring and/or competing meta-narratives of God, Economy, and Nation<sup>3</sup>, power relations materialize within and across domains of social action (or 'theatres') such as homes, schools, universities, workplaces, music scenes, etc. Convened by casts of unequally privileged 'actors' inhabiting various subject positions (those overlapping, historically-saturated makers/markers of identity including race, class, age, gender, language, religion and education, that complexly inflect individuals' experiences of society), theatres mediate<sup>4</sup> power relations by strictly or loosely setting the terms within which different scripts, subject positions and forms of capital are rendered salient or irrelevant. Power relations are also mediated by actors, who may variously endure, refuse, exploit, or defuse the controlling tendencies and effects of particular scripts, theatres, and subject positions (Allen, 2000: 30, 153; Bhabha, 1994: 1; Coplan, 1994: 15, 184-185; Gandhi, 1998: 14; Harvey, 1990: 226-227; Lipsitz, 1990: 67; Macdonell, 1986: 39; Mattern, 1998: 32-33; Moore-Gilbert, 1997: 8, 36; Negus, 1996: 106, 195; Pratt, 1990: 58; Smith and Fiske, 2000: 608-609; Thornton, 1995: 10, 12, 25; Turino, 2000: 555, 556; Williams and Chrisman, 1993: 2).

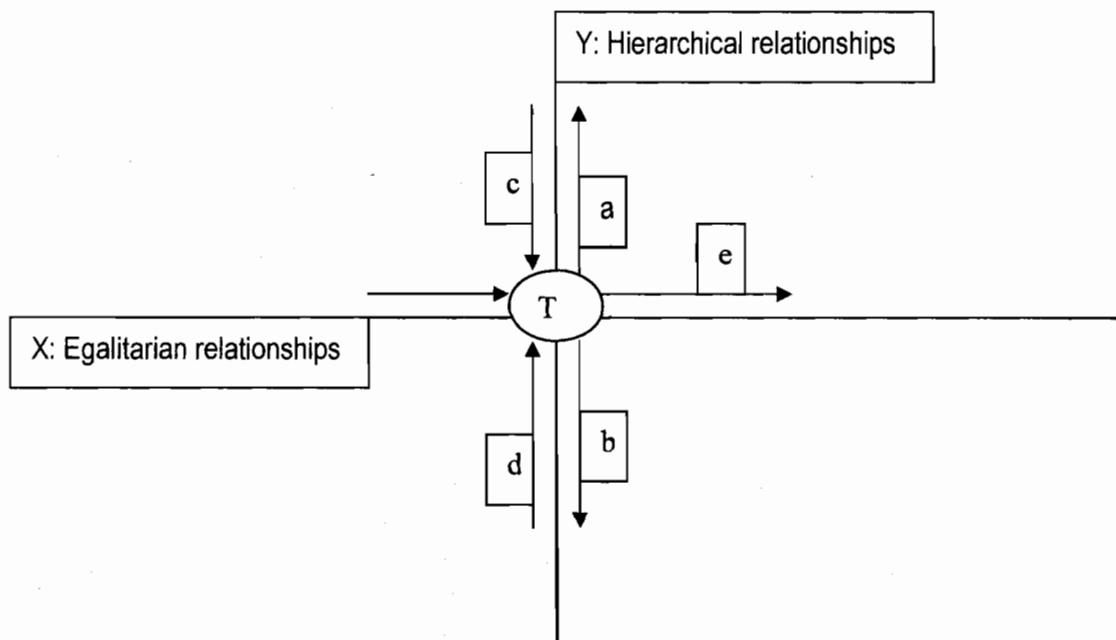
Taking the example of time as capital and a school as theatre, Figure 6-2 overleaf outlines five possible scenarios that emerge when three actors (a teacher, her principal, and her student) are placed in different power relations to one another.

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<sup>2</sup> I offer reasons for my broadened conceptualisation of 'capital' later in this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> For a riveting account of how these macro-social forces are playing out in the post-cold-war world, see Harvey (2003).

<sup>4</sup> According to Meintjes (1997: 10), "mediation refers to that which is both a conduit and a barrier. It transfers but in the process it necessarily transforms ...connects and translates."



**6-2: Vectors expressing power relations within a particular theatre, for example, a school.**

T is a music teacher

- a) She agrees to offer free extra flute lessons to a talented but poor student (who is new to the instrument and 'behind' his peers) – thereby empowering him;
- b) She refuses extra lessons to the same pupil – thereby disempowering him;
- c) She is thwarted in her attempts to assist the pupil by an unsympathetic principal, who assigns extra duties to her in the time she would have been assisting him – and is thereby disempowered;
- d) She is bolstered in her endeavour to assist the pupil by a supportive principal who relieves her of some of her duties so that she can spend more time with the pupil;
- e) She uses the lessons to try out an experimental teaching approach she hopes to include in a flute teaching manual she is in the process of writing – mutual benefit.

Note:

- 1) Arrows in the right half refer to T as a speaker of power, while those on the left show her as an addressee.
- 2) Different combinations of X and Y are possible: for example, if T's principal allows her to work with the pupil twice a week rather than every day (as she may have preferred), or if he frees her from extra duties on certain afternoons, but obliges her to make up the time on others, and so on.
- 3) T's response to her principal may range from passive acceptance to spirited refusal. Therefore, each arrow, like a rope in a tug-of-war contest, should be construed as a vector whose direction and force represents the combined result of the interacting actors' actions and responses.

The scenarios outlined above become considerably more complex when issues of subject position and the effects of different scripts are also considered. For

example, T's situation would be exacerbated if she were a poor, young, black, second-language English speaker and her principal a white, racist, sexist man. On the other hand, if T were the wife of a wealthy benefactor to the school, her status would be significantly higher. Transplanting the scenario to a different theatre may, likewise, radically alter the play of power. As a university lecturer, for example, T would have greater autonomy with regard to the use of her time and be far less answerable to a senior regarding the details of its use. Moreover, the conversion of her time into published research (say an article in a music education journal or a completed flute teaching manual) represents a form of capital that is more highly prized in a university context than in a school. Finally, if T were a nun teaching at a Catholic school where discourses of Christian charity and helping the weak predominate, rather than a teacher at a private, profit-run institution, the value of, and power struggles over her time would take on very different meanings.

### **Power/idiocultural contexts**

Subjectivity is produced in a whole range of discursive practices – economic, social and political – the meanings of which are a constant site of struggle over power. (Chris Weedon, 1987: 21)

Power is written into music in many ways: the fact that I was excluded from sharing the music that was meaningful to my father is present as I listen to that music now. He's not around anymore. I listen to it, I own it, and I wonder what it was that he enjoyed in it, saw in it. (Ralph Adendorff)

In this section I relate Weedon's proposition above to the music examined and consider the fluid interrelationships among local jazz's idiocultural and socio-political contexts. Temporarily overlooking the broader social forces that underlie subjective experience, I initially read jazz, in relatively abstract terms, as a closed system of power relations, and investigate ways in which the genre's actors (i.e. its musicians and listeners) function as speakers and addressees of power. Subsequently admitting macro-social factors into my analysis, I consider how actors' occupation of various subject positions underwrites their experiences of

power. As a general rule, I read instances of consonant interaction as indicative of (relatively) egalitarian relationships and dissonance as reflective of unequal/hierarchical relationships.

### **Actors**

I see [jazz improvisation] as this ultimate freedom thing. You can take knowledge about music, about how it's constructed and then you can fly with it; compose on the spot, work with it and have confidence in it to just *play*. I find the idea of that incredibly liberating. (Marion Caldwell)

Somehow, bebop and my politics are closest: here's a musical style where the unity of the collective is preserved but, also, individual expression is allowed. (Dinga Sikwebu)

As dynamic registers of their idiocultural contexts and vectors of feelingful, intersubjective interaction, musical moments reflect and constitute the power dynamics which suffuse social space. Moreover, because "interacting musical roles [in jazz] are simultaneously interacting human personalities" (Monson, 1996: 7) "[and] not merely [interacting] instruments or pitches or rhythms" (*Ibid*: 26), jazz texts often render power relations especially audible. Drawing on various popular music scholars' writings as well as my interview data, and rereading the conclusions arrived at in chapters 3 and 4, I argue that jazz (typically) constitutes its actors in (mostly) non-hierarchical relationships to one another. Echoing the structure of chapter 4, I focus separately on the power relations that attend the production and the reception of local jazz.

### *Production*

'Ethical Sam' was going to attack Iraq. That's something which I can't stand about the Americans: they [are] Caesar Julius Caesar [when] the Romans came round the world just taking over and leaving their troops everywhere; so I wanted to write a tune about that. The sirens at the end over "we come in peace" [recall the movie] *Mars Attacks*: all these Martians would 'come in peace' and then they shoot you. (Carlo Mombelli)

As jazz compositions go, Carlo Mombelli's "Ethical Sam's Cookery Class" – a musical characterization of Ethical Sam who "travels the world trying to teach everyone how to cook their traditional food, Sam's way of course" (Mombelli, 2003) – is unusual in its explicit reference to politics. Cleverly reasserting the irony of the title on a musical level, Mombelli simultaneously evokes an 'American sound' and a 'sinister feel' by pitting an energetic hip-hop groove against 'sour' minor second harmonies, and vocal and accompaniment melodies that emphasize minor seconds and tritones.

Mombelli's composition, like all jazz, also references the political in less explicit ways. For example, general overviews and close analyses of jazz performance (by scholars and lay-commentators alike) commonly describe an egalitarian field in which a finely balanced ethics and aesthetics of freedom/restraint, and autonomy/heteronomy offers a counter-narrative to the power asymmetries pervading western capitalist culture. Describing jazz as an "international vernacular of the oppressed", Christopher Ballantine (1993: 8) argues that the music was marginalized by apartheid South Africa because it "aspired to musical and social equality" (*Ibid*). For George Lipsitz (1994: 179) "jazz and blues musicians offer an alternative to the atomized individualism of capitalist culture [in that] they create collectively, privileging dialogue over monologue."

In a familiar comparison between jazz and classical music that draws attention to these musics' respectively dialogic and monologic conceptualisations of composition and performance, David Shumway (1999: 190) notes:

In jazz, relations between performance and composition are virtually the reverse of those in classical music practice. Performance is understood as at least an equal site of creativity with composition, and usually the more important one. If a classical performance is usually an interpretation of a canonical work, a jazz performance is most characteristically an improvisation on a familiar but distinctly non-canonical text, usually a popular song. The jazz musician is free to not play the music as the songwriter wrote it because the song is not regarded as having transcendent value.

In comparing metal and rock with jazz, Harris Berger (1999: 114) complements this point of view, highlighting the climate of freedom informing jazz performance:

Only rarely is [jazz] performance the exact enactment of practiced parts ... In rock and metal, things are quite different ... The range of materials specified in a composition are much broader: particular pitches and rhythms for the chords, melodies, and vocal harmonies, contours for the guitar solos, hits, locations of fills, and the overall form of the tune.

Contrasting his experience as a jazz pianist in various contexts, versus his experience as a rock keyboardist in the Johnny Clegg band, Neil Gonsalves echoes this sentiment:

At any point, at any time, I can play anything: that is how I experience jazz. For me, it's [this] ultimate sense of freedom. You know you read the biographies of Miles and Charlie Parker and drug abuse and this really wild living? Now sometimes, I wish that I had grown up that way to see how that feeds into this whole, I suppose, romantic illusion of being a jazz musician. [However], the one rush I do know about is just taking a leap of faith by just playing whatever's gonna happen Right Now. That doesn't happen on a Clegg stage.

In keeping with the Signifyin' ethos of jazz, composers facilitate improvisers' freedom of expression by consciously writing music that is structurally open to revision in the here-and-now of performance:

I never try to fix everything ... Generally, I try to keep something open about each piece and then ... if somebody comes up with something that's better than what I've got in the lead sheet - or more interesting - I'm actually happier. (Chris Merz)

Furthermore, as Mombelli's comment below implies, the jazz ideal is to create empowering musical environments that grant improvisers opportunities to play to their strengths:

I want to create pieces that the musicians have fun to play and will make them sound just amazing.

Consequently, Mombelli is critical of bandleaders who do not facilitate the creative and expressive freedom of fellow band-members:

Sometimes, I go into a band and the guy will say he wants a big slap solo. Now why is he asking me to play slap when that's not my style? Bandleaders have to learn to adapt to the musicians that are in their band.

In a commendable example of 'practise-what-you-preach', he remarked:

I'm very aware of the musicians in my band. Some of the stuff I'm doing now I couldn't do when Johnny [Fourie] was there: he's not a funk person; he doesn't play this heavy funk stuff.

Marcus Wyatt puts it more forcefully, expressing his disapproval of over-controlling bandleaders:

Certain people are control freaks. They don't wanna be upstaged because they are the bandleader, so they'll only book people they know they can control. That bandleader is king of the hill whereas with me it's the opposite. I don't mind being upstaged: it's about giving each person their space to shine, to say their best.

But as Berger (1999) remarks in his ethnographic study of jazz, rock, and metal, jazz's prioritization of dialogue and negotiation firmly underlies, and thus finds expression in, the micro-temporal organisation (or groove) of 'the music itself':

There was no consensus among jazz musicians about who was the primary timekeeper in a jazz band; some said the drummer and others said the bassist. In either case, all the players recognized that coordinating tempo required a kind of negotiation through mutual interaction and attention to the other players. Almost all of the rock players, however, said that the drummer was the band's timekeeper; here band coordination depends on the musicians' use of the drummer as a conductor and the adjustment of the other players' tempi to that of the drummer's, not a mutual negotiation. (*Ibid*: 152)

Where jazz drummers negotiate the time with the bass players and the others on the stand, the metal drummers are the unquestioned arbiters of the time. (*Ibid*: 160)

In addition to the groove, other features of the jazz text enunciate ideals of equality and reciprocity. As mentioned in chapter 3, jazz's pervasive Signifyin' gestures valorize musical 'otherness' ('outside' notes and 'dissonant', 'non'-chord tones; 'weak' harmonic movement, 'off'-beats, 'behind' the beat playing, 'out'-of tuneness, etc.) and deconstruct the musical hierarchies which characterize functional tonality. If we accept John Shepherd's (2003: 73) assertion that functional tonality articulates "the temporal and spatial senses underlying and making possible industrial capitalism as a social form", then this musical deconstruction is also a significant political gesture.

It is of course naïve to imagine that jazz represents a completely egalitarian never-never land, and, like any musical discourse, jazz has its own hierarchies and politics. Although jazz performances are ideally created in a spirit of collaboration (Berliner, 1994: 304-307) and "give and take" (*Ibid*: 348-386), the authority of composers – while not incontestable – generally prevails. Likewise, the authority of bandleaders and arrangers (who also perform a 'composerly' function in that they determine the overall shape of performances) often dominates. In other words, and as Marcus Wyatt is acutely aware, the dialogism for which jazz is celebrated is ultimately limited in practice, and it is usually composers who get to have the last say. As such, Prévost's (1995: 5) notion of composition as "a subtle prescription for a network of power relations" readily applies to jazz:

Obviously, when it comes to your<sup>5</sup> compositions, there's certain ways that you want it to be delivered especially when you're playing the head and in that respect, I'm very much a control freak. If someone plays something different to what I want them to play, I'll listen to it and if it works, sure, but if [I don't] agree then I'll say, "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, you're not playing that; you're playing this. (Marcus Wyatt)

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<sup>5</sup> The dangers of over-reading notwithstanding, Wyatt's use of the second-person pronoun here hints at a sense of discomfort with this 'un-jazz-like' assertion of negative face needs. (In linguistics, 'negative face' describes the self-oriented aspects of communication while 'positive face' refers to the other-directed dimensions of linguistic interaction.)

Carlo's band is an open forum whereas there's not many bands (in fact I can count them on one hand) [where you're] able to say, "Listen, I don't dig that." And he's prepared to listen, but he's also confident enough and comfortable with his ego to say, "Sorry, but that's how I want it and that's how we're going to do it." At the end of the day, you get the best possible results. (Marcus Wyatt)

Composers whose writing includes unusual forms, strange scales and/or odd time signatures (I stand accused, and plead guilty, on all three counts!) may hamper the expressive freedom of improvisers. Speaking of my composition, "Child's Play", Magandiren Moodley remarked:

It's enjoyable in the sense that it has different rhythmic structures within it. There's a 9 and 13 [beat structure]. I enjoy that but sometimes, it becomes difficult to improvise within it because [one] become[s] restricted by [that structure].

Just as composers try to respect performers' preferences and limitations, improvisers accept and sometimes happily submit to composers' authority in order to realise their ideas:

It's really nice when you can solo in the context of an arranged piece so you have something to draw from in terms of 'This is what the architect wants and maybe see if I can build it.' (Mageshen Naidoo)

Focussing on the power dynamics that attend the processes of text production, I have, thus far, considered how musicians – in their interaction with one another – function as speakers and addressees of power. Expanding this account of actors and power, I will now discuss *reception* as a locus of power relations and describe how jazz musicians-and-listeners (in *their* interaction) become speakers and addressees of power.

### *Reception*

[In the 1980s] I was very avant-garde. People used to scream out, 'Play something we understand!' I couldn't care two shits because I was this artist playing music for the musicians and played really way-out, avant-

garde shit. Now, as I've matured as a musician, I want the people to really feel something from this music, go away with the feeling that they've experienced something. That's the important thing. (Carlo Mombelli)

Predictably, egalitarian ideals often underlie the interrelationships among jazz musicians and listeners. As mentioned, jazz – like other African American musics – expresses an interactive, participatory approach to music-making (Wilson, 1996: 44), invoking feelings of communality and (relative) social equality between stage and house. Darius Brubeck is highly attuned to the multiple articulations of this dialogical ethos in jazz, and, for him, jazz typically features social and sonic environments that invite and facilitate higher levels of audience involvement than are possible in other genres like pop or classical music:

What the *audience* does in a jazz gig is drink and talk. It's much more participatory than a classical gig and strangely enough, most pop gigs are not participatory because the sound is so overwhelmingly loud that after you've applauded once or twice you realize that it doesn't mean anything because the sound that you are making back to the performers never reaches them ... they're orders of magnitude apart. But in a jazz situation, you can applaud even while the music's going on or react in some other way and it enhances the atmosphere. You're in a subtle way jamming with the group and you might believe whether it's true or not, that you're influencing the performance. (Darius Brubeck)

Articulating what she described as “the un-spoken rules of engagement” for ‘high culture’ situations such as the theatre or the classical concert hall, Kerryn Scott remarked:

It's like when you're a kid and you go to a shop [and you're told], “Don't touch.” It's that kind of thing: you must sit and *behave*<sup>6</sup>.

By contrast, she described the jazz gig as a freer experience:

If you go to jazz, it's more relaxed in the sense that you can touch and you can talk and you can appreciate and you can make a noise. Even at the [Prisoners' Wits Theatre] concert, people clapped after the [solos] and

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<sup>6</sup> In a mocking rendition of a parent admonishing a disobedient child, she punctuated the words “sit” and “behave” as she said them, by smacking the back of her left hand with her right.

cheered. You're allowed to do that; you're expected to do that 'cos it's a dialogue thing and it's a conversation thing. You're a lot more involved as an audience member than you are when you go to something classical or even if you go to theatre.

Voicing a similar reaction, Ralph Adendorff repeatedly described his experiences of listening to jazz in terms of accessibility, liberation and empowerment:

I feel an outsider to much classical music. I don't feel an outsider in the same way when it comes to jazz. This was a more inclusive experience.

I mentioned the [classical music concert I attended at the] Barbican as a contrast to the freedoms one feels when watching and listening to jazz.

For Adendorff, jazz is not a heavily policed space, riddled with strictures on how to listen and what to hear, or officially-guarded notions of 'right' and 'wrong' readings. Rather, jazz exhibits a hierarchy-negating, pluralist ethos that allows for the coexistence of a multiplicity of perspectives:

With jazz, by its very nature, you're not looking for that hierarchy and that paring down to the select few that really matter.

There's a lot of music that I have felt, because I wasn't educated into music per se, I don't have a right to talk about. In other words, I don't have the power to talk, or the right to be listened to, as a result of that: I haven't been schooled into that; I don't have my credentials. [But,] when I sat in that concert ... I was comfortable. There was this wonderful sense that you couldn't be found out, you couldn't be found wanting. You were free to read the music, and make sense of the music. It mightn't be the same reading and sense-making of others, but it was legitimate. You had the right; you had the power, if you like, to read it as you wanted to. It didn't mean that you could give it any reading – it was constrained in some sense by the place, the mode.

Listeners' feelings of involvement are not just an attribute of un-spoken, 'extraneous' contexts which 'surround' jazz performance but a crucial effect of its sonic materiality. Listening to jazz improvisation is analogous to "playing a game" (Naidoo), "reading a book" (Sikwebu) or following a conversation (Monson, 1996: especially, 77-87). As such, the successful reception of a jazz solo depends on the

active engagement of knowledgeable listeners who are able (and willing!) to follow the unfolding of a frequently unpredictable music:

When [people say] 'all that jazz' as a derogatory term [it's] because – to the inexperienced person – it really sounds like that ... it's like a game: you have to know the rules first. (Mageshen Naidoo)

It's like if you read a book: you can't have a book sort of filtering into your head; you must pick it up and read it. And, you don't want the story to be predictable: you've read the first chapter; you know where it's going to end; it becomes boring. (Dinga Sikwebu)

As mentioned, Faku's quotation of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" during his solo on Merz's "Travel in Peace", elicited a spontaneous eruption of applause from the Howard College audience. For Adendorff, Faku's musical gesture succeeded because his improvisation was being attentively followed by an audience that was 'in on the game':

There's intertextuality for you. And it's done with a straight face to start with. I don't know what would have happened if the audience hadn't picked it up but there's a challenge there: all along, you're being asked to listen to how it's been put together and what echoes home in your experience.

The use of quotation is one of the more obvious means by which jazz soloists facilitate audience involvement, but there are other ways whereby improvisers factor in issues of reception. For example, Marcus Wyatt's comments on the difficulties of improvising melodically-comprehensible solos without the harmonically-orientating presence of a piano or guitar suggest that audience engagement is consciously solicited even before a single note is played:

If you wanna play outside [the underlying harmony] or anything like that you gotta make it so clear to the audience and to yourself that that's where you're going because otherwise, it can sound like a big pile of shit. (Marcus Wyatt)

Faku's remarks below lead me to read his quotation of 'Old MacDonald' (a familiar tune likely to 'echo home' for the entire audience, even Adendorff's eight-year-old

son) in the midst of a set of otherwise unfamiliar and intense material, as expressive of an ethics of inclusiveness and a desire to constitute himself and his listeners as equals:

If people don't hear the music, you can't force them. It's very important to check who you are playing for. How are these people educated in terms of listening? Do they really dig the kind of stuff [you want to play]? The programme must be flexible.

Just as jazz musicians (ideally) aim to create hospitable musical environments that actively invite and encourage listener engagement, the exemplary jazz audience grants musicians the freedom to experiment; to subvert their expectations; to play, as Neil Gonsalves put it, "whatever's gonna happen Right Now". As Berger (1999: 192-193) observes in a comparison of rock and jazz:

The last thing rock audiences seem to want is the sort of spontaneous transformation of familiar material that is expected in jazz performance. The audience at a jazz performance, at least in theory, hopes for novelty; a rock audience, by contrast, demands the repetition of what it already knows and loves.

Neil Gonsalves offers a similar comparison of these musics from the perspective of the bandstand:

You could be doing the simplest of things but they're just lapping it up and for as long as you're on stage you basically feel that *you are Johnny Clegg*; you're the superstar that they came to see. As a jazz musician I don't know if I've ever felt that. Whenever I do a jazz gig, I know that I'm irritating someone, somewhere: there are lots of people loving it, but for somebody, somewhere, this sucks.

Thus far, I have presented the interrelationships among jazz musicians and listeners in mostly idealistic terms, and although I will shortly balance this account by considering the dissonant tensions which necessarily accompany the reception of local jazz, I want to emphasize that (as with all art) the evocation of utopia is a vital function of the music examined. As David Coplan (1994: 202) neatly remarks, "In its condensed and virtual landscape, art orders the world as we would do if we

could." Recounting Christopher Waterman's (1990) work, Veit Erlmann (1996: 22) notes that "through ordering temporal experience and by framing social interaction in a performance context, *jùjú* provides powerful, commonsense images of an ideal society marked by traditional hierarchy, cohesion and equal opportunity." As Waterman himself puts it, "good *jùjú* is good social order" (1990: 220). Offering a comparable reading of *isicathamiya*, Erlmann (1996: 134) argues that the genre's "singers and dancers construct spaces that renounce the law of the given and now by asserting their own spatiotemporal order." *Isicathamiya* performances then come to function as "embodiments of an imagined order, located in a heroic past beyond the here and now" (*Ibid*: 98). Similarly, Christopher Small (1987: 70) argues that "the musicking that moves us most will be that which most subtly, comprehensively and powerfully articulates the relationships of our ideal society – which may or may not have any real, or even possible, existence beyond the duration of the performance." Finally, in Melvin Peters' words:

For me, there's a much broader picture; it's not just about doing a gig here, a concert there: it's about trying to offer people a model of what life could be like.

Often, (musical) utopias are wish fulfilment spaces in that they symbolically surmount inadequacies that pervade the material contexts within which they are produced. Paul Garon astutely remarks that "what is possessed is not wished for – what is not possessed is wished for" (1975: 67 [in Pratt, 1990: 92]), and, in this sense, jazz's persistent expressions of freedom represent a powerful memento of the history of subjugation and struggle subtending African American experience. Like other "Black Atlantic" musics (Gilroy, 1993), jazz may be said to express an "obstinate and consistent commitment to the idea of a better future" (*Ibid*: 36), and offer "commentary on the systematic and pervasive relations of domination that supply its conditions of existence" (*Ibid*: 38). Additionally, jazz's ethos of dialogism, plurality, and heterogeneity may represent a counter-discursive alternative (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1998: 56) to the repressively monologic normativity that

Mark Poster (1990: 90-91) describes as a systematically instituted regularity of contemporary experience<sup>7</sup>:

In capitalist society, regulation takes the form of discourses/practices that produce and reproduce the norm. The school, the asylum, the factory, the barracks to greater or lesser degrees and with considerable variation all imitate the Panopticon<sup>8</sup>. In modern society power is imposed not by the personal presence and brute force of a cast of nobles as it was in earlier times but by the systematic scribblings in discourses, by the continual monitoring of daily life, adjusting and readjusting *ad infinitum* the norm of individuality. Modern society may be read as a discourse in which nominal freedom of action is cancelled by the ubiquitous look of the other. It may be interpreted semiologically as a field of signs in which the metadiscourse of the Panoptican is reimposed everywhere, even in places in which it is not installed.

Gilroy and Poster's references to "white modernity" (Kemp, 1997: 11) and contemporary capitalism, respectively, point to the powerful influence of meta-narratives (or 'scripts') on the micro-politics of musicking, and indeed, everyday life. In the last part of this chapter, I will return to this idea by considering how the political and economic discourses of apartheid and neo-liberalism have impacted on local jazz. For now, I temporarily abandon this vignette of jazz as utopian critique, and resume my account of actors and power, by considering some *dissonant* tensions that attend the reception of local jazz.

As Ralph Adendorff reminded me, art never fully transcends life, and despite its egalitarian aspirations, jazz is riddled with dissonant power dynamics:

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<sup>7</sup> This may account for jazz's valorization in many 'non-black' contexts in the west. According to Deborah Wong (2000: 75) "jazz is valorized by ... Asian American [jazz] musicians as emblematic of African American experience but illustrative of particular parts of that experience – as an expressive response to attempted subjection."

<sup>8</sup>"The Panopticon is a type of prison building designed by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham. The concept of the design is to allow an observer to observe (-opticon) all (pan-) prisoners without the prisoners being able to tell if they are being observed or not, thus conveying a "sentiment of an invisible omniscience" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panopticon>).

You've got ideological conflict and struggle that's taking place even within jazz. One mustn't fool oneself into believing that jazz is itself totally open and accepting and tolerant. There are nasty guys and nice guys; those whose prospects are being enhanced by the music and others whose prospects are being suppressed. And, the dialogue is on-going.

As mentioned in chapter 3, the socio-musical field encompassed by jazz can be a zone of rhetorical crossfire in which the definitional decrees of 'traditionalists/conservatives' like Wynton Marsalis, Martin Williams, or John Litweiler who "set themselves up as the arbiters of what 'jazz' is" (Merz) enter into battle with the resistive rejoinders of 'progressives/liberals' like Chris Merz, Ingrid Monson's interviewee Don Byron (1996:133), Amiri Baraka [LeRoi Jones] (1967: 18) or Gary Tomlinson (1991: 245). "Oh why doesn't he shut up and play the trumpet?" says an exasperated Merz; "I don't think that anybody has the right to tell anyone else what jazz is" Byron remarks; "What is the definition of jazz?" Baraka asks, "And who was authorized to make one?" Finally, Tomlinson (*Ibid*) criticizes the "aestheticism, transcendentalism, and formalism" underwriting the formation of the jazz canon.

Conflict not only suffuses the metadiscursive discourse of jazz professionals but, as Dinga Sikwebu remarks, it is an almost inevitable feature of interactions between musicians and listeners:

I feel there are two spheres: the sphere of music making and the sphere of music consumption. Unfortunately [the] languages of these spheres from what I've gathered are not identical and therefore, there's talking at cross-purposes.

Sometimes, audiences (unwittingly) antagonize musicians by harbouring preconceptions and expectations that the latter experience as outmoded and constraining:

Many people still persist in wanting jazz to be played by fucked-up addicts and alcoholics, in cramped smoky clubs, while wearing garish clothes and silly hats and sun-glasses and talking jive-talk. I get complaints all the time about not looking the part. (Gary Burton in John Gill, 1995: 75)

At other times (and as with other musics), mismatched conceptions of jazz performance, as intellectual/artistic endeavour or entertainment/amusement, may place musicians and listeners in conflicting relationships to one another:

The audience and musicians seem to be at odds. I think our music (well like a lot of other music, your music for example too) is very demanding of the audience and a lot of people just don't wanna work that hard. You know, they've come to be entertained and by God they don't wanna have to think about it. We're sort of 'audio television' you know. (Chris Merz)

What I call the free jazz cul-de-sac [is] this thing where the sphere of production becomes totally autonomous. When they perform, they don't even look at the audience – just at each other – and either you pick it up or you don't. This is not an argument to say someone must play all accessible music; it's just that even a little bit of communication and body language is important for the people who receive it. (Dinga Sikwebu)

Although jazz musicians commonly emphasize the feelings of freedom and autonomy that accompany their performance experiences, listeners may read the interpersonal dynamics being played out on stage in decidedly less idealistic terms. Commenting on the Prisoners' concerts, Kerryn Scott objected vigorously to what she perceived as an unfair distribution of speaking power heavily skewed in Mombelli's favour. For me, the ostensibly tautological phrases "centre, focus, all the time" and "in the stable, out of the action" convey the depth of her disagreement:

He choreographs the whole thing and he's in charge of ... what happens on stage. It's supposed to be about improvisation (I don't know enough to know how much of that happens) but he keeps very much in control of everything that they do. He's the centre, focus, all the time, is the impression [I] get ... You get the impression that these okes<sup>9</sup> are kept in the stable and kept out of the action.

Finally, musical sound itself can be the focus of conflict and struggle. Although jazz is generally characterised by open musical spaces and transparent textures (Berliner, 1994: 354) that invite and facilitate listener engagement (Middleton, 1990:89) specific performances may not necessarily live up to this ideal:

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<sup>9</sup> Colloquial term meaning 'guys'

The African Jazz Pioneers were brilliant, they really were, but they were very overpowering and I didn't like that: the music was busy and loud and full and so '*there*', there wasn't space for anything else. I felt excluded; I like music that gives me a space. (Seena Yacoob)

Remembering Yacoob's earlier comment that she "prefer[s] things that have a lot of different things happening [in] parallel that are not necessarily too together with each other" I asked whether this related to her preference for contrapuntal rather than homophonic musical textures:

That's entirely possible because it gives you the space to move with your ears and your mind; to concentrate on where you want to go; how you want to *listen*. Some things are just so *done* that there isn't space for any of that negotiation: it's just *there* and you take it.

Describing local jazz's actors in narrowly musical terms, I have thus far viewed jazz's power relations as entirely produced in, and through, (musical and linguistic) interactions among bandleaders, composers, performers, critics, and listeners. From here on, I construct progressively 'thicker' descriptions of local jazz as a field of power relations by successively considering how subject positions, theatres, capital, and scripts cumulatively influence actors' musical experiences.

### **Actors/Subject position**

In 1997 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) unequivocally concluded that "no society treats its women as well as its men." In 1981 it was reported to the UN Committee on the Status of Women that women composed one-half of the world's population and performed two-thirds of the world's work hours, yet were everywhere poorer in resources and poorly represented in elite positions of decision-making power. (V. Spike Peterson and Anne Sisson Runyan, 1999: 5)

Black males have the lowest life expectancy of any group in the United States. Their unemployment rate is more than twice that of white males ... The income of employed blacks is about 60% of that of whites (even college educated blacks earn only 75% of their white counterparts) ... The physical effects of white power are inescapably everywhere, but the discretion of its operations makes the system invisible, except in its effects. For whites, who are largely free of its effects, the invisibility is almost total;

for blacks, the struggle is to make visible that which they know is there, to give a materiality to the system and its intentionality that approximates that of its effects. (Christopher Holmes Smith and John Fiske, 2000: 608-9)

Inevitably, actors' experiences of power – both as capacity and constraint – are skewed by their occupation of various subject positions including gender, sexual orientation, age, class, race, and so on. Familiarly expressed in terms of hierarchically ordered 'Same-Other' polarities – or "binarisms" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1998: 23-27) – such as male-female, straight-gay, white-black, adult-child, etc, these 'positionalities' asymmetrically situate actors as speakers and addressees of power, variously facilitating or impeding their participation within different social arenas. This notion of power emerged strongly in my interview with Ralph Adendorff. Remembering the polarised social environment of his childhood, Adendorff perceptively described power (I refer here to his use of the words "hierarchies", "disciplines", and "constraints") and subject position (race, language-identity, gender, and generation) as tightly interlinked phenomena:

I grew up on a mine and was very conscious of the hierarchies in the community of mine workers (in the broader sense) and the kind of disciplines and constraints that were very apparent at all sorts of levels: white versus black; Afrikaans versus English; male versus female; young versus old.

The small-town, apartheid-era milieu Adendorff recalls may be reductively described in two words – Afrikaner patriarchy. In this 'archetypal apartheid' setting (late 1960s to early 70s Springs) an individual's experiences of power as capacity would have been exponentially enhanced by being white, and male, and Afrikaans-speaking; conversely, and depending on the number of 'other' subject positions an individual inhabited (in this context, black, female, non-Afrikaans-speaking), her/his experiences of power as constraint would have been exponentially exacerbated.

Generally, however, power and positionality do not intersect quite so starkly. Because individuals are not fixed subjects (Allen, 2000: 30; Bhabha, 1994: 1; Moore-Gilbert, 1997: 200; Mort, 1990: 169; Pillay, 1994: 154), the "cluster/tension

of positionalities" (Clifford, 1994: 323-4) they occupy affect their experiences of power in ways that are fluid and highly context-dependent. Power, like identity, exists in and through performance, and as with my discussion of local jazz's idiocultural contexts in chapter 4, I therefore present an episodic, 'freeze-frame' account of power/subject position focused around centripetal and/or centrifugal social tensions referenced in the interview data.

Predictably, given South Africa's history, issues of race were often raised by interviewees. However, because race is most profitably examined in relation to the spatial and ideational forces (or theatres and scripts) that frame its performance, I defer my discussion of local jazz, race, and power to the latter half of this chapter (power/spatiotemporal contexts). Although race also fundamentally intersects with class (Turino, 2000: 555), class is conspicuously under-mentioned in the interview data. This is not surprising. Although apartheid promoted, and depended on, an invidious conflation of class *and* race inequality, middle-class commentators, especially, tend to discuss it primarily as a politics of racial oppression rather than as a system of race capitalism. Post-1994, there are signs of an emerging class politics among working class and unemployed "poors" (Desai, 2002) hard hit by the present regime's callous implementation of neo-liberal policies, but, as yet, class remains under-spoken by those who benefit from, or are relatively unaffected by, the new order. Moreover, although clearly 'unequal' in terms of their access to economic and other forms of capital – included among the musicians and listeners I spoke to were bursary-dependent black students who would have been subjected to Bantu education, and, private-school-educated white, male, property-owning professors – all the interviewees, and I, ultimately represent (admittedly diverse) fractions of South Africa's middle class. In a predominantly third-world country such as South Africa, people with money to attend concerts or buy musical instruments, never mind the time to acquire the musical-technical abilities to play a skills-intensive music like jazz, or the financial and educational capital to study it at

university, are a tiny, and very fortunate, minority<sup>10</sup>. As with my exploration of race, then, I defer discussions of class to the latter half of this chapter. For now, I consider how interviewees' occupation of subject positions such as generation, language-identity, and gender politicise their musical experiences, situating them within networks of power relations.

### *Generation*

My mother and father's music never got shared. (That's a recognition I've developed later) ... The [record player] was in the lounge, and children didn't go into the lounge. When we did go into the lounge, on very special occasions, we sometimes heard their music. It was on oddish occasions that one was permitted into that territory, into that music. (Ralph Adendorff)

My son had expressed interest in going to a concert. I'd told him about the ones that I'd been to during 'office [university] hours'. He was at school during all of those, so he couldn't attend and he put pressure on me and I thought, "Well why not!" In part, it was a way of taking him into a little world of mine ... I've been very free to draw him into things that I found exciting. It's not something that my father did [but] I didn't do it because [my father] didn't. I did it, because I wanted to. (Ralph Adendorff)

Affirming Cameron et al's (1999: 153) observation that the "person becomes an intricate mosaic of differing power potentials in different social relations", Ralph Adendorff's respective accounts of his musical experiences as a child/adolescent in the late 1960s and as the parent of an eight-year-old boy almost thirty years later illustrate how differing enactments of subject position may imbricate music consumption in contrastingly exclusionary and inclusive economies of power. In the first situation he recounts, childhood is constituted as adulthood's 'other'. Centrifugal tensions predominate, and the subject positions of parenthood and childhood occupy (largely) separate and opposed physical and imaginary realms: the lounge is a physical area that is reserved for grownups and is out of bounds to

<sup>10</sup> In terms of the Gini coefficient, South Africa is the world's most economically unequal society. For those lucky enough to be employed (about 50% of the population), the average minimum wage in 2003 was R1609.68 (US \$268) per month. By contrast, the average monthly salary for a company director during the same period was almost 135 times more at R216 666.67 (US\$ 36 111). One company pays its directors 536 times more than its workers (Mail and Guardian: 14 June 2004). As a university lecturer I earn seven times more than the lowest earners, or, 18-50 times less than those in the highest echelons of the economy.

children; consequently, the music played on the record player housed there, becomes an imaginary domain from which children are also excluded. Similarly mired within this adult-dominated economy of constraint and exclusion, hit parade pop becomes ‘an-other’ imaginary territory that adults and children may not share:

I remember listening to radio hits on a Saturday afternoon, but again it was frowned upon: It was the hit parade; it was pop music; something forbidden; you didn't listen to that music with your parents. (Ralph Adendorff)

The anxiousness that attends the consumption of pop music indexes an epistemic disjuncture, a force field of centrifugal social tensions actuated by respectively antagonistic modernist and postmodernist enactments of age/power. Subtending this tension is the following array of dissonant power dynamics: first, the exclusionary politics Adendorff describes depends on the constitution of childhood and adulthood as strictly binary oppositions; next, as the “interstitial stage between child and adult” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 1998: 24), adolescence threatens this polarity-dependent field of power relations; finally, through a syllogistic enchainment of adolescence and pop, hit parade music is constituted as a dangerous (and therefore, “forbidden”) domain that children must experience on their own, away from the ears of disapproving adults.

By contrast, in the second situation he recounts, the subject positions of childhood and adulthood are significantly less estranged, and experiences of power as capacity (rather than constraint) predominate. In “putting pressure” on his father to attend the concert, Adendorff’s son functions as a speaker of power (though, obviously, he occupies the lower status subject position and it is Adendorff who controls the resources that make their presence at the concert possible, and who ultimately decides whether his son may accompany him or not). For Adendorff’s son, Howard College Theatre and the music he hears there become respectively real and symbolic parental territories that his father renders accessible to him. In this dialogical field of power relations, parenthood and childhood do not occupy rigidly separated spaces, and, as a shared and ‘co-owned’ domain, music

becomes the locus of a set of centripetal forces. Simultaneously, however, music functions as the locus of some centrifugal tensions:

Loyalties were split at interval. He wanted to go home. It was "very big", the music, he said, and it was a lot louder clearly than we'd ever played music at home. (Ralph Adendorff)

Like Seena Yacoob who found the "busy and loud and full" music of the African Jazz Pioneers "overpowering" and excluding, the younger Adendorff felt overwhelmed by Counterculture's "big" sound, experiencing this intense acoustic environment as an uncomfortable physical space he was reluctant to endure much longer. By contrast, Counterculture's farewell concert was of personal significance to Ralph Adendorff on two levels, and he would have been disappointed to miss the second half. Firstly, it was a chance to for him to share "a little world" of his with his son:

It was an important occasion, and it was just me and him. Mum wasn't there and the others, just the two of us.

Secondly, it was a final opportunity to hear a musician whose work he admired:

It was the last time to listen to Chris Merz. I felt, during the time that he was at the University, he had made an impact and he was one of the people who kindled the interest that I had in jazz so that I began then, regularly, to come to the lunch hour concerts. In part, it was a funny way of saying thank you to him.

Thus, in capitulating to his son's request, leaving early, and cutting short an "important occasion", Adendorff 'de-polarises' parenthood and childhood, momentarily actuating (as speaker of power) an alternative to the more hierarchical field of domestic power relations that he often inhabited (as an addressee of power) nearly three decades earlier.

### *Linguistic-identity*

In South Africa, as with other multilingual societies, ‘language’ is a bitterly politicised sphere. As part of its divide-and-rule arsenal, the Nationalist government cynically used linguistic differences to sow intra-African political divisions and rationalise its farcical homelands policy. Tensions between white Afrikaans and English speakers hark back to the South African War (formerly referred to as the Anglo-Boer War) of 1900-1902 and to the Great Trek some 60 years earlier (Ross, 1999: 72-74; 39-42). Among many South Africans of colour, especially, Afrikaans was (and quite often still is) negatively associated with Afrikaner dominance during apartheid, and, most infamously, the 1976 Soweto student uprisings which contested the government’s implementation of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in black schools.

Not surprisingly – given the continuity of local and global dimensions of power/subjective experience – dissonant power dynamics around language do not just play out on national (or macro-social) levels but simultaneously find expression in very personal (or micro-social) contexts. For example, Seena Yacoob, like me, recalls that, in the 1980s, she “felt quite ashamed of enjoying” Afrikaans lessons at school. At that time, for politicised South Africans of Indian origin, Afrikaans – as an official language and compulsory school subject – was to be endured, not enjoyed; to find pleasure in ‘the language of the oppressor’, felt traitorous. The demise of apartheid, however, has precipitated a renegotiation of Afrikaans’s social meanings (in some circles). Taking a conciliatory stance, Yacoob tries, in the excerpt below, to transcend the dissonance surrounding Afrikaans by deploying a strategic amnesia to positively re-imagine this contested language. Questioning an acquaintance’s refusal to communicate in Afrikaans, she said:

He said to me, even if he understands [an Afrikaans interlocutor], he won’t respond. But it’s a language; it’s a means of communicating of millions of people in this country and despite whatever histories it has, it’s still here and, to me, that’s what’s important.

Yacoob's argument is sensible and indeed, there are more (white and black) first-language Afrikaans speakers in South Africa than first-language English speakers. Nonetheless, the attitude of Yacoob's acquaintance is not unusual. Moreover, feelings of negativity around 'Afrikaans-ness' in contemporary South Africa do not just find expression in private discourse but are often stubbornly present in more public contexts too. Wryly observant, Dinga Sikwebu commented on a local record company's marketing of a jazz pianist of Afrikaans extraction as follows:

[In] '98, Wessel van Rensburg was Wessel van Rensburg. Now he doesn't put the 'van Rensburg' [in]. It's part of a marketing thing by Sheer Sound. No one's gonna buy some 'Van Rensburg': "He's a boer." So now, if you get his things, it's 'Wessel'.

For Stacey van Schalkwyk, who was "brought up as an Afrikaans child, with an Afrikaans identity" in the English-dominated province of Natal<sup>11</sup> (as it was then known), English-Afrikaans discord has been a source of much intrapersonal conflict. In the social environment of her pre-school childhood, English and Englishness were considered alien and 'other' and she remembers that feelings of anxiousness and mistrust commonly attended interactions with 'English' people. "But then suddenly," as she put it, she was thrust into an all-English milieu, and as she made this "cross into a new world", the 'Same-Other'/Afrikaans-English poles that had underwritten her sense of self until then were entirely reversed:

When I went to an English [-medium boarding] school I became 'English'. I wanted nothing to do with [my Afrikaans] heritage. I started dreaming in English, I started thinking in English – even now, I don't dream in Afrikaans, I don't think in Afrikaans, I don't create in Afrikaans ... I even pretended that I couldn't speak the language anymore when I met up with family and I would purposely not speak the language properly, with an English accent, and all of that.

As a university undergraduate, van Schalkwyk began to question her estrangement from her mother tongue, feeling increasingly uncomfortable about unitarily occupying the identity of, and presenting herself as, "English South African". No

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<sup>11</sup> The province was/is often jokingly referred to as the Last Outpost (of the British Empire).

longer wanting to partake of this exclusionary and polarised politics, she consequently "went back to aspects of [her] Afrikaans-ness", arriving at a dialectically re-imagined sense of self that better suited, and expressed, the "mixed-ness" of her bilingual/cultural identity. For van Schalkwyk, Mosaic's pluralist, 'Indo-Afro-jazz' aesthetic musically re-articulated this 'post-binary' ethos and she experienced the group's music (which was free of the English/Afrikaans polarities that had provoked so much personal unease) as an empowering expressive space:

Until [I started performing with] Mosaic, I didn't have a solid mode of expression: I couldn't express myself in Afrikaans, I couldn't express myself in English, but, I felt that I consistently could express myself in Mosaic ... This was a new language. It was essentially, "I can speak this. This is mine. I know where I'm at. I'm comfortable with this. I can express what I [want]." The language was made up of many variables [and] that was appealing. I didn't have to be this; I didn't *have* to be that in order to speak this language.

Underlying Van Schalkwyk's descriptions of Mosaic as "a new language" and a "comfortable" and empowering forum for self-expression is a complex interpenetration of subject position, history, place, and textuality. Firstly, as with any other subject position, van Schalkwyk's Afrikaans-ness references a historically-saturated field of power relations: had she been around during the Anglo-Boer War, in an area that was captured by the English, she would most probably have been placed in a concentration camp; on the other hand, during the Nationalist government's reign, being Afrikaans would have enhanced her chances of gaining employment in the civil service, or accessing other state-controlled resources, and so on. Next, and as mentioned, power/positionality dynamics play out differently in different spatial contexts: had van Schalkwyk grown up in the Afrikaans-dominated Orange Free State province, and/or attended an Afrikaans school, the discord that she experienced in Natal may not have occurred at all; by contrast, had she grown up *English* in the Free State, she may have experienced quite similar feelings of dissonance around language.

Textuality is a final ingredient in this stew of power relations. Although instrumental western classical music, like jazz, operates outside spoken language, van Schalkwyk experienced the dictatorial relationship of composition to performance in classical music as "limiting [her] personal voice", thereby implying that the feelings of constraint she experienced when expressing herself in English or Afrikaans were somewhat replicated when she played classical music. By contrast, the dialogical, pluralist, and relatively non-proscriptive ethos of jazz improvisation constituted "a good way of expressing [herself]", functioning, for her, as an arena within which she could actuate a transcendent alternative to the negatively politicised expressive experiences of her past. Whereas communication in English or Afrikaans (or playing classical music) located van Schalkwyk within a field of (largely) centrifugal tensions and (mostly) constituted her as an addressee of power, composing/performing with Mosaic placed her within an arena of centripetal forces that better enabled her to function as a speaker of power.

### *Gender*

[It] is almost certain that the rock guitarist will play her electric guitar with a plectrum and it is very likely that she will use an electronically generated sustain in her playing. It is unlikely that she will hit a diminished thirteenth chord, play a solo with constant intonation, or indeed be a woman. (Jason Toynbee, 2000: 39)

I don't really like drums because it borders on the masculine. No, it is masculine; it's military, militant, and, everything that it stands for is so "I'm in power, I'm in control." (Stacey van Schalkwyk)

Predictably, *all* six women I interviewed made some reference to music as a gendered discourse whereas *none* of the (nineteen) men interviewed did. As with the under-representation of class in the interview data, this is not surprising. Locked into a 'Same-Other' polarity by a male-dominated social order, men and women are respectively pre-constituted as speakers and addressees of power. Often violently consigned to the disadvantaged pole, and rarely exempt from the persistent, pervasive, and damaging operations of male hegemony, women experience their lower status subject position as a painful and all-too-visible

presence; by contrast, as occupants of the more privileged subject position, and, as beneficiaries of patriarchy, men typically luxuriate in a blissful blindness to its operations<sup>12</sup>.

Not surprisingly, given the ubiquity of gender inequality, patriarchy (or resistance to it) finds expression in music in numerous ways. The under-representation of female performers, especially in jazz, is one of these, and in a familiar analysis of this situation, Gisele Turner remarked:

Women were generally home-makers and therefore couldn't be up late at night hanging about jazz bands whereas the men could. They could roll in at 6 o'clock in the morning and sleep all day and wake up to dinner and then go off and do it all over again. Somebody had to stay home and look after the kids and whatever.

Mavis Bayton (1997: 48) offers similar reasons for the rarity of woman electric guitarists:

Male guitarists typically have their career serviced by the hidden labour of girlfriends and wives. Female guitarists are far less likely to get such support. Where were Erica Clapton and Pat Townsend? Washing the dishes and feeding the baby, probably.

As Turner and Bayton recognise, women's bondage to a "reproductive" economy (Peterson & Runyan, 1999: 39) of home-making and child-rearing virtually precludes their participation in time-expensive and 'high-visibility' public pursuits such as professional music-performance. In other words, and as gender inequality makes especially clear, subject position does not simply refer to the 'neutral' emplacement of actors in social space, but rather, to strictures on the roles that individuals may play within their designated domains. As such, where woman *do* participate in the formal or "productive" economy (*Ibid*) as wage workers, they

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<sup>12</sup> Most asymmetrical power relations work this way. Thus, "although not all whites endorse racism, all men masculinism, or all heterosexuals homophobia, *all* whites, men, and heterosexuals *benefit* from their positions of relative privilege within the structures of racism, sexism, and heterosexism" (Peterson & Runyan, 1999: 45). Moreover, they experience this privilege as 'natural' and 'given' and are typically blind to its operations.

typically remain hostage to their prescribed domestic role as 'nurturers', and are generally restricted to performing what patriarchal society deems "women's work": taking care of others and providing emotional and maintenance services (counselling, welfare services, clerical support, cleaning)" (*Ibid*).

Predictably – given that "music does not exist by itself [but] is constituted in social practice and ... bound to society through social contexts and social consequences" (Berger, 1999: 277) – this gendered division of labour also finds expression in jazz, where women typically occupy just two roles, those of singer and/or pianist:

Women have been encouraged to sing and play the piano since the 1700s. Where women have developed a tradition of performing on an instrument – such as the piano – there are examples of genuinely 'great' individuals, such as the late Mary Lou Williams among jazz pianists, who must be counted on anyone's list among the all-time 'greats' on that instrument, regardless of sex. But there are very few major figures among all the other instrumentalists in jazz. As an indication, in the 1988 *Downbeat* readers' poll in 35 categories, women were ranked in only 4 not exclusively reserved for women (i.e., 'female singer'), 1 as composer, 2 as arranger, 1 on soprano sax. (Ray Pratt, 1990:156)

As my interchange with Gisele Turner below reveals, the 'encouragement' (to play the piano) that women receive, especially as children, can be quite forceful, and is indicative of the coercion that frequently attends individuals' socialisation into their gendered identities. Although I have known Turner for over eight years and often interacted with her both professionally and socially, I didn't realise – until we did the interview – that she had received formal training in music. Recognising, in the way she was describing some music she had heard, that she had had 'hands-on' musical experience at some point in her life, I asked:

Did you play?

GT: I played classical piano for years and years and years and years. I started when I was five and I played till I was 17 and I went for my grades and I did theory.

NR: Why did you stop playing piano?

GT: I *hated* it!! I never wanted to play it. I wanted to dance! I'm a physical person! To be stuck behind the piano was deadly. My mother used to set the clock for two hours, so that I would practice. And all I ever did was these [grade] examinations. And I was *not* a talented musician, so it was really hard work. It was not natural for me ... it was one of those things where girls of my generation learned an instrument, and, they generally learned the piano.

Piano-playing and singing (and indeed musical performance in general) become gendered through their enchainment to a hegemonic ideological system which – through a lattice of syllogistic associations and metonymic transferences – works to sustain patriarchy by reductively constituting a multiplicity of objects, spaces, expressive modes, and so on, as either positively 'male' or negatively 'female'. Within this patriarchal semiotic regime, singing may be said to attain its status as an 'acceptable' female pursuit as follows: firstly, as with 'male' and 'female', patriarchy brings 'culture' and 'nature' into a 'Same-Other' relationship (Coates, 1997: 59); next, singing is construed as the 'natural' and feminine 'Other' to more 'masculine' modes of musical expression such as instrumental performance; as such, (conventional) female vocalities (typically) fail to contest the patriarchal status quo. With 'domesticity' as the pivotal trait, piano playing becomes acceptable feminine behaviour through a similar process: firstly, patriarchy constitutes domestic spaces as female and public spaces as male; thus, as *the* musical exemplar of (bourgeois) domesticity, the piano is metonymically invested with a 'feminine' identity, thereby becoming an 'allowed' means of musical expression for women<sup>13</sup>.

Whereas women classical musicians have been 'allowed', for some time now, to play woodwind and string instruments, female wind players remain a rarity in jazz:

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<sup>13</sup> Obviously, men sing and play the piano, but those who are *valorised* for doing so frequently express 'heroic' or transgressive vocalities and pianisms – I think here of opera or the virtuoso piano repertoire, Bruce Springsteen's singing or Jerry Lee Lewis's piano playing, for example. Also, many counter-examples exist – Madonna and The Pet Shop Boys, to name two famous examples, are often lauded by popular music scholars for the progressive gender politics they express – and these may reference music's "prophetic" function (Attali, 1977: 11), its status, in these instances, as a utopian prefiguring of a post-gendered future.

Women [in jazz are] not encouraged to play wind [instruments]. It's funny, because of course in a classical orchestra, women are very much part of it. I think it's more ladylike to be in a classical thing. There's something about jazz which has also got that slightly raw edge to it: who you hang out with, smoky venues, alcohol, catcalling. Some women just don't want that kind of attention. (Gisele Turner)

A different set of associations, pertaining to place, subject position and textuality, underlies *this* exclusion. Firstly, because the physical contexts of jazz performance often stubbornly recall its lower class origins in bars and brothels, jazz retains an attitude of sexual explicitness that is incommensurate with the 'sugar-and-spice-and-all-things-nice' ethos of bourgeois femininity. By contrast, classical music performances take place in sexually restrained and 'respectable' contexts like churches and corporate/state funded concert halls. Moreover, whereas jazz horns (in essence, the saxophone and trumpet) are 'loud' (read sexually-dominant/masculine), classical woodwind instruments (the flute especially) are 'soft' (read demure/feminine). Additionally, allowing women musicians to partake of the "ultimate freedom" of jazz improvisation (Gonsalves, Caldwell) is a 'dangerous' manoeuvre, antithetical to the operations of patriarchy. On the other hand, (women) orchestral players are seen and heard as part of a highly disciplined collective that obediently affirms male musical authority in the form of the (almost always male) composer and conductor.

Instantiations of patriarchy in jazz run even deeper, and, even after they overcome innumerable hurdles and eventually earn a place onstage, women jazz singers are further marginalised by being denied the status of 'musician'. Singing is constituted as 'Other' to instrumental performance, and like pretty packaging – there to attract attention, but ultimately extraneous to the 'important stuff' inside – the jazz singer's musical work is construed as ancillary to the 'real' 'content' of the music. However, as with most oppressive gestures, this rendering of the singer as 'other' is a double-edged sword and it can become as disadvantageous to instrumentalists as it is to singers:

One of the things that [Durban-based jazz musician] Natalie [Rungan] will complain about is that as a singer, people will not necessarily think of her as being a member of the band, but will see her [as] separate from the band. The woman's place in jazz has often been in the forefront: short skirts, attracting [and] holding the attention. It's quite tricky because as soon as you have somebody singing it also cuts down on the possibilities for what the band can do in terms of improvisations. You'll find that some bands will still take their breaks and other bands will simply back the singer. It becomes very complicated. (Gisele Turner)

Just as musical instruments become instruments of patriarchy, so too, as classical pianist Marion Caldwell suddenly figured out as she spoke, does musical process:

Ha-ha! I've just realised something! I think although I did seminars and stuff on this very issue, I was – deep down – a lot more accepting of the fact that jazz seemed to primarily be a 'male music' if I can use that term. It makes me feel that it's not something that I can actually do. It's music that I love so much but just like I couldn't really see myself playing rugby I can't quite envisage myself being a jazz pianist. I've always felt, deep down, it would be out of character for me and maybe that has got something to do with maleness.

NR: How so?

MC: There's a kind of arrogance in improvising often; I don't mean in a bad way, but in this assurance that 'Here I am; this is me. I can do this on the spot; work with it, play it for you. I could show off a bit: I can show just how fast I can play certain scales; I can show just how interesting I can make certain chords.' There is a kind of arrogance there. Just like I can't imagine myself being an electric guitarist duelling on stage with someone – it just wouldn't happen – it's the same with jazz.

Wittingly or unwittingly echoing Judith Butler (1990:136) or scholars influenced by her, Caldwell recognises that gender identities are performative. For Caldwell, jazz improvisation exhibits a set of characteristics conventionally marked 'male' including confidence, a take-charge attitude, and exhibitionistic displays of physical and mental prowess. In other words, jazz performance simultaneously involves the performance of a cockiness that Caldwell reads as incommensurate with performances of femininity.

Not surprisingly – given the exceedingly exclusionary environment that jazz is for women and the fact that jazz performance is only rarely lucrative – the few women

that manage to make their way into jazz usually find it difficult and impractical to remain in this male-dominated arena:

A lot of the very good [women] pianists who are also singers leave the jazz world because they can make themselves very good money in supper theatre. Why should [they] try and scratch a living out as a jazz musician when [they] can actually cut it in a more commercial field? I think Stacey was a very *rare* person in that she not only stayed true to the jazz medium, but also took the effort and energy to hold a band together. (Gisele Turner)

The dystopian intensity of gender discrimination in jazz, especially in comparison to the more hierarchical world of classical music, involves a contradiction that hinges on the following complex of factors. Firstly, “there has been a tendency to diminish music by categorizing it as ‘different’, that is by privileging other forms of human expression and activity as more important and more fundamental to social and individual existence” (Shepherd, 1993: 49). As such, “music has been constituted as an ‘Other’ to dominant forms of intellectual discourse and social practice” (*Ibid*). Furthermore, within ‘music’ as a whole, different genres tend to be ranked in terms of prestige, and although jazz presently inhabits an ‘upwardly mobile’ trajectory (Meltzer, 1993: 29; Neal, 1999: 29; 68), it nonetheless lacks the ‘pedigree’ of western classical music and is lower in status than that music. Consequently, through a series of transferences, jazz musicians are rendered ‘multiply-Other’ by virtue of their occupation of a multiply ‘othered’ expressive domain. Severe<sup>14</sup> expressions of patriarchy then come into play through a process of “displaced abjection ... whereby ‘low’ social groups turn their figurative and actual power *not* against those in authority, but against those who are even ‘lower’” (Stallybrass and White, 1986: 533 [*in Coates, 1997:60*]). In the end, and as Coates (1997: 60) argues is the case with rock music, women jazz musicians tend to be more discriminated against than women classical musicians<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Severer than in classical music, but in all probability significantly less severe than expressions of patriarchy in, say, a squatter camp where 96% of the male population is unemployed, and the women eke out meagre livings as domestic workers.

<sup>15</sup> Blindness to gender discrimination is a failing of much black discourse: even key theorists such as Fanon, Gilroy, and Hall, who write powerfully and sensitively about race and class oppression, are criticized for their inattention to patriarchy’s power effects.

Through the work of “rare” women like van Schalkwyk, Makuzeni, and others, who contest male domination in jazz, there are exceptions to this dystopian situation. As described by Seena Yacoob, Siya Makuzeni’s presence in the Prisoners of Strange as a trombonist presents a striking instance of resistance to patriarchy in local jazz:

That was one of the things I loved the very first time I saw the band. I've never seen a female trombonist before and Siya's obviously a very strong member of the band. She doesn't hide out or anything; that is really cool: it didn't seem like she's overpowered by the men.

Outlining four ways that Makuzeni transgresses the patriarchal norm for jazz, Yacoob’s comments neatly reference and summarise the main issues explored in this section. It is therefore instructive to examine each of her propositions in greater detail:

“I've never seen a female trombonist before”:

Makuzeni represents a welcome exception to the infamous rarity of female jazz performers especially on instruments other than voice or piano.

“Siya's obviously a very strong member of the band”:

Both as singer (Mombelli’s compositions often use the voice as another instrument, doubling or singing in counterpart to the other horns) and trombonist, Makuzeni is a fully fledged member of the group, and therefore, very unlike many women singers who tend to be marginalised and seen as “separate from the band” (Turner). Moreover, like the other men, she is featured as an improvising musician and more than holds her own as such.

“She doesn't hide out or anything”:

Makuzeni’s status as a “very strong member of the band” subverts expectations of female invisibility. (As mentioned, patriarchy works to render women invisible by consigning them to a hidden domestic economy that often precludes their participation in high visibility public pursuits.) This

visibility is, in part, musically engendered: because of its contrapuntal character, Mombelli's music renders its constituent elements, and therefore, the musical contributions of individual members (Makuzeni included) relatively easily discernable; by contrast, as the fourth trombonist in a traditional big band, Makuzeni's musical work would be far more difficult to disaggregate from the composite homophonic texture and she would be more 'hidden'. In this instance, there is a conflation of musical and social equality and music temporarily becomes a site of resistance – and possibly even a transcendent alternative – to instantiations of patriarchy in wider society.

"It didn't seem like she's overpowered by the men":

Quite simply, women mostly are "overpowered by the men" whether on the bandstand, in the home, the corporate world, etc. Conventionally, they are 'Other'. In stark contrast, Makuzeni displays mastery (!) of a male-dominated musical discourse and is seen and heard as a speaker of power, equal in musical status to her male counterparts onstage. Again, conventional (patriarchal) constructions of femininity are contested and transcended in music.

Yacoob's comment, "That was one of the things I loved the very first time I saw the band" references a fifth proposition. As mentioned in chapter 4, engagement with music, whether as a composer, performer, or listener, is a means by which individuals affirm and/or contest their participation within various social narratives. Importantly, insofar as these narratives include widely experienced, positionality-based discriminatory practices such as racism or patriarchy, 'the idiocultural' is often also socio-political, and musical experiences are almost always deeply political. Thus in 'loving' watching and hearing a band that includes an empowered female trombonist – tellingly, this did not register as noteworthy for any of the male interviewees – Yacoob identifies herself as a resistant member of patriarchal society.

To summarise: focussing on five key terms – actors, subject position, theatres, capital, scripts – this chapter investigates ways in which the production and reception of the music played by Counterculture, Mosaic, and the Prisoners of Strange indexes wider socio-political contexts largely characterised by asymmetrical power relations. To this end, I have, thus far, reread the arguments presented in chapter 4 by considering how power dynamics suffuse interactions among bandleaders, composers, performers, critics, and listeners. Initially, I focused on actors in isolation; thereafter ‘thickening’ my description of local jazz as political discourse, and additionally considering the influence of subject position, I explored the politicising effects of age, linguistic identity, and gender on (certain) interviewees’ musical experiences. In the next section, I expand my account of jazz as political discourse by considering the three-way interrelationships among local jazz’s idiocultural, spatial, and socio-political contexts.

### **Power/spatiotemporal contexts**

Space is the physical terrain and symbolic expanse over which contestations of power take place. (Belinda Bozzoli, 2004: 7)

Spatial and temporal practices are never neutral in social affairs ... and are more often than not the focus of intense social struggle. (David Harvey, 1990: 239)

Focussing on theatres, (but also continuing to address the role of actors and subject positions), the present section foregrounds the politicising impact of place on local jazz by considering how the physical settings of interviewees’ musical experiences imbricate them in different networks of power relations. Also factoring notions of capital into my analysis, I then consider music’s status as a social and political resource, and investigate how the values accorded to music emerge and evolve in relation to the different theatres within which it is heard. Finally, I highlight jazz’s occupation of a larger social, historical, and geographical field of power

relations, and, exploring the interrelationships among actors, subject position, theatres, capital, and scripts, I trace ways in which meta-narratives of Nation and Economy find expression in local jazz. In keeping with the ‘micro-to-macro’ movement of the thesis as a whole, I first present an ‘intra-verted’ reading of place that focuses on place as a performatively actuated mosaic of micro-social power relations. Thereafter combining this with an “extra-verted” (Massey, 1993: 66) or macro-socially oriented reading of place, I try to offer a ‘glocal’ account of local jazz, identity, place, and power.

### **Actors/Subject position/Theatres**

This (third) subsection is in three parts. First, drawing on Doreen Massey’s excellent “Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place” (1993), I present a theoretical description of theatres that details their centrality to power’s operations. Thereafter, I ‘hand over’ my narrative to interviewee Kreesan Chetty, whose autobiographical account of race richly illustrates the fluid inter-relationships of power, positionality, and theatres. Finally, through an analysis of various interviewees’ musical experiences in two theatres (the army and church) I construct a contextualised reading of music and the politics of place.

Convened by casts of actors, and existing individually, as a “particular constellation of relations, articulated at a particular locus” (Massey, 1993: 66), ‘theatres’ – whether countries, cities, neighbourhoods, or homes – are the physical, collectivising sites of social action where power’s operations are framed, filtered and concretized. The “focus of a distinct *mixture* of wider and more local social relations” (*Ibid*: 68), theatres are mediatory arenas where meta- and micro-narratives interface, and they exist as politicised and politicising spaces on four levels.

First, theatres exercise power by granting access to some actors and refusing entry to others. Thus churches bring together priests and parishioners rather than

pimps and prostitutes. Often characterised by pecking orders (executives, secretaries, and cleaners in corporate environments; vice chancellors, deans, and lecturers in universities) theatres also frame power relations by emplacing the actors they host in variously equal or unequal relations to one another. These 'intra-theatrical positionalities' then pre-script and presuppose certain behaviours, or kinds of performance, on the part of those occupying them. (Thus, fellow secretaries may feel comfortable about using expletive language in one another's presence but not in front of their bosses; the latter may assume rather formal personae before their underlings but be far more casual in their dealings with fellow executives, and so on.)

Second, theatres partially predetermine actors' status as speakers and addressees of power, and variously aggravate or alleviate widely-existing positionality-based practices of exclusion and stratification such as sexism or racism, by setting the terms within which different subject positions are rendered salient or irrelevant. Thus, as Allen's and Thornton's respective comments on the micro-politics of musicking in apartheid South Africa and contemporary Britain reveal, individuals' experiences of power as capacity and constraint are complexly informed both by who and where they are:

Although male *marabi* musicians had acquired a reputation for dissolute behaviour and were accorded little social respect, their status as professional musicians was rarely questioned. However, women who wished to be recognised as musicians, rather than brewers or prostitutes, had to wait for a stage: they needed the relative security and respectability provided by the separative and definitive power of the footlights. (Lara Allen, 2000: 58)

Discotheques may house alternative cultures, but they tend to duplicate structures of exclusion and stratification found elsewhere. Black men, in particular, find themselves barred or, more usually, subject to maximum quotas. (Sarah Thornton, 1995: 25)

Third, and as I will shortly discuss in greater detail, different objects' and attributes' status as capital depends on the theatres within which they occur. Thus, while

musical talent is a valuable attribute in a music school or on a concert stage, it is of little value in a boxing ring!

Finally, the actors convened within a specific theatre may be empowered and/or disempowered by the concurring and/or competing action of different meta-narratives, and, acting individually or collectively, successfully and/or not, may variously advance, endorse, enforce, accept, ignore, avoid, evade, escape, challenge, defy, resist, reject, dissipate, defuse, overcome, or outright negate the controlling force of different scripts. In short, theatres are scripted and scripting arenas that *refract* the power effects of macro-social forces. Thus, in 1980s South Africa, state repression was (largely) condoned and rationalised in white (state) schools, somewhat contested (via schools boycotts) in Indian and coloured schools, and intensely resisted (most violently in the form of school-burnings) in black township schools.

Kreesan Chetty's remembrances of his changing experiences and understandings of race as a child in the mid-1970s to 80s, and as a young adult in the late 80s and early 90s, vividly illustrate how different theatres (in this instance, home, shops, two universities, and a hospital) engender distinctive performances of power characterised by specific refractions of certain scripts as well as unique combinations and hierarchical orderings of different positionalities. Although Chetty's reflections do not specifically refer to music, I quote him at length because his is a subtle, sensitive, and very honest telling of race and place in South Africa, a powerful portrait of the emotional and social landscapes that are home to the musical experiences described in this thesis:

KC: My world changed hugely when I went to university: pre-that it would have been almost exclusively Indian with strong stereotypes of all other race groups.

NR: What were those stereotypes?

KC: For instance, my grandmother when I wasn't eating my supper used to say to me, "Eat your supper or I'll give you away to the man who comes to

collect the dirt" (who was black and smelly). It built up this perception that all black people were to be feared, and were smelly and dirty.

White people were always people of authority who you had to be *respectful* around. I remember my mother taking me shopping and she'd always be *respectful* of these snotty, arrogant, shop assistants who were less educated than she was but who would be very condescending because of your colour. I didn't have a strong dislike of these people, I was more fearful of them. I think as an Indian person you were brought up with a lot of fear.

There was all this political turmoil [at] UDW<sup>16</sup>. Together with that, there was this other personal turmoil of my sexuality breaking the surface. Just out of high school, I'd suddenly become acutely aware of my attraction to other men.

There were all these [student] riots. I got tear-gassed for the first time at Durban-Westville; I was actually involved in political conflict in some physical way which made me more politically aware [and] also more resentful of the regime in power. And, I fell in love for the first time with another man. I dunno whether I'd call myself or him a man at that stage but with another ...

NR: [smiling] another XY?

KC: [smiling] Another XY. So, it was quite eventful. I don't think I particularly understood everything that was happening or was sitting back and analysing [it]: I was just being pulled along by the momentum of everything and, at the end of the year, was spat out at the other end. It wasn't [a] particularly happy year. I didn't feel like I was achieving anything; I felt resentful of being there and it wasn't a space I was comfortable in. It definitely wasn't [a] space that entertained a nineteen-year-old gay man. It was full of typical South African Indian people who were doing typical South African Indian things and I didn't feel at home there.

And then in 1989, I came to Natal University and started my Nursing degree. I was suddenly in a much more comfortable place. [A friend] introduced me to the gay and lesbian society<sup>17</sup> which opened up another avenue of my life; I was much happier in the academic environment, more interested in what I was studying and it was much more [racially] integrated<sup>18</sup>: [There were] black and white and coloured people that I was

<sup>16</sup> The former University of Durban Westville

<sup>17</sup> As a mostly white institution, the University of Natal would have brought together students who were, on average, more economically empowered than their counterparts at the mostly Indian University of Durban-Westville. By and large better resourced, (mostly white) gay and lesbian students at Natal University were consequently in a stronger position to positively address their alterity.

<sup>18</sup> During apartheid, students of colour were allowed to enrol at a white institution if the degree they wished to study for was not offered at the appropriate black, coloured, or Indian institution. The University of Natal was the only local institution that offered a degree programme in Nursing and for this reason, even in 1989, students of all races were to be found in its Nursing department. By

interacting with on a daily basis and forming friendships with and who I liked. There were black people who weren't scary and smelly and dirty and there were white people [who] were stupid and annoying and I wasn't respectful of. And, there were white people who I liked because they were nice and friendly and non-judgemental and they weren't superior or aggressive. I suddenly thought, 'Whoa!' All those stereotypes I had of all these people were being broken down.

[Long silence] One [moment] I'll always remember:

As a nurse, I had to come into very close contact with patients – physical contact – and patients were people of *all* races. Although our hospitals weren't integrated by and large, we did have black and white and coloured patients and because of the degree course I was moving around a lot within the health care services within Durban. I couldn't physically touch black cruse hair: I don't know where it came from (probably from those early years with my grandmother saying that she'd give me away to the garbage collector) but cruse hair represented everything about black people I was fearful of.

When I was doing my midwifery [course] I delivered this little baby one day. I was washing his mother's membranes and blood off his hair and I remember thinking: "There is nothing more pure and beautiful and untouched than this child in my hands who I have the privilege of touching before anyone else in the world. *How could I possibly attach anything negative to this poor innocent child?*" I was so ashamed for the first time of this totally ludicrous, irrational fear that I had of this physical attribute. That was very symbolic and made me very aware of how much and how fast my worldview was changing.

The nexus of idiocultural, spatiotemporal and socio-political dynamics that shape individuals' "worldviews" also influence music making. Focussing on Mombelli's experiences in the army, and other interviewees' experiences in the church, I now consider how this trio of contextual forces specifically impacts on individuals' *musical* experiences.

### *Army*

Mombelli's recounting of his experiences in the army in the late 1970s may also be understood in terms of a 'glocal' or 'micro/macro' politics of self and State, but whereas Chetty's narrative emphasizes his status as a passive addressee of

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contrast the student population of the Psychology departments at the two institutions would have been respectively (almost) exclusively Indian and exclusively white.

power, Mombelli's anecdotes mostly highlight his role as an active respondent and speaker of power. Unlike Chetty, Mombelli refused to be "pulled along by the momentum of everything" and his experiences represent interesting examples of music as a site of struggle and vehicle of resistance.

Despite various attempts to avoid recruitment, the eighteen-year-old Mombelli, like most school- or university-leaving white men in apartheid South Africa, was conscripted into compulsory military service:

I tried all possibilities to try and get out of the army. I told them I was gay, I told them all sorts of shit. I landed up in the infantry, was put inside a tank. I didn't want to be part of this.

Mombelli's resistance took many forms; his response to the regular inspections of boots and uniforms is a case in point. He only ever wore one of the pairs of boots and one of the two sets of uniforms that they were issued, reserving the other exclusively for inspections. He had varnished his boots, so that they always shone perfectly, and had sewn the uniform onto box cardboard so that all the creases were perfectly in place. Then on those evenings when his fellow conscripts were busy preparing themselves for the following morning's inspections, Mombelli

would get into the cupboard and close the door. I used to sit in there the whole night thinking, what am I doing here? I used to smoke and just smoke and just smoke. When I came out, pfff all this smoke would come out. Hey! And Mombelli arrived out of this cupboard; so they thought I was a nutcase.

Things got worse for me. The corporals were having this big party and they knew I was a musician. "Could I organise a band?" I said, "Yah, no problem but I need a few days to come up to Pretoria to get musicians." So I came all the way up here – and I got [some musicians]. They smoke so much zol<sup>19</sup> you can't imagine and by the time they got down to Bloemfontein they were all high. Now, [the corporals] were expecting some popular stuff. Not us hey! We just jammed! I wasn't in anyone's good books then. I had to get out of there. I angled: I said there was something wrong with my testicles – I had to go to the hospital. On the way to the hospital, I sneaked out of the camp, went up to Pretoria and organised a transfer onto the entertainment unit.

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<sup>19</sup> Marijuana

Although Mombelli would no doubt have been relieved to be out of the infantry, he remained irrepressibly resistant during the four years he was required to serve in the entertainment unit and while there, he refused to play anything except original music:

The entertainment unit played at the general's wedding and shit like that. All I wanted to do was play original music while they wanted to hear 'Tie a yellow banana round the tree' or whatever. They said I'm a pseudo-intellectual bass player. Nobody could play with me. They put me in the office, working at everyone's leave. That was fine. Because I wasn't playing anymore, I could do my outside gigs.

Mombelli additionally turned things round to his advantage by 'using' the army to further his music education:

In the entertainment unit, whoever saw me coming ducked because I made a pain of myself; I always had a note pad or score paper and managed to corner every single horn player (they had a big band) and ask a few questions: "Where is your favourite note? Where is your favourite range? What are your difficult notes?" When the big band was playing, I would pitch up with an arrangement I'd done in the office and I would always ask everyone to play it for me. Then, if it sounded shit, I would analyse it and ask them "Tell me, why didn't that work?"

Mombelli's army experiences represent an unusually 'black-and-white' situation of a starkly authoritarian theatre and an especially resistant actor who resolutely refused cooption. Ordinarily, however, and as various interviewees' recounting of their experiences in church will reveal, power dramas typically play out in more subtle shades of grey.

### *Church*

The perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly. A central point would be both the source of light illuminating everything and a locus of convergence for everything that must be known. (Michel Foucault, 1977: 308 [in Smith and Fiske, 2000: 611])

The omnipresent, omniscient entity Foucault describes sounds a lot like 'God', and the power that religions have wielded in many places at many times, may relate to the fact that they posit both the existence of, and their superior access to, "the perfect disciplinary apparatus". Consequently, as the theatres vested with the primary responsibility and privilege of staging different versions of the 'God-script', churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, etc can – working collectively – powerfully influence the nature of macro-social power dynamics; individually, they may likewise significantly affect the tenor of micro-social power relations in smaller theatres existing within their sphere of influence, such as schools and homes. This has been especially true of churches in South Africa, where Christianity has been central both to the processes of white domination as well as anti-apartheid resistance (Ballantine, 1993: 4; Ross, 1999: 174).

Not unexpectedly, several interviewees made reference to the church: as a locus of anti-apartheid politics; as a controlling (but largely empowering) force in their early lives, and in Lex Futshane's case, as a space of disempowerment. The post-Vatican II Catholic Church, for example, was fierce in its condemnation of apartheid, and Marion Dall recalls that the Catholic parish that she belonged to in the 1980s, in the exclusively white borough of Westville, was served by an Indian priest. Even in the early 1970s, during the 'height' of apartheid, Gonsalves and his family were members of a racially mixed congregation:

The [Catholic] church [in Port Shepstone, 100km south of Durban] was fairly integrated: I'm saying that not from recollection of having been there but when I look at photographs. I'll see a photograph [taken] in the church hall on my dad's surprise birthday and well, it's not multiracial but bi-racial in that there are lots of Indian people and lots of white people.

More radically, Lloyd Martin was part of an anti-apartheid Christian pop band in the mid-80s to early 90s called Friends First:

We were banned by the government because we were going into the townships and we were contesting the theology of apartheid [as rationalized

by] the NG Kerk<sup>20</sup>. We said it's a load of crap; it's total hogwash. They tried to bribe us; they tapped our phones; they tried to take us out; a few of us were on the CCB<sup>21</sup> hit list for extermination. It was bizarre because we never did anything; I've never been a card-carrying member of any political party. We were [just] making statements. We weren't covert about it, we were very overt about it, about the fact that apartheid is unacceptable and all those type of things. I hated the music of Friends First personally: it was bubblegum and all that stuff. But that was the objective: to reach the masses and that's where the masses were. So it was a political decision; I didn't like the music at all (most of the other members loved it) but I knew that this was right, so I just plunged into it.

The church has not only been a site of resistance to external, macro-social forces, but impacting 'inwardly' on 'subsidiary' theatres like the homes of its parishioners, has functioned as speaker of power on more micro-social levels. Neil Gonsalves, for example, attributes his becoming a keyboardist to his Catholic upbringing:

[My parents] decided to send [my brother and I for] organ lessons. I suppose they chose organ because we have that instrument at home and because we come from a Catholic family. They thought, "Ah, well they can play in church as well."

Melvin Peters, who has been playing for Anglican services since he was twelve, experienced the church as an empowering space, central to his subsequent development as a jazz performer:

What was very influential was the whole connection with the church: I remember starting to play the organ when I was twelve years old. It was one of those which had two pedals which you had to pump. (It was like doing Jane Fonda!) ... It really gave me a great deal of confidence just playing in front of people, so later on, that was never an issue.

For Michael Blake, the Methodist church was an empowering environment in a rather different way:

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<sup>20</sup> The *Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk* (Dutch Reformed Church) was the 'religious wing' of apartheid discourse.

<sup>21</sup> The ominously named Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB) was a special police unit set up by the apartheid government to quash civil dissidence.

I used to be a church organist when I was at school. Instead of delivering newspapers or something, I played the organ which was more lucrative and less hard work ... I had this very religious sort of enforced upbringing and I gave it up when I was about eighteen: I decided to give it up as one gives up smoking or something; it's just a habit.

As a power drama, Blake's experience of the church parallels Mombelli's stint in the entertainment unit of the army on two levels. First, although Blake and Mombelli experienced the church and army as inhospitable environments, they were required by more powerful forces (family and apartheid state) to inhabit these theatres because of their respective subject positions as 'minor in a religious family' and 'school-leaving white South African male'. Second, both actors escaped cooption, and using music as a tool, surreptitiously empowered themselves by refusing to follow, and strategically revising, the game rules of these theatres. Blake's musical contribution to the church involved a cynical duality: 'externally' his organ-playing would have been read by church and family as performances of religiosity, whereas 'internally', he was accessing a useful source of pocket money. Refusing to play anything except original music, and labelled musically incompetent by the army, Mombelli similarly defused the disempowering energies around him; as such, he was able to use his time in the army to improve his skills as a composer and arranger and to play, outside its confines, the gigs that he wanted to do. By contrast, Lex Futshane was less successful in his attempt to use the church to further his music education:

I joined the Salvation Army Church, playing trumpet there. It was coming [along] ok but the pastor realised that I wasn't really there because I was Christian [but] because of the music. So he had problems with that [and] I was expelled. I could say I was one of the few people banned from church! Then I had to find another instrument because I couldn't afford to buy [a] trumpet.

In addition to its influence over the (musical) actors it accommodates, the church has politicised music making more directly by deeming some musics acceptable and others, notably jazz, unacceptable:

At Durban Girls' College, one teacher says she just doesn't know what to do with the girls because they are so tired of the old hymns, they sing them like ... they can't open their mouths and it's terrible first thing in the morning. So I said, "Why don't you vibe it up and sing some contemporary local stuff?" and the way she phrased it is, "Anything contemporary, and anything that borders on what they term 'happy clappy' is totally forbidden to be sung in assembly." (Stacey van Schalkwyk)

There was a time when I was frowned upon (not so much by my church, but one or two other churches) for playing jazz: it wasn't considered kosher you know ... jazz was considered to be the devil's music. (Melvin Peters)

If the music of 'God's' ultimate 'Other' (the 'devil') was not welcome in church, it was similarly unwelcome in the church's subsidiary theatres. Thus, even though jazz was the musical lingua franca of South Africa's townships in the 1960s ("jazz was like what *kwaito* is today" said Lex Futshane) it was not heard in the devoutly Christian home that Dinga Sikwebu inhabited as a child:

Everyone always talks (sometimes I think it's all played up) about how jazz was a big thing in the township in the 60s and all the hi-fi systems blasting. There wasn't jazz at home. I come from a religious background and father used to play [the piano] but, really, it was to rehearse hymns for Sunday.

More recently, however, in keeping with jazz's increasing 'respectability' in broader society (Meltzer, 1993: 29; Neal, 1999: 29; 68; Ramsey, 2003: 14), its standing within the church has improved. Facilitating this process has been the growing popularity of the praise and worship movement which has seen, across most denominations, the mainstreaming of more charismatic modes of worship, accompanied by contemporary, popular musics. As such, jazz has become more welcome in the church:

But now I'm quite amazed at the fact that I get invited by churches – not to play gospel music – but to play jazz. And these are like Pentecostal churches who, ten years ago, would have said, 'Ha! No ways!' (Melvin Peters)

Jazz's changing fortunes in the church index its function as 'capital' and I now turn to a discussion of this phenomenon by considering how music's status waxes and wanes in relation to the theatres within which it is performed and heard.

### **Actors/Subject position/Theatres/Capital**

*Capital is not a thing, but rather a definite set of social relations.*<sup>22</sup> (Anwar Shaikh, 1990: 73)

Stunning voice, very attractive, a young black woman: [Siyah Makuzeni's] got lots of cultural capital. On some level, she says something about where we're going as a country by virtue of who she is: she's respect[ed]; everybody likes her; everybody recognizes her talent and that's powerful. (Kerryn Scott)

Although 'capital' typically refers to resources such as money or property, the descriptive scope of the term has broadened significantly following Bourdieu's (1984) introduction of the concepts "cultural capital" and "social capital" into the cultural studies lexicon. Thornton (1995:10) describes the former as "knowledge that is accumulated through upbringing and education which confers social status" and the latter as "connections in the form of friends, relations, associates and acquaintances [which] can all bestow status". She distinguishes between cultural and economic capital noting that "high levels of income and property often correlate with high levels of cultural capital, but the two can also conflict" (ibid). For example, artists and academics are often "rich in cultural capital but poor in economic capital" whilst self-made business tycoons or soccer stars are often "rich in economic capital but less affluent in cultural capital" (ibid). She also observes that the aristocracy, private members' clubs and old boys' networks tend to privilege social over other forms of capital (ibid). Expanding Bourdieu's idea, Thornton coins the term "subcultural capital" to refer to insider knowledge about dress styles, dance moves, venues, DJ's, drugs, etc. shared by participants in rave culture. Echoing Garnham and Williams (1986: 123), she argues that "what ultimately defines cultural capital as capital is its 'convertibility' into economic capital."

In his work on race, class, and musical nationalism in Zimbabwe, Thomas Turino (2000: 556) offers a similarly fluid conceptualisation of capital:

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<sup>22</sup> Italics his

Within the social system as a whole, economic and political capital usually have the greatest importance, whereas more leeway may be granted to subordinate groups in regard to access to types of capital deemed less consequential (e.g. cultural capital) within the overall social system ... [however], this can misfire because, as Bourdieu has shown, one type of capital can be used to secure another.

Cued by these writers, I therefore propose that any object or attribute that is deemed valuable and exchangeable with other valued entities within a particular theatre accrues *currency* and consequently functions as capital in that context. Further, I propose that the overall capacity of any form of capital to affect a particular power equation, both as an enabling and constraining force, increases in relation to the number of theatres within which it has currency.

As sound, (and crucially, as an affective medium) music is a valuable resource in that it has the capacity to shape individual and social perceptions of the environments within which it is heard (Erlmann, 1996: 186; Pratt, 1990: 22; Shepherd, 1991: 159). When music is construed to address the needs or political agendas of a particular theatre (guiding worship in a church, providing the right ambience in a restaurant, production of knowledge in a university, generating profit for a recording company, inspiring national pride) it becomes a "factor of production" (Edgar & Sedgwick, 1999: 52) or "resource that is valued, not for its own sake, but for its function in the production of other goods or services that are of intrinsic value" (*Ibid*), and functions as a form of capital. Like money (albeit more complicatedly and unreliably) music may accrue exchange value and function as currency, and its status as capital waxes and wanes in relation to the moods of the politico-economic environments in which it 'trades'.

This notion was expressed by the interviewees in various guises. For example Neil Gonsalves and Melvin Peters remarked that their fluency with pop music during their teenage years bolstered their popularity (increased their holdings of social capital) at school:

I was taking these organ lessons and [on] school show day, my dad would bring the whole organ and I'd pull out this show like a one-man band. I was a star! People couldn't believe that one person could actually keep all of that going. (Neil Gonsalves)

I could improvise a little bit on pop tunes and that kind of thing; at school, I was popular for that reason, you know. (Melvin Peters)

Marion Caldwell commented that a shared interest in, and practical knowledge of, classical music is a significant aspect of her interaction with her husband and his family. Again, cultural capital (musical expertise) helps secure social capital:

I married into a family which is so musical and where that's just so much a part of them that I don't think that I'd be able to have the same relationship with [my husband] or his family if I wasn't musical: I think I'd probably feel a little bit out when the family gets together. (Marion Caldwell)

The circumstances surrounding Mosaic's fundraising concert illustrate the recursive relationships among social, cultural, and monetary forms of capital, and the music played by the group that December evening functioned as a signifier of value on three interdependent levels. First, as the collectivising locus of its members' friendship and family networks, Mosaic constituted a fund of social capital. Second, the band enjoyed high holdings of cultural capital in that our 'Indo-Afro-jazz' sound articulated discourses of the Rainbow Nation. Moreover, "in its condensed and virtual landscape" (Coplan, 1994: 202), Mosaic presented a musical description of South Africa that privileged middle-class Indian South African experiences, and for this reason, was warmly supported by the mostly professional Indian people who attended the concert. At the concert, these funds of social and cultural capital were converted into monetary capital (we raised over R6000). Consequently, we were able to attend the 1996 International Association of Jazz Educators' conference in Atlanta, and further increased our holdings of cultural capital by virtue of having played at the prestigious event.

As described by Gisele Turner, jazz's rising popularity in post-apartheid Durban indexes a comparable, but much wider, circuit of convertible 'capitals':

There was growing interest in [jazz], and people started to recognize that they were accessing a middle-class black market with jazz. Jazz didn't seem to have too much of a generational thing: you could still access youngish people, quite a lot of Coloured and Indian people, and even some white people, as well as a large [number] of black people. Suddenly it seemed as though jazz could be the universal language of Durban: especially as jazz is such a *broad* term for such a *lot* of different music, it seemed to cover the bases. People were getting excited about that because it was the potential to make money ... and access the correct clients. I don't want to sound cynical, but the growth of jazz in Durban has got nothing to do with music.

Proficient in what has become a prestigious, and 'high-capital' musical discourse, Durban's jazz musicians have become financial beneficiaries of this process:

The corporate world is borrowing from the fact that people are more interested in jazz. There's a sense in the corporate world that they have to 'go African' because so many of their clients are African ... PR people (who are very quick to catch onto what is trendy so that they can look good in the eyes of their clients and their bosses) will hook into jazz, especially Afro-jazz, so people can go: "Oh we had Afro-jazz at our function." And they pay; that's where the money is. If there's been any real spin-off in terms of money for musicians, it's been that the corporates are climbing onto the jazz bandwagon. The musicians are basically able to say what they want to be paid, and they're paid well. (Gisele Turner)

As Turner is all too aware, she is herself both exploited by, and a beneficiary of, this corporate-led politics of cynical self-interest:

It's all about power. It's also about political correctness; it's about reaching the people a newspaper has to reach. Editors will go to their sub-editors and say, "There aren't enough black faces in this paper." And suddenly Gisele's a very popular girl: not only does she know all the black musicians, but she's got pictures of them (that she's been taking painstakingly over the years). Basically the media has got to be seen to be keeping au fait with what is current. [When] the *Tonight* section of *The Daily News* was down-size[d], they got rid of all [but two] of their [freelance] columnists: I'm not blinded about why they kept me. I'm onto a good thing in their eyes.

As Turner's comments reveal, jazz's status as capital is complexly underwritten by various meta-narratives of Economy and State, and in the following (and final) part of this chapter, I try to trace how these 'scripts' frame the production and reception of local jazz.

### **Actors/Subject position/Theatres/Capital/Scripts**

We need a mapping that pays attention both to the minutiae of daily life and to the larger structures of relations underpinning the surface diversity of individual and unique lives. This mapping needs also to move continually back and forth between them. Without this kind of nuanced mapping our analyses are unlikely to tell us much about just *how* the great surging narrative of contemporary capitalism translates into real power relations among real people in real places. (Kate Crehan, 1997: 8-9)

Largely privileging the interests of elite social groupings, scripts are systems of predispositions that legitimate, and thus help perpetuate, societies' unequal distributions of physical and symbolic capital. Representing the ideational level of power's operations, scripts are primarily 'authored' by 'super-theatres' such as national governments, the World Bank, or the Vatican, that enjoy vast holdings of political and economic capital. Faithfully or flexibly enforced within subsidiary theatres (state apparatuses, archdioceses and parishes), scripts often result in the imposition of violent hierarchies and same-other polarities (west and rest, saved and heathen) that rationalise the subjugation of the weak (women, the poor, Iraqi children) by the powerful (men, trans-national corporations, US military).

Apartheid was a 'model' script in this sense. Involving a violent hierarchy that entrenched white, male capital at its apex, apartheid advanced the needs of a migrant labour system which absolved capitalist interests of social wage costs, and ultimately cannibalised the reproductive labour of rural, black women. A ubiquitous presence, apartheid was/is staged in innumerable South African theatres, and experienced as a multiplicity of intra- and interpersonal dramas of acquiescence and/or resistance. In the discussion that follows, I consider how spatial and

performative refractions of the apartheid script at the University of Natal politicised the (musical) experiences of actors convened there.

### *Apartheid*

Like many senior 'New Left' intellectuals, Christopher Ballantine cites the events of May/June 1968 as a central influence on his scholarly work:

1968 was a brilliant time, brilliant, brilliant. To be a student in the northern hemisphere then was just thrilling; to have *lived* through May/June '68 was really a life-changing experience: it was then that I started to get very seriously interested in Marxism ... I encountered the Frankfurt school and Adorno, and ate and breathed and slept this stuff.

After completing his postgraduate studies at Cambridge, Ballantine returned to South Africa in 1972 to take up a lectureship at the University of Natal's newly established music department:

My commitment was going to be to try to find a way to make music in a South African context participate in the struggle. I understood that to be partly through the writing that I was doing and also partly through being in on the ground floor of what was going to be a new musical institution; it wasn't shaped ... there was nothing to fight against, except what I wanted to engage with, which was a capitalist world and race capitalism.

Although there were no significant institutional hurdles to overcome, the politically-oppressive climate that pervaded the country as a whole was inescapable:

In 1972 you didn't want to go around calling yourself a Marxist. I'd smuggled some books back from Cambridge. You had to declare every book you were bringing back and there were some books that I couldn't get into the country – didn't want to even try, because you then get on the security branch watch-list. But there were some books I'd managed to get in – and I can remember in 1972 or 73 – getting so nervous about what I had that I actually had a book-burning. I was keeping a whole lot of books in the ceiling of the house that I was living in. (Christopher Ballantine)

Even close friendships were not exempt from the tight grip of state repression:

My closest friend on campus at that stage was Raymond Sutner. A senior lecturer in law, he was, at that stage, working underground for the ANC although I didn't know it; I only discovered that later. He [later] went to prison for ten years. (Christopher Ballantine)

Other individuals within the university community, like political scientist Rick Turner, also contested the prevailing politics, both in their intellectual and private lives:

Rick Turner was clearly talking Marxism, unashamedly – well carefully – and living a very alternative way. Rick was living with Fozia, breaking the Immorality Act<sup>23</sup>. He was constantly raided by the security police, so they had to have all sorts of ruses in their house about which room she slept in. (Christopher Ballantine)

In the early 1980s, the linguistics department tried to challenge the racial status quo by exploiting fissures in the apartheid edifice:

Professor Chick wanted to introduce [a course] in linguistics at the post-grad level [for] practicing teachers as a response to what was happening politically. I recall him explaining to me a loophole in the system by which you could get black, Indian, and coloured teachers in to do postgraduate course[s]: partly, you had to argue upon the grounds of there not being a comparable course offered in the surrounding ethnic universities. (Ralph Adendorff)

Although this was not the music department's primary intention, its decision to include ethnomusicology and jazz in its curriculum had a similar effect. Christopher Ballantine explains:

We were considered to be out on a limb [because] of things that we were doing here: introducing a degree in ethnomusicology; appointing the first black lecturer in a South African music department; introducing jazz.

It was framed not in terms of a recruiting ploy, because in those days [when] black students came to study here permission had to be sought. Of course if you were offering something that was not on offer somewhere else, that was the only ground on which exemption would be granted. So it did work as a recruiting thing. But it was more that we needed to start taking

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<sup>23</sup> The Immorality Act of 1950 forbade sexual relations between whites and 'non-whites'.

seriously the local cultures. We had to wisen up to where we were [and] that wisening up was part of the greater political shift that was to take place.

That for me was very conscious. I couldn't have felt that I should be here if I didn't have the sense that I was at least trying, in those ways, to make that political engagement. I was trying to make it all the way through from my research and writing, through to the way the Department of Music was being structured, the staff we were appointing, to kinds of courses we were designing, to my own teaching, and, beyond that, to entrance criteria, and so on. To try and think about this in a new way: as an anti-apartheid enterprise.

Nevertheless, the university was constrained by the larger racial politics of the country, and inadvertently replicated it in certain respects. Thus students of colour, like Melvin Peters who began his BMus studies in 1981, were only ever a tiny minority. Moreover, as a racial 'other' within a white-dominated theatre, Peters had to contend with a semiotic regime that syllogistically enchain'd dark skin and 'substandard-ness', and was burdened with having to 'prove' his equality:

Being the only Indian in class, it was a bit strange but ... once they saw that I was pretty much on a par with them, it was fine.

Peters was "on a par" with his white peers because he had been trained in classical music, and just as his fluency with pop music had bolstered his holdings of social capital at high school, his knowledge of western classical music constituted, within the Music Department, a fund of cultural capital that underwrote his 'parity' with white students. When the Music Department began teaching jazz, however, the micro-politics of subject position and cultural capital shifted significantly. Because "the University of Natal has been associated as *the* institution for intellectuals in Natal" (Stacey van Schalkwyk), jazz's formal recognition by the university did much to enhance its status as capital:

Jazz became academically respectable at that time, in the sense that it figured in the prospectus: you could do a [degree] in jazz. (Ralph Adendorff)

This in turn positively affected the portfolio of capital held by jazz students. As Melvin Peters explains, people would say:

"There's Melvin Peters: he's studying with Darius [Brubeck]", and it would lead to a gig. There were a lot of spin-offs because I'd started off so early with Darius.

The department's introduction of a jazz degree was of even greater significance as an anti-apartheid gesture. As mentioned, jazz was enormously popular in apartheid South Africa's black townships:

We grew up listening to jazz: jazz was like what Kwaito is today; popular, popular. It's like you didn't really need to buy records because (whether consciously or unconsciously) there was a communal listening thing in New Brighton. A guy would be cutting the grass at his home; he would take out the speaker, put it outside, and play jazz (the Blue Note label was very, very popular). So you could be walking down the road, going to a shop or something, and you would have listened to a whole range of jazz. And it was 'Jazz'. (Lex Futshane)

Being proficient in a musical discourse recognized as capital by the university, jazz musicians from township communities were consequently able to study on campus (if they could find the money) and thereby increased their holdings of cultural and social capital by virtue of their links with the institution. For some members of the university community, like Ralph Adendorff, jazz's presence on campus constituted a utopian prefiguring of a post-racial future:

[In the mid to late 1980s,] you didn't see students of different racial backgrounds together other than in classrooms. But jazz, it seems, was a kind of opportunity for more normal mixing, and less self-conscious mixing. I think it's something inherent in the nature of jazz. It has a 'non-white', glorious past as it were that acts as a backdrop to whatever is happening now. The key figures were for the most part, 'non-white'.

Neil Gonsalves understands the higher levels of interracial interaction among music students in more pragmatic, spatially-defined terms:

In computer science, there [are] hundreds of students [and] there's a certain anonymity. With the Music department, because it's much smaller, one is forced to interact a lot more. When I was doing computer science, all my friends were Indian. When I got into the Music Department, it really took me out of my comfort zone. Suddenly – and I do mean suddenly – the guys I

was hanging out with (because you still weren't there) were almost entirely black.

While the opportunities for meaningful interracial interaction opened up by jazz's presence on campus are valuable and significant, the introduction of jazz studies was initially not without its problems and contradictions. For example, many black students felt that jazz's marginal position in the curriculum replicated apartheid hierarchies and inequalities:

The only thing that was jazz when we got there was jazz workshop<sup>24</sup>: that was the only time you'd do anything that had to do with jazz ... [Within] the first few months, we realised, "Ah man, this is not what we thought it was. This is not what we wanted." So we were disillusioned ... Our point was, to put it bluntly, if you were black, you would come out of Natal University not good enough a jazz musician and of course, you wouldn't be good enough to be a classical musician because you didn't grow up with that [music]. The people that really benefited were white students because that was their gig. (Lex Futshane)

It is unlikely that the almost exclusively white staff of the music department will have foreseen this contradiction, but this is because

the operations of whiteness have historically produced dispersed regularities with no identifiable point of origin whose absence allows white people to deny even the existence of the regularities, let alone that of any intentionality that might inform them. By disarticulating each power effect from the others and isolating it into an individual 'problem' (if it is noticed at all), white people can deny regularity and thus the systematicity of their own whiteness. The net effect of such strategic denial is to produce the truth that whiteness as an informing regularity of the micro-physics of power, does not exist. (Christopher Holmes Smith and John Fiske, 2000: 609)

Moreover, the legitimating power and hegemonic force of these meta-narrative "truths" is such that they not only 'buy in' those who benefit from their operations but often co-opt those whose interests they hurt. As such, despite apartheid's obviously negative impact on people of colour, many South Africans of Indian origin, for example, were remarkably un-politicised:

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<sup>24</sup> A jazz ensemble class

I had a cousin [on campus] who was much more [politically] conscious and connected with people who used to attend these SASCO meetings. I used to hang out with her, and she would take me to the meetings, actually dragging me. I remember [having] a sense of dread – I suppose, the same kinds of dread that a Catholic has attending a revivalist meeting where people stand up and shout, and you just want to sit down and say your “Hail Mary’s” or something. This political meeting invariably would end up with people singing “Nkosi Sikelela”, picking fists in the air, and going, “Viva!” These things I’d never done: when I was in school, and people went out to boycott, I was always on the fence and ultimately didn’t go out; I was one of the guys that stayed in the classroom ...I didn’t go to the meetings in terms of standing up for anything; I went because I was hanging out with [my cousin]. (Neil Gonsalves)

By contrast, the micro-politics of music, subject position, and capital that surrounded Gonsalves as a music student were to have a much greater impact on his consciousness of race and power than the more formal kinds of anti-apartheid protest he had previously encountered:

I started to wake up when I saw black students’ perspective[s]; it came from hanging out with them. They would describe something and how they saw it suddenly opened my eyes to different things, for example the fact that we (as jazz musicians) *had* to study European classical music. I could never conceive of any racial slant on that [until] these guys [articulated] it. I started seeing the department as a microcosm of something much bigger.

Ultimately of course, and as Christopher Ballantine implies in his reference to “race capitalism”, apartheid is itself “a microcosm of something much bigger”, a ‘chapter’ within “the great surging narrative” (Crehan, 1997: 9) of global capitalism. Because of its geographical position and its distinctive mix of natural and human resources, South Africa has, since the seventeenth century, been conscripted into key dramas on the global capitalist stage. During the spice trade, it functioned – for one of the leading trans-national corporations of the seventeenth century, the Dutch East India Company – as a geopolitically crucial halfway post between Europe and the East. Later, as a repository of vast mineral wealth and cheap (read subjugated, black) labour, the region was, between the 1880s and late 1960s, a space of rapid but criminally asymmetrical economic development. Again, international capitalist interests benefited enormously, and it is not insignificant that South Africa’s biggest conglomerate, Anglo-American, takes its double-barrelled name from the world’s

earliest and largest capitalist economies. Finally, in the 1980s, as the last remaining ‘western’ polity in sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa was pertinent (albeit peripherally and problematically) to the power dynamics of a Cold War world.

### *Post-apartheid*

Coinciding with the ‘triumph’ of capitalism and the end of the Cold War, the inauguration of post-apartheid South Africa was, for many, marked by Nelson Mandela’s release from prison on 2 February 1990, and crowned by his installation as president following the nation’s first democratic elections on 27 April 1994. Accompanied by “the Rainbow Nation” meta-narrative, the emerging “New South Africa” was, at least for its more privileged citizens, a space of elation.

Mosaic was very much a product of this euphoria, and both musically and in public descriptions of our “Indo-Afro-jazz” project, Mosaic endorsed the Rainbow Nation script. For example, in a press release advertising our very first gig at Durban’s Le Plaza Hotel on 5 April 1991, we wrote that “much of our inspiration comes from the rich network of each member’s culture and our experience of cross-cultural music.” In 1995, when we were fundraising for our Atlanta trip, I wrote: “the politics of the Rainbow Nation are not just the macro-politics of the Mandelas and De Klerks or World Cup Rugby, but equally, the micro-politics of drawing together within the visual arts, literature, drama or music, the historically disparate strands of the ‘rainbow’ into a whole we can proudly call truly South African.” However, what I failed to recognise, in my giddy blending of nationalistic and academic rhetoric, is that the Rainbow Nation, for all its colourful pluralism, is but another meta-narrative fiction:

The Rainbow Nation is a government-imposed ... strategy for creating a harmonious populace ... it's a top-down thing: this is the policy; this is the propaganda; this is what we must do ... The idea of a Rainbow Nation is daft. (Kerryn Scott)

As far as I'm concerned, there's nothing like a Rainbow Nation; that's all a farce: it's a big, big, big joke. I mean look, you Indian, I'm Xhosa, we Africans and that is white, and that is black, and that is that. If we accept

each other at that level, I think we're addressing the real issues. Now if we are going to want to accept each other on superficial, fake platforms, then we're not addressing the grass-root issues, and we will always have problems, which is why there are problems ... Before we spoke the Rainbow nation ... we were talking non-racialism, and I still have serious problems with that. I'm not a non-race: I am a race, and if you look closely at non-racialism, all the so-called second-class citizens were getting classed out of ourselves. You had to stop being an Indian; I must stop being a Xhosa, and then we meet in this common ground that we call non-racial. But if you scrutinise that 'common ground', it meant you subscribed to white [perspectives]. (Lex Futshane)

Worse still, between 1990 and 1994 alone, while we 'fiddled', musically celebrating the nation's 'miraculous' transformation, "the death toll in political violence reached 14 000, with 22 000 injuries, more than at any single period during the apartheid era" (Pieterse and van Donk, 2002: 6). A regressive force, Mosaic's musicking in this instance partakes of a blinkered politics of amnesia, rationalising the pleasures that accompany middle-class privilege while ignoring the life-and-death struggles of an economically-disempowered majority.

Another post-apartheid script is Thabo Mbeki's "African Renaissance", which posits a locally-driven, socio-cultural, political, and economic rejuvenation of Africa that transcends the continent's long history of colonialist and imperialist subjugation. David Coplan (2001: 117) cautiously suggests that the African Renaissance may represent an improvement on the Rainbow Nation narratives it supplants:

If indeed the Rainbow Nation offered nothing more by way of economic advancement to the majority of dispossessed black people than the rueful sight of a small number of their more fortunate brothers and sisters enjoying economic privilege, then the African Renaissance could still serve as an ideological weapon in the struggle to extend benefits and opportunities more broadly.

Kerryn Scott disagrees vehemently. For her, the African Renaissance, like the Rainbow Nation, is an elitist fantasy, fatally out-of-step with the lived realities of the nation's and continent's inhabitants:

KS: We forget that half the continent speaks French as their first language, and like how much xenophobia is there in South Africa? How much do we

hate foreigners, black foreigners, particularly? You know, "All Nigerians are drug-lords"; "All Cameroonian are here to steal our women." This idea that "we are Africans; sesonke, we are one" is crap, because it does not happen on the ground. The levels of xenophobia in post-apartheid South Africa are unprecedented: we don't see ourselves as one with the rest of the African continent. [Mbeki's] got a very imperialistic notion of his role in Africa: because we're the most technologically advanced, and the most industrialised, and this, that and the other, all the businesses go out and then they do all of these things and

NR: and that's a very short, black Rhodes.

KS: You know what I'm saying: it's not a humanitarian dream; it's an imperialistic dream.

Likewise, numerous scholars argue that post-apartheid South Africa functions as a sub-imperial power, and remains detrimentally inscribed by the interests of trans-national capital (Beal, Crankshaw, and Parnell, 2002; Beavon, 2004; Bond, 2004; Hart, 2002). As Scott's comments on the Newtown Cultural Precinct (where one of the Prisoners' concerts was held) reveal, the harsh realities of neo-liberal post-apartheid South Africa ultimately form part of the broader contexts that surround local jazz's production and reception:

Johannesburg definitely needs urban renewal, and to attract everyone back to the city centre, but not at the expense of chucking people off to Diepsloot. It's a particular *kind* of vision of urban renewal that they're imposing on groups of people who live in the city centre who themselves are not consulted. It's a bourgeois notion of urban renewal, and if you're a hawker or somebody living in one of those high-rise buildings, where you actually live every day of your life, you're not part and parcel of this renewal strategy; you're extraneous to it; they want to get rid of you. That is very, very, very problematic ... it's not done in consultation and that's why it's not really legitimate.

To summarise: power is the commonality subtending and linking local and global dimensions of social experience. Ideationally scripted, and spatially and performatively refracted, its operations saturate every aspect of local jazz's production and reception. In short, 'the musical' is always deeply political.

## 7. Turnaround

Recognising that music is best studied in relation to the social contexts that surround and subtend its existence, and drawing on a notion of discourse that views expressive practice as a palimpsest of textual, subjective, spatiotemporal and political dynamics, the present dissertation has offered a thick description of the music played by Counterculture, Mosaic, and the Prisoners of Strange in eight concerts held in Durban and Johannesburg between 1994 and 2003.

Providing relatively 'thin' descriptions of these concerts, chapter 2 introduced the reader to local jazz's musical and social landscapes. Focussing on issues of intra- and intertextuality, chapter 3 then presented a parametric analysis of their music, and showed how local jazz functions as a cohesive field of musical discourse. Drawing primarily on interview testimony, chapters 4, 5, and 6 subsequently explored how local jazz is additionally inscribed by an array of idiocultural, spatiotemporal, and political dynamics.

Addressing notions of music and identity, chapter 4 described how the textual materiality and social meanings of the music examined are (partially) shaped by a mosaic of idiocultural dynamics collectively constituted by local jazz's musicians and listeners. Chapter 4 then argued that in producing and receiving music, musicians and listeners variously affirm and/or contest their participation within various social narratives. Extending this account of text/context interaction, chapter 5 explored the role of architectural and geographic space as socio-historical forces that additionally shape local jazz's production and reception.

Finally, noting that power is the commonality subtending and linking local and global dimensions of social experience, chapter 6 offered a socio-politically focused rereading of the arguments presented in chapters 3, 4, and 5. Offering a detailed account of the political dynamics that saturate the production and reception of the music examined, chapter 6 proposed that local jazz's idiocultural

and spatiotemporal contexts, and ultimately, its textual instances, are inseparable from the political energies which shape most human activity.

"So how is any of this any different from opera, pop, Zanu PF, or the British National Health System?" asked musicologist, Roger Parker, when I presented parts of chapter 4 at a Cambridge Music Faculty colloquium. The short answer is, probably not very much: as a theoretical lens, discourse ultimately views music in over-generalised terms; and most musics, and indeed human activities, may be profitably conceptualised as discourse. Nevertheless, jazz is not opera, and neither of these musical discourses is a political party or a state apparatus. As different regimes of truth, they involve different enactments of identity; are differently influenced by their spatiotemporal contexts; involve different politics; and ultimately exist as very different social practices.

As such, this paragraph marks, not an ending, but a turnaround, the beginning of a comparative project that would rethink jazz and discourse by exploring how interrelationships of text, subjectivity, place, history and power play out in other musical ecologies. The central question that this thesis has posed – "what does it mean when these performances (of these works) take place at these times, in these places, with these participants?" – is Christopher Small's; and in keeping with the cyclical theme of the moment, I think it makes sense to end as I began, with his sensible words:

In musicking, our exploration, affirmation and celebration of relationships does not end with those of a single performance, but can expand to the relationships between one performance and another, and for those who are prepared to explore further afield, to the relationships between performances in different styles, genres and even whole musical traditions and cultures. It is an ever-widening spiral of relationships, and each twist of the spiral can widen our understanding of our own relationships, of the reality that we construct and is constructed for us by the society in which we ourselves live. (1998: 209-210)

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<sup>3</sup> In addition to recordings referred to in the text, this discography also includes an incomprehensive list of albums on which participant musicians may be heard as leaders or 'side' players.

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# Appendix

## Notes to accompanying CD

### **Track 1: Counterculture; “Ngu Makazi” (Lex Futshane)**

Live recording by SABC Radio: Howard College Theatre; 3 June 1994

Chris Merz – tenor saxophone  
 Feya Faku – trumpet  
 Melvin Peters – piano  
 Lex Futshane – double bass  
 Vince Pavitt – drums

### **Track 2: Mosaic; “G force” (Mageshen Naidoo)**

Studio recording by Guy Chandler: Centre for Jazz and Popular Music; 27 June 1997

Stacey van Schalkwyk – flute  
 Nishlyn Ramanna – piano  
 Mageshen Naidoo – guitar  
 Bongani Sokhela – bass guitar  
 Magandiren Moodley – tabla

### **Track 3: Prisoners of Strange; “Sunlove” (Carlo Mombelli)**

Track 5: Mombelli, Carlo. 2002. *When serious babies dance*, Instinct Africaine INS004.

Carlo Mombelli – basses and live jam-man loops  
 Siya Makuzeni – voice  
 Marcus Wyatt – trumpet  
 Sidney Mnisi – tenor saxophone  
 Lloyd Martin – drums