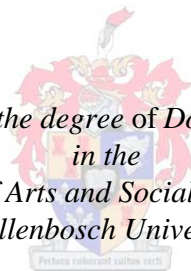


**The dynamics of the interaction between music
and society in recorded popular Afrikaans music,
1900 – 2015.**

by
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*Dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (History)
in the
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at
Stellenbosch University*



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Declaration

By submitting this dissertation, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

December 2015

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In memory of my father, “Black” Dan van der Merwe, who instilled in me a love of reading.

Abstract

This thesis provides an analytical account of the interaction between political events and popular music culture with specific reference to recorded Afrikaans music of the last 115 years. It starts with the first recordings of Boer national anthems during the Anglo-Boer War in 1900, and concludes with expressions of racial exclusivity in post-apartheid Afrikaans pop music. It reveals cases of compliance with, as well as resistance to, the master narrative of Afrikaner nationalism as it existed for most of the twentieth century, and gives examples of how these values persist in the present. By employing popular Afrikaans music as a lens, a clearer image of the agency of ordinary individuals (artists and listeners) emerges against a background of fundamental societal and political change. Furthermore, by looking at popular Afrikaans music over a wide historical period, salient themes (for example class tension and the ubiquitous efforts by cultural nationalist entrepreneurs to co-opt popular Afrikaans music into the Afrikaner nationalist project) in the development of Afrikaner culture over this period are highlighted, which helps to historicise the invocation of Afrikaner nostalgia in post-apartheid Afrikaans pop.

Opsomming

Hierdie tesis bied 'n analitiese verhalings van die interaksie tussen politieke gebeure en populêre musiekkultuur met spesifieke verwysing na opgeneemde Afrikaanse musiek oor die laaste 115 jaar. Dit begin met die eerste opnames van die nasionale volksliedere van die Boererepublieke tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog, en sluit af met uitdrukkings van rasse-eksklusiwiteit in post-apartheid Afrikaanse popmusiek. Die tesis verskaf voorbeelde van die ondersteuning van, en verset teen, die meesternarratief van Afrikanernasionalisme soos dit bestaan het vir groot gedeeltes van die twintigste eeu, en gee ook voorbeelde van hoe hierdie waardes nog manifesteer in die hede. Deur populêre musiek in te span as 'n lens, word 'n duideliker idee verkry van die lewens van gewone mense (kunstenaars en luisteraars), gesien teen 'n agtergrond van fundamentele sosiale en politieke verandering. Deur 'n oorsig te skep van populêre musiek oor 'n lang historiese tydperk, word sekere opvallende temas in die ontwikkeling van Afrikanerkultuur oor hierdie periode (byvoorbeeld klasespanning en die herhaalde pogings deur kulturele nasionalistiese entrepreneurs om populêre Afrikaanse musiek te ko-opteer vir die Afrikanernasionalistiese projek) blootgelê. Dit dra by daartoe om die tematiese gebruik van Afrikaner nostalgie in post-apartheid Afrikaanse popmusiek te historiseer.

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List of abbreviations:

ABC – African Broadcasting Corporation

AHRC – Arts and Humanities Research Council

ATKV – Afrikaanse Taal-en-Kultuurvereniging

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

CHARM – Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music

DRC – Dutch Reformed Church

ECC – End Conscription Campaign

FAK – Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge

GNP – *Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party*

INCH – University of the Free State Institute for Contemporary History

KKNK - Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees

LAM – Ligte Afrikaanse Musiek

NP – National Party

SABC – South African Broadcasting Corporation

SAME – Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie

TBK – Tradisionele Boeremusiekkklub van Suid-Afrika

VP - Volksparty

WAT – Woordeboek vir die Afrikaanse Taal

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Introduction

Music, and discourses on music, contribute to imagining memories that re-organise the history of a group in order to make it meaningful and useful for the present.¹

The Gallo Record Company archivist Rob Allingham provided a concise, yet remarkably insightful, summary of the history of popular² Afrikaans music in his contribution to the African, European and Middle Eastern section in *World Music: The Rough Guide*.³ On one page, he highlighted many of the most important historical themes in the development of popular Afrikaans music in the twentieth century. These included the influence of imported American music on the “concertina-led brand of dance-music” of the 1930s (and later country music), the role of Afrikaner nationalism, the post-war imitation of middle-of-the-road European light music styles, the emergence of alternative Afrikaans music during the 1980s and 1990s, and the link between music revivalists and right-wing politics after 1994. This is a commendable feat. Were it published ten years later, it would undoubtedly also have included the success story of Afrikaans pop music after 2000 in what remains a period of political uncertainty for white Afrikaans speakers. Of course, the story of popular Afrikaans music is much more complicated than Allingham’s commendable potted version allows for. Part of the complication derives from the truism that to disentangle the history of this music’s development from its socio-political context, is to remove it from an essential part of that history. In this thesis, it is the story of change in society, rather than changes in musical genres, that is of primary interest.

¹ D. Martin, *Sounding The Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa* (Somerset-West: African Minds, 2013), p. 21.

² For a differentiation between “popular” and “pop” music, see pages 9-14.

³ S. Broughton, M. Ellingham, and R. Trillo (eds.), *World Music: The Rough Guide. Africa, Europe and the Middle East, South Africa - Popular Music: Nation of Voice*, Vol. 1 (London: Rough Guides, 1999), p. 651.

Problem statement and focus

It has been 115 years since the first recording of an Afrikaans song. Although it was no seismic event in the tumultuous political history of South Africa, it marked the beginning of the development of a cultural space that was of significant importance in the social life of Afrikaners. One can even argue that Afrikaners engaged more regularly with such cultural spaces than with party politics. This thesis explores an eclectic range of cultural themes that rarely (if ever) feature in comprehensive historical works on South Africa of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.⁴ Yet, although (perhaps *because*) they are of a cultural nature, they are of significant political import as well.

This thesis hopes to expand the historiographic boundaries of writing on Afrikaner history. It wrestles with the problem of constructing a previously untold narrative of popular Afrikaans music as it is (and was) informed by and interacts (and interacted) with other contemporary social, political and cultural structures of the time. I offer an alternative focus on Afrikaner history away from key political and economic events and elite individuals (that have traditionally dominated historiography), to the agency of artists and “ordinary” individuals. Considering the interaction of these neglected subjects with dynamic, external structures of power and influence is a foundational prerequisite for the understanding of the development of Afrikaner culture throughout the twentieth (and into the twenty-first) century.

This is a wide-angled historical study, spanning the last 115 years, and follows a basic chronological order of developments in recorded popular Afrikaans music from pre-WWI patriotic Afrikaans recording artists to instances of aggressive racial politics in post-apartheid Afrikaans pop. However, despite using popular music as its main lens while simultaneously

⁴ For instance, Hermann Giliomee’s comprehensive account *The Afrikaners* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003) makes no mention of Afrikaans music at all, while William Beinart’s *Twentieth Century South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) only briefly mentions the popularity of American country music among Afrikaners.

considering constructions of identity, it does not, in the first instance, claim to be a musicological (or critical musicological) study⁵ or an involved psychological analysis of collective or individual Afrikaner identities.

It also does not claim to be a complete history of all the elements involved in the creation, performance and consumption of every popular Afrikaans record ever released. This is an unattainable objective for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is doubtful whether all the missing source material (track listings, early records, etc.) will someday be re-discovered; secondly, the sheer number of records involved over such a long period, makes such an exercise impractical; and lastly, there are persuasive philosophical arguments against the achievability of “comprehensiveness”.⁶

Available sources, as well as a desire to bring into focus certain salient themes, influenced the selection of historic examples employed here. This process of selection is an intentional and unavoidable act and is instrumental in forming a narrative that serves this purpose. Since culture and identity are complex phenomena, and neither is static, such a wide-angled historical view is well suited to highlight the forces and counter-forces at work in the development of popular Afrikaans music and their links to wider phases of societal change. Furthermore, political readings of music provide vital new framings for understanding music in a broader context.⁷ By not considering the “extra-musical” as Lydia Goehr⁸ puts it, the observer is left with an incomplete understanding of the musical text itself. Departing from this point, this thesis looks at the wider context of twentieth century Afrikaner history, which provides a rich backdrop for investigating how the “extra-musical” manifested during different phases in the development of popular Afrikaans music. It also provides insight into

⁵ For a discussion on the theory of popular music studies, see pp. 10-15.

⁶ R. M. Burns (ed.), *Historiography: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies Vol. IV* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), p. 12.

⁷ S. Muller, “Protesting relevance: John Joubert and the Politics of Music and Resistance in South Africa”, *SAMUS* 19/20 (1999/2000).

⁸ “Political Music and the Politics of Music”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52:1 (Winter, 1994), pp. 99-112.

various areas of conflict within the master narrative of Afrikaner nationalism. Although such a political – or any other – reading of popular Afrikaans music is subject to the contingent nature of popular music and its socio-historic context, it nevertheless exposes important aspects of the constructions of Afrikaner identities by those who were in the business of doing so.

Literature review

The last decade has seen a substantial increase in the literature on popular Afrikaans music, mainly as a result of the impact of singer Bok van Blerk's 2006/ 2007 hit "De la Rey".⁹ The song provided an irresistible opportunity to look at the relationship between popular music and Afrikaner identities and their relation to the past. What brought the song to the attention of so many was its reference to the Anglo-Boer War general, Koos de la Rey, the fact that it was the fastest selling debut Afrikaans album in history, and that it seemed to have struck an undeniable chord with Afrikaners. Among all the complexities surrounding the "casting off of old identity moorings", to paraphrase Leswin Laubscher,¹⁰ here was a song that brought many Afrikaners together. This level of popularity led to some concluding that it had become a symbol of Afrikaner unity in a time when there were precious few cultural spaces left in post-apartheid South Africa that enjoyed the support of a significant percentage of Afrikaners. It also sparked wide-spread comment in the media and academia on various aspects of Afrikaner identity, leading to debates on whether or not Afrikaner nationalism was again on the rise and

⁹ A. Bezuidenhout, "From Voëlvry to De La Rey: Popular Music, Afrikaner Nationalism and lost irony", Stellenbosch University seminar, 2007; G. Baines, "De La Rey Rides (Yet) Again: Afrikaner Identity Politics and Nostalgia in Post-Apartheid South Africa", Paper presented to the IASPM Conference, Liverpool, July 2009; D. Roodt, "The 'De la Rey' Song: Is it a sign of Afrikaner resistance?", *American Renaissance* 18:10 (2007); M. Wines, "Song Wakens Injured Pride of Afrikaners", *New York Times*, 17 Feb, 2007; L. Lambrechts and J. Visagie, "De la Rey, De la Rey, sal jy die boere kom lei?", *Litnet Akademies* 6:2 (2009); C. Lotter, "The De la Rey Phenomenon – More than a Song?", *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* 7:2 (2007), available at <https://voices.no/index.php/voices/article/view/490/397>, accessed 10 April 2012.

¹⁰ L. Laubscher, "Afrikaner identity and the music of Johannes Kerkorrel", *South African Journal of Psychology* 35:2 (2005), p. 308.

if this was a form of guilt-free assertion of an identity with its roots in a time when the Afrikaner was the victim, instead of perpetrator.¹¹ These studies linked up with investigations into Afrikaner masculinities,¹² whiteness studies¹³ and sociology¹⁴ to determine how Afrikaner identities manifested amidst changing social landscapes. In this way, “De la Rey” became a fetishised part of the Afrikaner past. More than 200 000 copies of the album were sold, which constitutes almost 10% of the white Afrikaans speaking population in South Africa. It was even featured in the *New York Times*¹⁵ and was discussed in parliament.¹⁶

Apart from right-wing Afrikaner groups attempting to hi-jack the song as a call to arms, and from whom Van Blerk publicly distanced himself,¹⁷ there seemed to be a sudden awareness of a wider cohesive element in Afrikaner society. According to Van der Westhuizen’s view on Afrikaner politics, the mid-2000s seemed:

... (M)ore fertile for these moves than when PRAAG¹⁸ and the Group of 63¹⁹ appeared on the scene. Superficial individualism oiled by rampant materialism and consumerism seemed to provide only a temporary panacea. The heightened civil society activity around “De La Rey”, led by Solidarity and spurred on by *Rapport*, along with pop singer Steve Hofmeyr’s new incantation as an “activist” for Afrikaner interests, signalled another phase in the search for a legitimate Afrikaner identity.²⁰

While her assertion above certainly rang true at the time, this new “phase in the search for a legitimate Afrikaner identity” did not produce another “De La Rey”, and although Steve

¹¹ Bezuidenhout, “From Voëlvry to De La Rey”, p. 4; see also K. van der Waal and S. Robins, “‘De la Rey’ and the Revival of ‘Boer Heritage’: Nostalgia in the Postapartheid Afrikaner Culture Industry”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37:4 (2011), pp. 763-779.

¹² K. du Pisani, “Puritanism transformed: Afrikaner Masculinities in the Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Period”, in R. Morrell (ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Durban: Zed Books, 2001), pp. 157-175; D. Pretorius, “The Visual Representations of Masculinities in Huisgenoot Tempo Magazine”, *COMMUNICATIO* 39:2 (2013), pp. 210–232.

¹³ C. Ballantine, “Re-thinking ‘Whiteness’?: Identity, Change and ‘White’ Popular Music in Post-Apartheid South Africa”, *Popular Music* 23:2 (May, 2004), pp. 105-131.

¹⁴ M. Vestergaard, “Who’s Got the Map? The Negotiation of Afrikaner Identities in Post-Apartheid South Africa”, *Daedalus* 130: 1 (Winter, 2001), pp. 19-44.

¹⁵ M. Wines, *New York Times*, 17 Feb, 2007.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Bezuidenhout, “From Voëlvry to De La Rey”, p. 3.

¹⁸ “Pro-Afrikaans Action Group”.

¹⁹ Founded by Afrikaner intellectuals to debate issues critical to the future of Afrikaners.

²⁰ C. van der Westhuizen, *White Power & the Rise and Fall of the National Party* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2007), p. 325.

Hofmeyr has remained politically active,²¹ for the moment, the “temporary panacea” of “rampant materialism and consumerism” seem again to dominate Afrikaner interests. In fact, it can also be argued that “De La Rey”’s popularity ran alongside this materialism and did not suspend it at all.²² Yet “De la Rey”’s popularity was not extraordinary if seen in the wider context of commercial Afrikaans pop music. In fact, several artists since 1999 have released albums that have sold just as many, or more, copies than “De la Rey”, but the connection between them and how representative they are of post-apartheid Afrikaner identities has not been explored. Within the wide definition of popular music then, the Afrikaans mainstream was neglected despite the fact that the artists representing this group have been much more successful in packaging “desire” – to borrow from Michael Drewett²³ – for consumption by the majority of Afrikaners, often by linking up with other popular cultural themes such as sport and television. Robust sales figures, along with the dissemination of their profiles into most areas of mass media, make Afrikaans pop stars some of the most recognisable Afrikaner celebrities of the past and present. These artists constitute a clearly defined hegemonic group who purposefully project specific identity stereotypes – with specific ideas regarding gender roles, sexuality and race – determined by traditions that are sometimes at odds with a multi-racial South African society. This gives mainstream Afrikaans music the feel of an exclusive cultural *laager*. In this way, Afrikaans pop music has become a memorialised space that plays an integral role in defining a popular brand of post-apartheid white Afrikaner identity.

Before “De la Rey”,²⁴ academic literature on popular Afrikaans music was very limited. Apart from Jury,²⁵ Grundlingh,²⁶ Bosman,²⁷ Viljoen²⁸ and Laubscher,²⁹ who published articles that

²¹ Electronic communication with author, 05 August 2013.

²² A. Grundlingh, “Die historiese in die hede: Dinamika van die De la Rey fenomeen in Afrikanerkringe, 2006-2007”, *New Contree* 53 (2007), pp. 147 – 166.

²³ “Packaging Desires: Album covers and the presentation of apartheid”, in G. Olwage (ed.), *Composing Apartheid: Music for and Against Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), pp. 115-135.

²⁴ The song and album with the same name was released already in 2006, but sales increased exponentially the following year.

²⁵ B. Jury, “Boys to Men: Afrikaans Alternative Popular Music, 1986-1990”, *African Languages and Cultures* 9:2 (1996), pp.99-109.

pre-date “De la Rey”, and Pat Hopkins’ book on the Voëlvry tour,³⁰ the literature on popular Afrikaans music before 2007 was limited to newspapers and magazines. In most journal publications, but especially Grundlingh’s and Jury’s, the Voëlvry movement of 1989, or the artists associated with the movement, formed the central focus. Although the music of the Voëlvry movement falls within a wider definition of popular music, it does not form part of the Afrikaans pop mainstream. The interest in these artists stems from the overt political protest in their music – a rare thing in popular Afrikaans music prior to the movement. Typically, “protest” singers,³¹ poets (through literature studies of their lyrics), or Afrikaans music movements tend to dominate discourse on popular Afrikaans music. As a result, artists like Koos Kombuis, Johannes Kerkorrel and bands like Fokofpolisiekar,³² and of course Bok van Blerk, attract more academic attention than artists whose music is more “mainstream” and less overtly political. While the existing discourse is by no means irrelevant and is often motivated by a search for dynamic cultural processes, it runs the risk of accepting the mainstream as “static”. Most top-selling Afrikaans artists have also often been criticised for being “superficial” by journalists and other, more “serious” artists.³³

Recent musicological studies have focused on the historiography of Afrikaans music during and preceding apartheid,³⁴ but not popular Afrikaans music per se. The exception is

²⁶ A. Grundlingh, “‘Rocking the boat’? The ‘Voëlvry’ music movement in South Africa: Anatomy of Afrikaans anti-apartheid social protest in the eighties”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 37: 3 (2004), pp. 483-514.

²⁷ M. Bosman, “Die FAK-Fenomeen: populêre Afrikaanse musiek en volksliedjies”, *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* 41:2 (2004), pp. 21 – 46.

²⁸ M. Viljoen, “Johannes Kerkorrel and post-apartheid Afrikaner identity”, *Literator* 26:3 (2005), pp. 65-81.

²⁹ Laubscher, “Afrikaner identity and the music of Johannes Kerkorrel”, pp. 308–330.

³⁰ P. Hopkins, *Voëlvry: The Movement That Rocked South Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2006).

³¹ B. A. Senekal and C. van den Berg, “’n Voorlopige verkenning van postapartheid Afrikaanse protesmusiek”, *LitNet Akademies* 7:2 (2010), pp. 98-128.

³² A.E. Klopper, “Die opkoms van Afrikaanse rock en die Literêre status van liriek, met spesifieke verwysing na Fokofpolisiekar”, (MA Dissertation, Stellenbosch University, March 2009).

³³ S. Hofmeyr, *Mense van my Asem* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2008), pp. 212-216.

³⁴ See dissertations by C. Venter, “The Influence of Early Apartheid Intellectualisation on Twentieth-Century Afrikaans Music Historiography”, (Unpublished M.Mus dissertation, Stellenbosch University, 2009), and A. Stimie, “Cosmopolitanism in early Afrikaans music historiography, 1910-1948”, (Unpublished M.Mus dissertation, Stellenbosch University, 2010).

Froneman's ethnomusicological work on *boeremusiek*,³⁵ which is of special significance for the period from the 1930s to the 1950s, when it was one of the most popular genres of recorded Afrikaans music. The lack of musicological studies on popular Afrikaans music is itself a result of political forces, since the historiography of South African musicology has not escaped the politics of the apartheid era. The primacy of race permeates wider studies of popular South African music, which have traditionally focused on subaltern constructions of identity. Under this rubric, white, but especially white *Afrikaans*, music was excluded on the basis that it formed part of the culture of the oppressor. As Christine Lucia puts it:

Local views in the 1980's polarised into two musicological camps: crudely put, musicology for conservatives who engaged with the hegemonic discourse of Western classical music regardless of the way it propped up the regime (indeed, as if it had nothing to do with politics); and ethnomusicology for liberals engaged mainly with African music and with discourse of resistance or for new African scholars...with their "own" music.³⁶

This left no space for the study of popular Afrikaans music within the broad context of South African musicology. Only a handful of studies mentioned Afrikaans pop music in passing, normally accompanied by unflattering adjectives such as "trite and banal",³⁷ and "bland".³⁸ This music was considered to contribute little to South Africa's musical heritage. However, to imply that mainstream Afrikaans popular music is static and meaningless is problematic. It is also still regarded as a compliant part of the dominant language of apartheid ideology,³⁹ an assumption that may be partially correct, but fails to address instances of tension between Afrikaans pop singers and apartheid ideologues. Furthermore, accusations that Afrikaans pop upheld racist Afrikaner hegemony during apartheid have to be substantiated by claims that, in contrast, local pop in other languages did not. By considering its history, much more is

³⁵ W. Froneman, "Pleasure Beyond the Call of Duty: Perspectives, Retrospectives and Speculations on Boeremusiek", (Unpublished D.Phil thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2012).

³⁶ C. Lucia, *The World of South African Music: A Reader* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2005), p. xxxv.

³⁷ Jury, "Boys to men", p. 99.

³⁸ I. Byerly, "Mirror, Mediator, and Prophet: The Music Indaba of Late-Apartheid South Africa", *Ethnomusicology* 42: 1 (1998), p. 14.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

revealed about how Afrikaans pop, or light Afrikaans music “(en)codes, signifies, and/or textualises identity concerns and tensions”.⁴⁰

Generally, the discipline of sociology has been the first to investigate popular music’s cultural impact, while such studies have struggled for legitimacy in the field of musicology.

Musicology has been very slow to embrace a sociological dimension whereas sociology has been happily annexing art and music for over a hundred years. Musicology has typically remained cool about the latter’s results, on the grounds that the sociology of music’s focus on context has tended to make the music peripheral rather than central to its study.⁴¹

Since the first International Conference on Popular Music Research, held in Amsterdam in June 1981,⁴² the field of popular music studies has witnessed substantial development. In the US this has been supported by the development of the so-called “new” musicology, and in Britain “critical” musicology.⁴³ The normative values applied by academic institutions that have dismissed popular music studies for most of the twentieth century have had to adjust to a reality of important musicological and theoretical work in popular music studies. However, this has not made the theoretical approach to popular music any easier, since traditional analytical methods struggle in their analyses of new meanings in popular music today.⁴⁴ These meanings can be found in the relationships between text and context, musicians and audiences, style and history, and between artistry and commerce.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Laubscher, “Afrikaner identity and the music of Johannes Kerkorrel”, p. 1.

⁴¹ J. Johnson, review of Max Paddison’s *Analysis in Adorno’s Aesthetics of Music*, *Music Analysis* 14:2/3 (Jul. - Oct. 1995), pp. 295-313.

⁴² P. Tagg, “Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice”, *Popular Music* 2 (1982), p. 37.

⁴³ A. Moore, Review, *Music & Letters* 77:4 (1996), p. 658.

⁴⁴ D. Brackett, *Interpreting Popular Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

“Pop” vs “Popular” Music

The definition of “popular” – and by extension “pop” – music has posed some theoretical problems that persist in popular music studies today. One of the first to address these problems was Richard Middleton, who provided four possible definitions for “pop” music:

- a) Normative – pop music as inferior; b) Negative – pop music as a particular type which is not something else (i.e. classical or folk); c) Sociological definitions – pop music is associated with (produced by and for) a particular social group; d) Technologic-economic definitions – pop music disseminated by mass media and/or in a mass market.⁴⁶

This last definition is particularly evident in Afrikaans pop music sales, which is the biggest selling genre of all South African music releases. Most of the recent studies on post-apartheid “popular” Afrikaans music have only tacitly assumed one of the first three definitions, without elaborating on the problems inherent to them. To date, no studies on South African popular music have defined “popular music” according to the technologic-economic definition mentioned above, while only De Wet has provided useful data on popular Afrikaans music sales.⁴⁷

For the purposes of this thesis, it is imperative that a differentiation between “popular” and “pop” music is established. “Popular” music has traditionally been associated with the “people’s” music, or well-favoured music, while “pop” is generally regarded as a derogatory sub-genre that is primarily focussed on commercial successes as opposed to the “purer aspirations” of other popular music genres such as folk, rock and blues.⁴⁸ This distinction is weak, and can be problematic:

⁴⁶ R. Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990), p. xi.

⁴⁷ A. de Wet, “Afrikaanse musiek en die model van rasionele verslawing”, Working paper, Department of Economics and the Bureau for Economic Research, University of Stellenbosch, 2008.

⁴⁸ C. Rojec, *Pop Music, Pop Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), p. 1.

(O)ne can hardly escape the conclusion that the opposition to using the descriptor “pop”, with regards to the people’s music, has more to do with defending academic boundaries than engaging with cultural realities.⁴⁹

Rojec poses serious questions regarding the traditional differentiation between “pop” and “popular” music. Firstly, “pop” is more well liked than other more “authentic” genres of popular music, despite accusations of “low taste”.⁵⁰ Secondly, “pop music uses the same mechanism as other branches of the people’s music to influence mass opinion.”⁵¹ In this way, other genres of popular music also use the same “commercialized communication highways” as pop music, although their composition might not be affected by these highways in the same manner.⁵²

Thirdly, the boundaries between “pop” and “popular” are becoming increasingly vague in an era of technological developments and changes in the music industry. The modes of production are changing rapidly, along with the traditional music hierarchies and the interaction with audiences.⁵³ Furthermore, Rojec asserts that these changes are best understood as part of global processes of “cultural de-differentiation”.⁵⁴ While this is undoubtedly true, the Afrikaans pop music market displays some resistance to global trends. Even though global CD sales decreased by 30% between 2004 and 2009⁵⁵ as an inevitable result of legal and illegal music downloads, Afrikaans CD sales tend to remain relatively healthy.⁵⁶

The term “commercial” music is an important one to use in conjunction with the differentiation between “pop” and “popular”. Although “commercial” music is not a well-

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵⁶ M. Malan, “Samas-sukses”, *Rapport*, 12 May 2013, p. 3.

defined category in terms of genre, Simon Frith makes the following important observation about commercial music's function as a commodity in the market:

The record industry is geared to capital accumulation and its profits depend on the number of records sold. The business is ruled by the logic of mass production and a large market is its overriding aim. Record companies don't much care what forms mass music takes as long as its sources can be organised and controlled to ensure profit.⁵⁷

Middleton is skeptical about defining popularity solely according to sales figures. He argues that this positivist approach treats music as an object and ignores its role in cultural practice and "way of life."⁵⁸ On the other hand, Frith's statement above about commercial music's function as a commodity in the market is compelling, as empirical data can provide very important information, especially in the case of high-selling Afrikaans pop music. In this regard, popular music as a commodity is just as subject to normal trends in a capitalist marketplace than other commodities and the channels for distributing music to a large market form its commercial foundation. Thus, for music to become commercially available it must first be identified as being commercially viable, then recorded, distributed and advertised. The socio-political contexts in which these processes occur are of primary importance. Commercial Afrikaans music functioned just like any other type of commercial music, which necessitates an historical investigation into the various channels of distribution of Afrikaans music, specifically the Afrikaans recording and radio broadcasting industries, both of which date to the start of the twentieth century.

Some of the most important technological advances in the record and broadcasting industry coincided with important junctions in the history of the Afrikaner. This was not always coincidental. For example, the demand by Afrikaans listeners for better quality radio signals during the 1938 centenary Trek led to the improvement in the SABC's broadcasting capabilities. This illustrates that the history of radio broadcasting in South Africa, as well as

⁵⁷ S. Frith (ed.), *Facing the Music* (New York: Pantheon, 1989), p. 3.

⁵⁸ Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, p. xi.

an awareness of the development of Afrikaner nationalism and its various projects (of which Afrikaans music was one) contributed to the story told in this thesis. What constituted commercial Afrikaans music also changed over time. Afrikaans music sells in high numbers in South Africa and is outcompeting local releases in other languages.⁵⁹ This warrants an investigation into the social context of the biggest sellers of popular Afrikaans music and how this music is composed, produced, performed and consumed.

In the Afrikaans music industry, the differentiation between “pop” and “popular” has manifested in derogatory remarks aimed at Afrikaans pop singers for the superficiality of their music⁶⁰ and/ or their use of “backtracks” (this refers to the practice of singing along to pre-recorded music instead of using live musicians).⁶¹ At times, these differences had come to symbolise not only differences in artistic values and merit, but also political affiliations. The first Houtstok concert was held on 31 May 1990, the same day as the FAK’s Republic Day festivities at the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria.⁶² At Houtstok, “alternative” Afrikaans musicians – a loosely defined selection of anti-establishment Afrikaans rock and punk groups – played to a crowd of young Afrikaners who did not proscribe to the ideologies of the state. This contrasted sharply with the Afrikaans pop artists performing at the FAK concert who not only used backtracks, but mimed, and entertained a more conservative group of Afrikaners in celebration of Afrikaner nationalism. This positioned Afrikaans “pop” as politically compliant, while “alternative” Afrikaans artists were not only artistically superior, but politically opposed to apartheid. Such accusations of political compliance point to a longer history of interaction between the Afrikaner culture industry and Afrikaner ethnic nationalism.

⁵⁹ Personal communication with record companies, and music retailer Look ‘n Listen, June 2011.

⁶⁰ A. Goosen, “Afrikaanse musiek stamp-stamp tot in die rioolsloot”, *Rapport*, June 13 2009.

⁶¹ Hofmeyr, *Mense van my Asem*, pp. 212-216.

⁶² A. Arnold, “Veertien uur se rock by Houtstok”, *Insig* (May 1990), p. 37; J. Goodwin and B. Schiff, *Heart of Whiteness: Afrikaners face black rule in the New South Africa* (New York: Scribner, 1995), pp. 174-183.

Since the 1930s, ensuring that Afrikaner nationalism was embedded in the character of individuals was seen as a vital pre-requisite for the survival of Afrikaners as a group. This not only resulted in a web of nationalist legislation post-1948 that reflected the policies of the apartheid government, but also gave them unprecedented political power to control the lives of South Africans. These agendas were also evident in Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) services during the apartheid era.⁶³ Yet to assume that popular Afrikaans music went through a similar process of manipulation right from the start of the rise of Afrikaner nationalism is problematic. Various factors played a role in what eventually amounted to the “superficialisation”⁶⁴ and politicisation of Afrikaans pop music. These factors were not exclusively political, nor were they the result of the expressed intention of Afrikaner nationalists only. Technology, global trends and chance all played a role, as well as the compliant attitudes of many Afrikaans music artists.

It is also important to justify the choice of recorded (and broadcasted) music over unrecorded music as primary focus in this thesis. As cultural artefacts, both forms carry with them embedded meanings that link their performers and composers with networks that represent any number of identity constructions. Research on unrecorded popular Afrikaans music will undoubtedly be drawn to the music of coloured Afrikaans speakers who traditionally did not have the same level of access to the recording and broadcasting industries enjoyed by white Afrikaans artists. Despite coloured Afrikaans speakers playing a central historic role in Afrikaans music performance, white Afrikaans language politics dominated the Afrikaans music industry since the very first recordings of Afrikaans music. The last few decades saw an increase in recorded coloured Afrikaans music (and an increase in the literature), from hip-hop to ghoema, but the overwhelming majority of commercial Afrikaans music remains white. Recorded music, with its ability to be heard over the radio and television (both heavily

⁶³ See J. Cilliers, *God for us?* (Stellenbosch: Sun Media, 2007), p. 77 for explanations on the nationalisation of religion during this time.

⁶⁴ Goosen, *Rapport*, 13 June 2009.

contested mediums) and to excite hundreds of thousands of listeners at the same time, historically functioned as popular cultural artefacts on a much larger scale and under different conditions. Albums were subjected to censorship, popular singers had to appeal to the aesthetics of a white Afrikaans market and some have even used their concerts as political platforms.

Identity

The theoretical basis for studying the formation of identity is perhaps the most diverse and complex of all the themes covered in this thesis. Originating from within the field of psychology during the mid-twentieth century, identity studies have come to involve various disciplines, including (since fairly recently) music studies.⁶⁵ Philosophically, the post-structuralism of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and Roland Barthes, and the wider postmodern theories (in various disciplines) by Jean Baudrillard, Giles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and Jean-Francois Lyotard have had a significant impact on the humanities. The philosophic and schizo-analytical work of Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, especially, provides a strong critique of the view that identity is formed by group affiliations such as language, the nation and religion.⁶⁶ Due to the fact that the primary focus of this thesis is on a historiography concerned with the interface where popular music culture and political culture and events meet in Afrikaans music, these highly theorised themes and their long history of debate are of secondary importance, yet not irrelevant. Abebe Zegeye provides an elegant definition that is sensitive to the inter-disciplinary nature of, and complexities associated with, the study of identity. He describes identity as:

⁶⁵ Martin, *Sounding the Cape*, p. 3.

⁶⁶ G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (New York: Continuum, 2004); J. Rachjman, *The Deleuze Connections* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001).

...open-ended, fluid and constantly in a process of being constructed and reconstructed as the subject moves from one social situation to another, resulting in a self that is highly fragmented and context-dependent. The notion of fluidity and context-dependence is particularly apt. After all, conflicting racial, ethnic, gender, class, sexual, religious and national identities are a reality.⁶⁷

Such identity conflicts are ubiquitous in Afrikaner history. Laubscher's analysis of Afrikaner identity and the work of Johannes Kerkorrel is, to date, the most effective effort to position the relationship between Afrikaner identity and popular Afrikaans music within the highly theorised parameters mentioned above. He rightly underscores the vulnerability of the *volkseie* (belonging to the nation) versus *volksvreemd* (foreign to the people or nation) construct to resistance discourse (what constituted "Afrikaner" was defined by what was not "Afrikaner").⁶⁸

Studying this margin, frame, unspoken other, constitutive outside, and/or frontier effect is consequently as, and more, telling of identity than an originary and self-generating centre.⁶⁹

Certain centrifugal forces, however, became more powerful in the process of Afrikaner self-identification since the second half of the nineteenth century. The Afrikaans language movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries helped differentiate Afrikaans (specifically a white version of the language) from Dutch, and the language became a crucial element in the emerging self-identification of people calling themselves "Afrikaners". During the 1930s especially, language, race and religion, were the cornerstones on which Afrikaner cultural entrepreneurs laboured to construct a new form of Afrikaner nationalist mythology that would be the power base of D.F. Malan's *Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party*. Central to this process was the construct of the self as opposed to the "other": white South Africans (English speakers), but also other races. Cultural identities depended on Afrikaner cultural constructions. These were often without historic basis, like "volkspele" and, of vital importance to this study, translated European music repackaged as authentic Afrikaans music.

Martin writes:

⁶⁷ A. Zegeye, (ed.), *Social Identities in the New South Africa* (Cape Town: Kwela, 2001), p. 1.

⁶⁸ Laubscher, "Afrikaner identity and the music of Johannes Kerkorrel", p. 311.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

The aim of identity entrepreneurs is precisely to convince individuals to choose and support a group whose borders these entrepreneurs define in order to make it appear unique, exclusive and pure. The group must seem to be as different as possible from other groups, although there are often degrees of difference which allow one to distinguish between potential allies and implacable foes. Constructing the identity of one group therefore implies giving Others other identities. The invention of the Other – be they “Orientals” (Said 1978) or Africans (Mudimbe 1988) – is part and parcel of the consolidation of the Self. Nationalist intellectuals in colonial societies (Smith 1971), ethnic leaders (Smith 1981), clerics of various denominations have devised identity narratives liable to attract a large number of individuals sharing at one point in time the same territory, participating in the same cultural practises, and ready to believe they have a history in common. On this basis, they form political organisations that claim to represent and defend the exclusive interests of the group.⁷⁰

Laubscher provided a clear explanation of the manner in which music was used to establish cultural authenticity based on the *volkseie* vs *volksvreemde* opposition:

Having transformed relational borders into supposedly natural and primordial ones, a central task of the *volkseie* was to surveil its inside for what “authentically” belonged to its being. Certain musical forms, artists and content were therefore considered *volksvreemd*, while others were welcomed as *volksvriendelik* and/or *volksmusiek* (music of the people or nation). Most commonly, *volksvriendelike* music included ritualised “traditional” music that celebrated the *volk*’s history, *boeremusiek* (literally “farmer’s music”, although slippage of meaning frequently allows *Boer* to substitute for *Afrikaner*), a form particularly signifying of the farm and the rural social, and the popular *lekkerliedjie* (nice song) ... Allied to the *Afrikaner* nationalist project, these musical forms were almost entirely without dissent, controversy, or criticism of that project.⁷¹

His choice of Kerkorrel’s music as an example of a crisis of *Afrikaner* identity hegemony that emerged in the 1980s is an obvious one, since it was so overtly different, critical and clearly counter-hegemonic. However, the *volkseie* vs *volksvreemd* construct was by then more than five decades old and, accepting the notion that such constructs are vulnerable from its inception, had to have been unstable from the start. In fact, *boeremusiek* was not always as *volkseie* as Laubscher suggests. In its earliest recorded form the genre had close links to the poor *Afrikaner* working class and evoked strong opposition from the very same cultural entrepreneurs who laboured to construct the *volkseie* vs *volksvreemd* paradigm.

⁷⁰ Martin, *Sounding the Cape*, p. 7.

⁷¹ Laubscher, “*Afrikaner* identity and the music of Johannes Kerkorrel”, p. 313.

Such class elements of Afrikaner society during this time was a major obstacle for the formation of new nationalist identities. Dan O'Meara's evaluation of Afrikaner class dynamics during the period between 1934 and 1948 – a critical phase in the rise of Afrikaner nationalism – has convincingly pointed out the shortcomings of ethnic dynamic explanations for the rise of Afrikaner nationalist mythology.⁷² He makes the important observation – true to a Marxist model – that Afrikaner nationalism was a “highly differentiated phenomenon” and only one of a number of political and ideological forms of struggle and furthermore, that it emerged due to the contested development of capitalism in South Africa.⁷³ Specifically, the brand of Afrikaner nationalism that rose to prominence after 1934 happened because:

... petty-bourgeois groups sought to transform themselves into an industrial and commercial bourgeoisie utilising a broad set of organisational, ideological and political means to mobilise mass support from Afrikaans-speakers of other classes ...⁷⁴

As Hyslop later points out, this approach provides a crucial understanding of Afrikaner nationalism because it is critical of the assumption (made by many) that “Afrikaners” are an undifferentiated, monolithic ethnic group. The ethnic identification that emerged during the 1930s was a construct that had to withstand, and conceal, major fault lines such as “divisions of class, interest and gender.”⁷⁵ These fault lines have more often manifested in popular Afrikaans music throughout the twentieth century (and into the twenty-first) than has been suggested in the literature to present. The link between music and identity is strong:

Music plays a part in identity configurations because musical differences are interpreted as social differences, although the consequences of this interpretation vary considerably from place to place, from time to time, and may generate feelings of fellowship, connection, alliance, opposition or hostility. The social interpretation of music associates styles and genres with the same building materials used to configure identities: history, space and culture form the social frames of music.⁷⁶

⁷² D. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism 1934 – 1948* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press: 1983), pp. 4-11.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ J. Hyslop, “Problems of Explanation in the Study of Afrikaner Nationalism: A Case Study of the West Rand”, *Journal of South African Studies* 22:3 (1996), p. 373.

⁷⁶ Martin, *Sounding the Cape*, p. 21.

This thesis is an investigation into these manifestations, rather than an attempt to find essential identity truths in historic events.⁷⁷ One historic event, however, has had a substantial influence on the construction of Afrikaner identities and subsequent studies of such identities: the end of apartheid. As Vestergaard stated, “... the Christian nationalist elite lost the political power to define Afrikaner, or any other, identity, leading to a reopening of the social field.”⁷⁸

Although the social changes of post-apartheid South Africa provide new spaces for identity negotiation that challenge the fixity of group identification of the apartheid era, old oppositions have not disappeared.⁷⁹ There was also a close relationship between the symbols that were used to imagine Christian nationalist Afrikaner identity and the symbols of apartheid South Africa.⁸⁰ As can be seen in debates regarding other apartheid iconography, such as the Springbok emblem on the national rugby team’s jerseys, the re-interpretations of such symbols in a post-apartheid society – by different population groups – are complex. This association has also left its mark on contemporary studies of both Afrikaner identity and Afrikaans music. By positioning popular Afrikaans music automatically within the dominant narrative of apartheid – as South African popular music studies have tended to do⁸¹ – it has become a symbol thereof.

In a post-apartheid society, Afrikaners are exposed to rapidly evolving global forces of change. While there seems to be a tendency to depoliticise and deracialise Afrikaner identity in order to erase its association with apartheid,⁸² certain groups seek new formations of identity in old Afrikaner symbols as an attempt to make sense of an age of neo-traditionalism,

⁷⁷ Laubscher, “Afrikaner identity and the music of Johannes Kerkorrel”, citing Derrida, succinctly describes the questionability of such methods, p. 310.

⁷⁸ Vestergaard, “Who’s Got the Map?”, p.22.

⁷⁹ H. Wasserman, and S. Jacobs (eds.), *Shifting Selves: Post-Apartheid Essays on Mass Media, Culture and Identity* (Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2003), p. 16.

⁸⁰ Vestergaard, “Who’s got the map?”, p. 22.

⁸¹ Lucia, *The World of South African Music*, p. xxxv.

⁸² Vestergaard, “Who’s Got the Map?”, p. 22.

globalisation and greater inter-group interaction.⁸³ Vestergaard divides “Afrikaners” into two groups, as stipulated by Pierre Bourdieu, namely heterodox and orthodox. Heterodox Afrikaners accept “new challenges and champion the opening of the social field”, while orthodox Afrikaners “resist change and cling to established values.”⁸⁴

Throughout the twentieth century activists in South Africa for the Afrikaans language struggled with, yet never resolved, the language/people, Afrikaans/Afrikaner issue ... (W)as the Afrikaner community a racial or linguistic one? Was the push to promote Afrikaans subordinate to the entrenchment of a white supremacist government and ruling party? Was there a hegemonic or counter-hegemonic relationship between language and ethnicity? If the social identity of the Afrikaner was to be shaped by the acceptance of Afrikaans as a public language on equal footing with English, the creed that the language constitutes the entire people (“die taal is gans die volk”) had to be race-blind.⁸⁵

Many white Afrikaans speakers have expressed fears for the survival of their culture in this new environment,⁸⁶ and a number of post-apartheid Afrikaans protest songs have reflected this fear.⁸⁷ Many believe that these are legitimate fears and it has even lead to a debate in Parliament in 1999.⁸⁸ The popularity and diversity of Afrikaans cultural products today, however, might suggest otherwise.⁸⁹ These notions are undoubtedly useful when considering the complexity tied to the idea of Afrikaner identity and its disassociation with an undesirable past. Specifically, the post-apartheid search for something “new” – a new place where Afrikaner culture/identity could be legitimised and celebrated, is still determined by a need to hold on to traditional identity markers. As, again, Laubscher puts it:

It has become almost commonplace to characterise identities within post-apartheid South Africa in terms of flux and change. Most authors and commentators link this “moment of ‘gappiness’ in

⁸³ L. Lambrechts, and J. Visagie, “De la Rey, De la Rey, sal jy die boere kom lei?”, p. 75. See also D. van Zyl, “O Boereplaas, Geboortegrond!” Afrikaner Nostalgia and the Romanticisation of the Platteland in Post-1994 South Africa, *S.A. Tydskrif vir Kultuurgeskiedenis* 22:2, (2008).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ B. Kenelly, “Beauty in Bastardy? Breytenbach on Afrikaans and the Afrikaners”, *Portal Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 2:2 (2005), p.1.

⁸⁶ Vestergaard, “Who’s Got the Map?”, p. 22.

⁸⁷ Senekal and Van den Bergh, “’n Voorlopige verkenning van postapartheid Afrikaanse protesmusiek”, p. 98

⁸⁸ Vestergaard, “Who’s Got the Map?”, p.29.

⁸⁹ Bosman, “Die FAK-fenomeen”, p. 24; Vestergaard, “Who’s Got the Map?”, p. 29.

identity”⁹⁰ to the demise of apartheid, the consequence of which was a supposed dislodging of old identity moorings and verities, such that all South Africans, “willingly or unwillingly, successfully or unsuccessfully... reinterpret old selves in the light of new knowledge and possibilities.”⁹¹

Although race is not the only determinant of identity historically, it was positioned in such a way that the cultural separation of different groups of first-language Afrikaans-speakers along racial lines was unavoidable. Although such constructions are still common in post-apartheid South Africa, it is important to recognise that new cultural spaces are fertile grounds for identity negotiation and movement across cultural, and racial, boundaries.⁹² Even the term “Afrikaner” has become contested (or has become more contested than ever before) in post-apartheid South Africa.⁹³ Although “Afrikaner nationalism” has a specific historic definition that remains in use today, albeit with shrinking interest from academics,⁹⁴ not all white Afrikaans speakers would describe themselves as “Afrikaners”. It is also important not to approach Afrikaans-speakers as a homogenous group. Afrikaans as a language has never belonged to only one group,⁹⁵ even though white Afrikaans-speakers have historically claimed ownership under the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism. Under white curatorship, Afrikaans as a language enjoyed substantial state support through the four provincial councils, the SABC, the Censorship Board⁹⁶ and even National Intelligence,⁹⁷ as well the support from cultural organisations such as the FAK.⁹⁸

If “Afrikaner” has contested meanings, so too does the term “coloured”. Historically, the term was used to describe people of mixed heritage that were neither “European”, nor “Native

⁹⁰ M. Steyn, *Whiteness just isn't what it used to be: White identity in a changing South Africa* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), p. xxii, in Laubscher, “Afrikaner identity and the music of Johannes Kerkerrel”, p.308.

⁹¹ Laubscher, “Afrikaner identity and the music of Johannes Kerkerrel”, p. 308.

⁹² R. Davies, *Afrikaners in the New South Africa: Identity Politics in a Globalised Economy* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2009), p. 81.

⁹³ Kennelly, “Beauty in Bastardry?”, p. 1.

⁹⁴ Bezuidenhout, “From Voëlvry to De La Rey”, p. 4.

⁹⁵ Although groups within Afrikaans can be distinguished by dialects and accents.

⁹⁶ Under the direction of the Directorate of Publications.

⁹⁷ www.freemuse.org, accessed 22 September 2010, see also M. Drewett, “Packaging Desires”, in G. Olwage (ed.), *Composing Apartheid*, pp. 115-135.

⁹⁸ Jury, “Boys to Men”, p. 99.

Africans”. As a group, it is one of the truly diverse constructs in South African history. Under apartheid and specifically the Population Registration Act of 1950, all coloured people were classified under one group, despite many heterogeneous elements. The majority of Afrikaans speakers belong to this group (by 2002, only 42% of Afrikaans speakers in South Africa were white),⁹⁹ a group that succeeded in inventing lifestyles and traditions that consolidated a diverse collection of people into a distinct part of the “mosaic of South African populations.”¹⁰⁰ Although sharing Afrikaans as a first language with white Afrikaans-speakers, this group was excluded from Afrikaner nationalism during apartheid. Recently, the literature on coloured identity has been growing, with studies on different spaces of identity formation in post-apartheid South Africa.¹⁰¹

Although white Afrikaans speakers have dominated the Afrikaans record industry in terms of output and consumption, the composition of traditional Afrikaans songs and the development of Afrikaans music genres owe a considerable debt to coloured and black music. The creole roots of *boeremusiek*, Hendrik Susan’s connection with the Jazz Maniacs and Nico Carstens’ coloured musical influences are just some examples of top-selling white Afrikaans musicians and genres that were influenced by the music styles of the racial “other”. Unfortunately, it was not in the interest of apartheid ideologues to preserve this shared music heritage. In fact, it was considered necessary to construct it as an exclusively white heritage for the purposes of establishing a legitimate folk tradition that formed part of a larger Afrikaner nationalist mythology. Popular commercial Afrikaans music thus ignored and denied – sometimes pragmatically – the multi-racial roots of many Afrikaans music genres as well as vital areas of music innovation outside of the Afrikaans music mainstream. This “sterilisation” from

⁹⁹ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 623.

¹⁰⁰ D. Martin, “What’s in the name ‘Coloured’?”, in Zegeye, A., ed, *Social Identities in the New South Africa*, p. 250; see also Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 629.

¹⁰¹ See M. Adhikari, “‘Not Black Enough’: Changing Expressions of Coloured Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa”, *South African Journal of History* 51 (2004); also A. Haupt, *Stealing Empire: P2P, intellectual property and hip-hop subversion*, (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008).

“other” influences was not sustainable, possible or realistic. However, some forms of popular Afrikaans music, like *kwela*, have shown signs of resisting such division at times of increasing racial segregation. The history of popular Afrikaans music is one of a shared space with other racial groups and their musics, where the racial hierarchies established in the wider society – through various historical agents – did not necessarily apply.

Method and sources

The post-apartheid era represents a time where my own life-history becomes entwined in the subject of this thesis. Here my personal experiences of the last twenty years have been very useful, but also challenging. As a first year student at Stellenbosch University in 1995, I joined a band (the Wild Possums) and my first show was an opening slot for Koos Kombuis. He even invited us to play his song “Katie” with him. Although, admittedly, this was not a ground breaking event in the history of South African music performance (despite our best efforts, we really were quite awful), to join one of my music heroes on stage at my first live show, was a momentous occasion on a personal level. That night was the symbolic start of a music career that continues to this day. The socio-political context in which I have performed and written music over the past twenty years has sparked an interest in how Afrikaans speakers use Afrikaans music to negotiate their identities in a changing social environment. A brief summary of this career serves as an explanation of my position as “embedded observer”, which has given – and continues to give – valuable insight into the production, performance and consumption of popular Afrikaans music.

I have performed and/or recorded with a number of well-known Afrikaans artists like Valiant Swart, Karen Zoid, Die Heuwels Fantasties, Theuns Jordaan, Rina Hugo, Anneli van Rooyen, Amanda Strydom, Bobbie van Jaarsveld, Jack Parow, Ollie Viljoen, Laurika Rauch, Piet Botha, Anton Goosen, Gert Vlok Nel, Dozi, Francois van Coke, Steve Hofmeyr and Koos

Kombuis. Apart from local English artists (or artists who sing in English) like PJ Powers, Arno Carstens, Dan Patlansky, Albert Frost and Gerald Clark, I have also performed with international artists Bastille (UK), Saffire The Uppity Blues Women (US), Eden Brent (US) and Jose Luis Pardo (Spain). I have also had the privilege to perform with well-known black artists like Vusi Mahlasela, Zolani Mahola, Dorothy Masuka, Louis Mahlangu and Moreira Chonguica (Mozambique).

I have performed at more than forty Afrikaans arts festivals, including – but not limited to – the KKNK (Klein Karoo National Arts Festivals), AARDKLOP, the Garipees, the Vryfees (previously the Volksbladfees), the Woordfees and Innibos, as well as the mostly English Standard Bank National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. I have also composed the soundtracks for four Afrikaans cabarets. Apart from arts festivals, I regularly perform at most of the major rock music festivals, such as Oppikoppi, Splashy Fen, Rocking the Daisies and Up the Creek.

My position as participant complicates observations from an epistemological point of view, but it also affords me access to all the aspects of Afrikaans music production, from composition to consumption. This position is useful specifically because it is embedded in the subject matter and gives the observer access to a wider scope of the context in which music functions. As a result, I have had access to various aspects of an industry over an extended period of time that would have been impossible to non-participant observers. Apart from a few exceptions, most of the Afrikaans artists I have worked with fall outside the big-selling pop mainstream, despite the numerous awards and gold and/or platinum-selling albums they have accumulated. Although opinions vary to a degree, they generally consider their music removed from what normally constitutes Afrikaans pop,¹⁰² even though a number of them share the perception that superficial pop music means greater commercial success in the Afrikaans music market. CD sales confirm this. In this way, they appeal to a smaller, more

¹⁰² Goosen, *Rapport*, 13 June 2009.

discerning market of Afrikaans listeners. While some of them have had gold albums,¹⁰³ Afrikaans pop stars with their *lekkerliedjies* (nice, easy listening songs) boast multi-platinum sales numbering in the hundreds of thousands.

Festival stages often host Afrikaans artists from different genres (especially at the Afrikaans arts festivals – rock festivals are more genre based), which has given me the opportunity to observe the performance and reception of different genres of Afrikaans music, including pop, over a long period. Although I have used my position of familiarity as a departure point for interviews with some of the artists I have worked with and befriended, I have tried to maintain my scholarly position as historian. In most cases, my position as embedded observer has proved very helpful in overcoming certain obstacles often encountered during interviews. Artists are people who are used to being interviewed and have developed – in some cases – a reluctance to speak candidly about personal aspects of their work. A good example is Mathilda Slabbert's and Dawid de Villiers' biography of David Kramer,¹⁰⁴ which as an analytical piece on his work is excellent, but simultaneously becomes largely removed from the daily domestic "life" of Kramer – as they readily acknowledge in the prelude.¹⁰⁵ This study is, however, not a biography of the artists I have worked with, neither is it limited to a personal account of my experiences of the last twenty years, although it is informed by them. I have, admittedly, often wondered why Afrikaans pop is so successful, and although my own normative judgment is hardly a valid epistemological point of departure, it became one of my primary motivations for this study.

It is important to note that although a number of publications exist that detail the development of Afrikaans music, very few provide any information on the concurrent socio-political

¹⁰³ Valiant Swart's *Song vir Katryn*, Die Heuwels Fantasties' *Die Heuwels Fantasties* and *Wilder as die Wildtuin*, and Karen Zoid's *Poles Apart* and *Chasing the Sun*. Anton Goosen also has eleven gold albums to his name.

¹⁰⁴ *David Kramer: 'n Biografie* (Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 2011), pp. 9-10.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

context. Discographies, although mostly a reliable source of statistical information, do not include the social context of album releases, a fact that limits understanding of the music.

The sources consulted differ with each historic era involved. No official archive exists of the earliest Afrikaans music recordings, and written sources are very limited. The *Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie* (*South African Music Encyclopaedia*, hereafter SAME),¹⁰⁶ is the most comprehensive and provides a detailed discography of early Africana and Afrikaans records between 1901 and 1938. One of the SAME's main sources is Roberto Bauer's *The new catalogue of historical records, 1898-1908/09*.¹⁰⁷ New information surfaces regularly, which means that such catalogues become outdated.¹⁰⁸ More recently, the discographer Alan Kelly's research on the Gramophone Concert Company has provided invaluable information of the earliest years of the global recording industry.¹⁰⁹ Since this company, along with its subsidiary labels HMV and Zonophone, was responsible for most of the earliest Afrikaans recordings, Kelly's catalogues are of major significance. It can be searched online at the AHRC Research Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music (CHARM) in the UK, established in 2004. The CHARM discography was especially useful in finding listings of early Afrikaans recordings in London that are older than those of Paul Roos' Springbok rugby team (from 1906), which were previously thought to be the first in Afrikaans, by Afrikaners.¹¹⁰ The Truesound Online Discography Project¹¹¹ is another online archive with almost 400 000 matrix listings of early recordings. Here, the Zonopoint catalogue (again thanks to Kelly and updated in 2003) yielded matrix listings of a number of Afrikaner national anthems, never documented before, that pre-date the earliest mentioned in the SAME

¹⁰⁶ J.P. Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol. 1, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 350-385.

¹⁰⁷ R. Bauer, *The new catalogue of historical records, 1898-1908/09* (Michigan: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1947).

¹⁰⁸ Electronic communication with Alan Kelly, 29 October 2014.

¹⁰⁹ *The Alan Kelly Matrix Listings*, available at <http://www.normanfield.com/kelly.htm>, accessed 19 June 2014; see also A. Kelly, "Structure of the Gramophone Company and Its Output, HMV and ZONOPHONE, 1898 – 1954", (September 2000), p. 3, available at The Truesound Online Discography Project, <http://www.truesoundtransfers.de/disco.htm>, accessed 18 July 2014.

¹¹⁰ *Alan Kelly Catalogue*, available at <http://charm.rhul.ac.uk/index.html>, accessed 5 October 2014.

¹¹¹ Available at <http://www.truesoundtransfers.de/disco.htm>, accessed 18 July 2014.

(Thomas Denijs' and Betsy Schot's recordings of 1901). Unfortunately, such catalogues are not organised according to language or title, which forces the researcher to go through hundreds of thousands of matrix listings with potentially very low yields.¹¹² Another invaluable source, especially for information on the 1912 South African recordings and later, is the South African Audio Archive, which features photographs and sound clips of old records sourced from private collectors.¹¹³ By having consulted these various updated catalogues for previously unknown recordings and combining it with the existing information listed in the SAME, a more complete picture has emerged on early Afrikaans records. Early newspaper reports, magazine articles and advertisements have also provided vital source material. The earliest example of an advertisement for an Afrikaans gramophone record, for instance, appears in *Die Brandwag* of 15 November 1910.¹¹⁴ These new discoveries provide a unique opportunity – and a larger sample size – to explore the relation between recorded Afrikaans music and emerging Afrikaner identities at a critical phase of the development of Afrikaner nationalism.

Rob Allingham's contributions to the quarterly of the Traditional *Boeremusiek* Club of South Africa (TBK), *Opskommel*, have done much to address the lacuna of information on the recording industry of the early 1930s. His former position as Gallo's archivist also lends authority to his work. Dating from the early 1930s onwards, FAK correspondence and memorandums contain vital information on the organisation's policies toward popular Afrikaans music. In this regard, archival material from the Stellenbosch University Africana Collections (especially the G.G. Cilliers and J.J. Smith collections) and the University of the Free State's Institute for Contemporary History (INCH) archive (most notably the FAK collection) have served as primary sources. Regarding the history of radio in South Africa, the

¹¹² For example, the author's search of almost 100 000 titles yielded just 15.

¹¹³ Available at http://www.flatinternational.org/template_volume.php?volume_id=280, accessed 12 June 2014.

¹¹⁴ *Die Brandwag*, 15 November 1910, p. ii.

work of Eric Rosenthal,¹¹⁵ Ruth and Keyan Tomaselli and Johan Muller,¹¹⁶ and Peter Orlik,¹¹⁷ have been very useful. Ralph Trewhela's interviews with music artists¹¹⁸ have been a vital source and link up with the interviews I had conducted with artists.

As the focus started to fall on more recent periods, the source material changed somewhat. SABC memorandums from the late 1950s onwards explain policy changes, while the work of Lara Allen¹¹⁹ and Charles Hamm¹²⁰ are rare examples that focus on white popular music reception at a time when the National Party was consolidating its political dominance. An unusual, though very informative source covering the late 1950s and 1960s specifically, was a Facebook group – Marq-Vass-Southern-African-Music-Collectibles¹²¹ – of collectors, producers and studio musicians from that era, some of whom had been directly involved in the recordings. Personal communication with Ollie Viljoen and Boet Pretorius, both active in the Afrikaans music industry at this time, also proved informative.

The period between 1979 and 1992 represents an important phase of change in the history of popular Afrikaans music. Parts of this era, especially the Voëlvry movement of the late 1980s, have been well documented, while the Musiek-en-Liriek movement of 1979 was not. Personal interviews with the two main artists of this movement, Anton Goosen and Laurika Rauch, provided insight into numerous aspects surrounding it. Goosen's role as songwriter, his tense relationship with the Afrikaner establishment and political statements in a time of censorship are very revealing. Rauch, on the other hand, provides valuable information on the vital role of television, as well as the fact that her own more moderate political voice – as opposed to

¹¹⁵ E. Rosenthal, *You have been listening: The early history of Radio in South Africa* (Cape Town: Purnell, 1974).

¹¹⁶ R. Tomaselli, K. Tomaselli and J. Muller (eds.), *Currents of Power: State Broadcasting in South Africa* (Cape Town: Anthropos, 1989).

¹¹⁷ P. B. Orlik, in S. W. Head (ed.), *Broadcasting in Africa: A Continental Survey of Radio and Television* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), pp. 140-146.

¹¹⁸ R. Trewhela, *Song Safari: A journey through light music in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Limelight Press, 1982).

¹¹⁹ L. Allen, "Kwela's white audiences: the politics of pleasure and identification in the early apartheid period", in G. Olwage (ed.), *Composing Apartheid: Music for and against apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press), pp. 79-98.

¹²⁰ C. Hamm, "Rock 'n Roll in a Very Strange Society", *Popular Music* 5: 1 (1985), pp. 159-174.

¹²¹ <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Marq-Vass-Southern-African-Music-Collectibles>, accessed 15 April 2013.

the more radical voices of the Voëlvry artists – had much to do with her family life. Writing about Voëlvry carries with it a two-fold responsibility. Firstly, it has already been documented in a way that leaves little space here for revision, and secondly, despite others having argued convincingly that the significance of the movement has often been exaggerated,¹²² it did have a considerable personal impact on me as a teenager growing up in the Eastern Cape.

One day, in 1989, a friend gave me a bootleg tape with a mix of Voëlvry songs, and it had a significant influence on me as a thirteen year old boy. I learned all the lyrics. I also learned to play Johannes Kerkorrel's songs on the piano and Koos Kombuis' songs on the guitar (which were easier). From then on, my friends and I would often mock the politics of our conservative teachers and Afrikaner society as a whole. Somehow, a group of schoolboys in the Eastern Cape became politicised by the music of the Voëlvry movement. In a sense, then, my personal connection with Voëlvry makes me sympathetic to the claims by some that it was a monumental, ground-shifting, cultural-political movement. However, I am also cognisant of the fact that the small group of friends at school who listened to Voëlvry music in 1989 was just that: small. Furthermore, in either 1992 or 1993, Anton Goosen and his Bushrock band – including Piet Botha – came to perform at our school. It was the first live band I ever saw and it was in Afrikaans, and fantastic. Afrikaans music at that time for me consisted solely of “alternative” music – there was no other type of Afrikaans music than alternative Afrikaans music.

Apart from embedded observations from the stage, I have had many informal conversations with so many Afrikaans artists that do not constitute actual interviews, but helped form ideas that were influential in guiding me along. One specific journey in a bus with Steve Hofmeyr resulted in a conversation of almost three hours that was especially insightful. My electronic interview with him has also, in my opinion, revealed important information to consider in

¹²² Grundlingh, “Rocking the Boat”, p. 13.

future studies on popular Afrikaans music. The utilisation of Afrikaans pop concerts as spaces where homogenising political forces are at work, needs much deeper investigation than has been done here.

My numerous conversations with Karen Zoid about Afrikaans music and politics, frequent correspondence with Anton Goosen and the late Ollie Viljoen (both of whom I interviewed as well), bus rides with Vusi Mahlasela, and a quiet moment or two with Dorothy Masuka, were invaluable experiences. So too were chats with Jannie Hanepoot van Tonder, Dagga-Dirk Uys, Deon Maas, Klem Carstens (son of Nico Carstens), sound engineer Peter Pearlson and journalist/ author Ilza Roggaband, as well as electronic correspondence with Rob Allingham. I am particularly indebted to Tertius Louw who, as a collector of South African rock albums, has been an important source of information on the history of South African music, as well as a sounding board and, on occasion, editor. Since this study is engaged with popular culture, social media sources have been utilised perhaps more regularly than would have been the case in other historical studies. However, the growing importance of such sources is hard to ignore, and they have proven to yield useful material.

Structure of chapters

Chapter one of this thesis starts with a search for the earliest recordings of Afrikaans songs. It combines recently updated discographies that have been made available online, with older sources like the SAME. This has moved the known dates for the earliest Africana (references to Afrikaners, sung by Europeans) and Afrikaans (Afrikaans records sung by Afrikaners) records back. The first Africana recordings (almost without exception recordings of Boer national anthems) are a few years older than the first Afrikaans recordings, and the oldest date to the Anglo-Boer War (1900). They were recorded in Europe and sung by Dutch singers, and places the idea of Afrikaner nationhood in a wider, international context. The first Afrikaans

recordings by Afrikaners soon followed (in 1906), which places them at a particularly sensitive time in the development of not only the Afrikaans language itself, but also of the development of Afrikaner identities based on race and ideas of nationhood. Subsequent advertisements of Afrikaans records (from 1910 onwards) formed part of a range of cultural ephemera that was slowly shaping distinct Afrikaner identities.

The period dating from 1900 to 1930, considered in Chapter one, constitutes the establishment and early development of the Afrikaans record industry and, from the early 1920s, the early phases of Afrikaans radio. The trauma of the Anglo-Boer War and its immediate aftermath determined the socio-political context of the first Afrikaans music records. This, along with the outbreak of the First World War, would have an influence not only on Afrikaans recordings, but also on the early development of South African radio broadcasting. Music records and radio would not only become the two most important distribution channels of popular Afrikaans music, but also represented hotly contested ideological and political battlegrounds. Although the 1920s constitute an important historical phase in Afrikaner politics and language struggles, the research presented in this chapter illustrates that the commercial music front was relatively quiet until the beginning of the next decade.

Chapter two looks at the 1930s – a turbulent social, political, economic and cultural time, both globally and locally. This decade represented an especially hard time for Afrikaners who, in the wake of the Great Depression and the Great Drought of 1932-33, moved to the cities in their thousands, in the process abandoning their traditional strongholds in the rural areas. I argue in this chapter that the popular Afrikaans music of the time reflected the realities of the disaffected and poor Afrikaner working class, which would be a matter of great concern for the Afrikaner cultural elites of the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge* (FAK).¹²³

¹²³ The FAK was the public face of the ultra-nationalist and secret *Broederbond*, see I. Wilkens and H. Strydom, *The super-Afrikaners: Inside the Afrikaners Broederbond* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1978), p. 269.

Throughout that decade, the FAK would make concerted attempts at keeping “low-brow” Afrikaans music from being released or broadcast by the SABC (established in 1936, with a dedicated Afrikaans service in 1937). The organisation would also actively campaign against English dominance of radio broadcasts. The significance of the 1938 Centenary Trek celebration was that it had a deep impact on Afrikaner cultural life and served as an important celebration of a new brand of Afrikaner ethnic nationalism. From a musical perspective, 1938 marked the emergence of jazz influenced *boeremusiek*, or *light Afrikaans music*, which became very successful commercially. The class-tensions represented in popular music records and the constructions of Afrikaner nationalist mythology during this decade form the basis of this chapter.

Chapter three addresses the influence of the Second World War and its aftermath, including the victory of the National Party in 1948 and the subsequent ushering in of the apartheid era and its influence on Afrikaans music. The war caused a deep divide among white South Africans, which resulted in rising tensions at the SABC between pro-war English and anti-war Afrikaans staff. With many English personnel volunteering for military service during the war, their positions at the SABC were filled by Afrikaners, which led to the corporation gradually becoming more Afrikaans. Not only did 1948 mark the victory of Malan’s National Party at the polls, but also the appointment of a group of Afrikaner nationalists to the board of the SABC. Chapter three documents how, during this time, both the FAK and the SABC would actively collect and promote *volkseie boeremusiek* in an effort to preserve a part of the Afrikaner’s cultural heritage – in sharp contrast to the way in which the genre was discredited by the FAK in the 1930s. Springbok Radio – the first commercial radio channel of the SABC – was established in 1950 and had a radically different programming schedule than the existing two channels. It focussed mainly on pop music (sometimes also Afrikaans pop songs) and from 1956 onwards, also rock music, following the global impact of the genre. Politically, these early apartheid years were characterised by the introduction of an intricate set of

legislation focused on racial segregation that would radically complexify racial politics. These laws affected music performance severely, as exemplified by the destruction of Sophiatown in Johannesburg, which was the leading black urban cultural and political nerve-centre and vibrant mixed-racial space of music innovation.¹²⁴ The sentimental singing group, Die Briels, started their recording career during this time and offered a rare musical glimpse into the lives of the Afrikaner working class. Their importance is considered in this chapter. Also prominent in white popular music at the time was the influence of *kwela* on Afrikaans musicians, which presents itself as a subtle counter-hegemonic tendency during a time of Afrikaner homogenisation.

Chapter four explores the influence of the socio-political and economic changes of the 1960s and 1970s on Afrikaner youth. Globally, the 1960s saw a rise in social movements that had close links with popular music. Locally, this era witnessed the height of apartheid and Afrikaner political domination. H.F. Verwoerd's ascension to power in 1958, the Sharpeville massacre and the banning of the ANC and PAC in 1960, the establishment of South Africa as a Republic and its exit from the Commonwealth in 1961, are all well-documented political events that left profound imprints on South African society. This period also marked the end of a relatively autonomous and independent era of broadcasting at the SABC and the beginning of its total ideological compliance with the apartheid regime.

Precipitating this period, during which a large Afrikaner middle class emerged, class tension between poor Afrikaners and the elite was one of the central features of the Afrikaner culture industry. Chapter four indicates how new concerns – like the influence of pop and rock music from abroad on Afrikaner youth – became a priority for the FAK and other organisations closely linked to Afrikaner nationalism, including the SABC. This fear was not without merit, as imported rock music had a significant impact on South Africa's youth from the late 1950s

¹²⁴ D. Coplan, *In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music Guide* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985), p. 6.

onwards. Polls show that Afrikaner youth favoured English pop and rock music over commercial Afrikaans music, despite public outcries by conservative church and party leaders. In fact, they did not view Afrikaans as suitable for pop music at all. Popular Afrikaans music during this time had an older listening public. Also popular among a wider demographic was American country music, as evidenced in the tours by Jim Reeves.

Some exposure to music that linked with the social movements abroad reached South Africa via LM Radio in Mozambique until 1972, when the SABC bought the majority shares in the radio station. Groups like the Rolling Stones, who did not get airplay on any SABC stations, were nonetheless very popular in South Africa. The lyrics of “Street Fighting Man” even found its way into an article by Benedictus Kok, FAK executive member and rector of the University of the Free State, who warned against their revolutionary tendencies.¹²⁵ He should not have feared, since there was no Afrikaner youth revolt. Several factors that played a role in minimising radical elements among Afrikaners are considered in Chapter four: the censorship of Marxist literature, the close relationship between Afrikaans Universities and apartheid ideology, the control of the SABC over the news and Christian national education, which gave Afrikaner culture a distinct Calvinist tone. The elements conspired to create a conservative society with a limited knowledge of the political realities of South Africa. Furthermore, Afrikaners as a group were significantly better off economically than a generation ago.¹²⁶ Under such circumstances, life for the Afrikaner was easy. What objection to conservative norms there were, were more personal than political. The tension between conservative norms, changing lifestyles and the influence of global social changes form the parameters of this chapter.

Chapter five is an investigation into the emergence of subtly political Afrikaans music amidst a wider circle of dissatisfaction among Afrikaners. The emergence of new critical voices in

¹²⁵ B. Kok, “Die invloed van musiek in die lewe van die mens”, *Handhaaf* (August 1972), p. 20.

¹²⁶ A. Grundlingh, “‘Are We Afrikaners Getting too Rich?’ Cornucopia and Change in Afrikanerdom in the 1960s”, *Journal of Historical Sociology* 21:2/3 (2008), pp. 143-165.

Afrikaans from the middle of the 1970s was visible not only in the arts, but across the spectrum of Afrikaner life. The much-delayed introduction of television in 1976, after the first test signals in 1975, had a critical impact on the Afrikaans culture industry. The left was also growing. The Progressive Party under Frederick van Zyl Slabbert was founded in 1977. Furthermore, events like the Soweto Uprising in 1976 and the death of Steve Biko in 1977 were influential in undermining the popularity of the National Party. The economy was struggling, which endangered the lower Afrikaner middle class. Politically, this undermined the strength of the National Party, which started to consider the inclusion of coloured and Indian representation in parliament to strengthen its power base. This led to the rise of a conservative right, sparking the formation of the Conservative Party under Andries Treurnicht in 1982.¹²⁷

From this changing social landscape, I argue in this chapter, emerged a new vitality in Afrikaans music. From 1979 onwards, Afrikaans music gradually became part of the political domain. With P.W. Botha's total strategy as counter-measure to the total onslaught of communism, the state became acutely sensitive to any form of subversion.¹²⁸ The role of censors – and even national intelligence officers – in prohibiting artists from openly questioning the authority of the state in their lyrics and album covers, became commonplace.¹²⁹ Never before had Afrikaans music artists (and of course many other South African artists as well) faced such intense opposition from the state and its cultural allies. The Musiek-en-Liriek movement of 1979 marked a break with the Afrikaans pop mainstream and in some cases showed subtle political protest. Bernoldus Niemand's "Hou my vas Korporaal", and Wildebeest's "Bossies", both released in 1983, were deconstructions of the Border War experience and the militarisation of white masculinity. The small record company Shifty, with

¹²⁷ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 603.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 609.

¹²⁹ M. Drewett, "'Stop this filth': The Censorship of Roger Lucey's Music in Apartheid South Africa", *SAMUS* 25 (2005), pp. 53-70.

its links to the End Conscription Campaign, provided a home for (among others) alternative Afrikaans music. Afrikaans literature and cabaret also became much more outspoken against the regime. This tension culminated in the Voëlvry movement of 1989 which, along with the Houtstok concerts, form the basis of chapter six.

Chapter six reflects on this radical movement 26 years on. Voëlvry is one of the most documented topics in popular Afrikaans music history, and this chapter aims to add some perspective on its impact and legacy. Exaggerated claims that it brought down the apartheid regime (or was the final nail in its coffin) are contrasted with more sober evaluations that question its wider social impact. In 2014, the movement came under new scrutiny in celebration of its 25th anniversary. Links were freely drawn between Voëlvry and the birth of the influential Oppikoppi rock festival, as well as the later rebellious Afrikaans punkrock group Fokofpolisiekar. These links are less conspicuous from a political perspective, as Afrikaans protest music today has come to represent a very different position. Chapter six also investigates the rising tension between alternative Afrikaans artists and the pop mainstream and its culmination with the Houtstok concerts in 1990 and 1992. The former attracted a crowd of over 20 000 (much larger than any Voëlvry concert) on the same day that the FAK's Republic Day concert at the Voortrekker monument drew 16 000. Singer Anton Goosen interprets this as a clear victory of the new mindset over that of the old South Africa at the end of apartheid. However, the same pop mainstream has remained dominant in the post-apartheid context.

Chapter seven considers post-apartheid South Africa. Although the “new” South Africa was formally born on 27 April 1994, the preference of “post-apartheid” over “post-1994” acknowledges the fact that apartheid, and the support for the project by many Afrikaners, had started to unravel long before this date. Furthermore, the positioning of the year 1994 as the end of a specific music era is somewhat artificial, since it does not represent a prominent

historical juncture for Afrikaans music. A more appropriate watershed year for the latter would be 1992, as it marked the end of an acute political phase in Afrikaans music as well as the discontinuation of vinyl records. After Voëlvry and Houtstok, Afrikaans music had gained a younger following which resulted in an increase in overall Afrikaans CD sales in the 1990s, and a boom after 2000. Although censorship played an enormous role in prohibiting the release and broadcasting of material, it greatly declined by 1994.¹³⁰

It is, however, important not to underestimate the changes in South African society that were ushered in with the multi-racial elections of 1994. One prominent effect was that the official status of Afrikaans was diminished from being one of two national languages (along with English) to being one of eleven. The funding that the National Party provided for the Afrikaans arts ended with the dismantlement of the four provincial councils in the same year.¹³¹ This led to the establishment of the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK) in 1995 as a refuge for the Afrikaans arts,¹³² although some have commented that it has really become the refuge of white Afrikaans culture, based on the demographic profiles of the festival goers.¹³³ Since then South Africa has seen a proliferation of arts festivals all across the country, most notably Potchefstroom's AARDKLOP festival. Furthermore, in the post-apartheid era commercial Afrikaans music sales account for between 30% and 40% of all locally produced South African music.¹³⁴ This suggests that public support of Afrikaans cultural products is strong, even though large-scale state support ended in 1994. Many Afrikaners and Afrikaans artists experience post-apartheid South African society as

¹³⁰ Jury, "Boys to Men", pp. 99-109, see also www.freemuse.org (accessed 22 September 2010).

¹³¹ H. Kitshoff, "Die opkoms, dinamika, en betekenis van die Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees: 1995 – 2005", (DPhil Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2005), p. vi. See also Jury, "Boys to Men", p. 101.

¹³² Kitshoff, "Die opkoms, dinamika, en betekenis van die Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees: 1995 – 2005", p. vi.

¹³³ T. Hauptfleisch, "Eventification: Festivals and the making of a theatrical event", *South African Theatre Journal* 15 (2001), p. 6.

¹³⁴ These numbers are an estimate based on personal correspondence with numerous record companies, RISA, SAMRO, and music retailers such as Musica and Look 'n Listen. RISA (Record Industry of South Africa) do provide numbers for sales of international and local music in South Africa, but they do not distinguish between Afrikaans and non-Afrikaans music. No official number exists for the total number of Afrikaans album sales per year.

threatening, and this fear has manifested in popular music. Political Afrikaans music in this context has a racist edge, and pop concerts serve as guarded spaces of racial and cultural exclusivity. Chapter seven unpacks the complexities of aggressive racial politics in post-apartheid Afrikaans pop music.

Chapter One

Kruger's lost voice - Nation, religion and race in pre-WWI Afrikaans music records

This chapter goes in search of the very first recordings of Afrikaans music. It starts with a brief topography of the development of the language itself up to the beginning of the 20th century and underscores mutual elements between this development and the development of Afrikaans music. Although the emerging language and popular music performance in this language had many heterogeneous elements, especially regarding race, recorded Afrikaans music was limited to a small section of whites and their specific world-views. Recently updated discographies have uncovered recordings that pre-date the previously known oldest recordings listed in the *Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie* (SAME). What makes these recordings significant is that they coincide with a particularly turbulent time in Afrikaner history. The earliest pre-dated the fall of the Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek during the Anglo-Boer War in September 1900. More recordings of the national anthems of the two Boer republics followed after the war and patriotic Afrikaans singers regularly recorded anthems and folk songs abroad before the first mobile recording unit arrived in Cape Town in 1912. The SAME lists a number of these pre-1912 recordings and the singers who made them, with occasional biographical information included. This chapter expands significantly on this and includes information on the political affinity of some of these singers, as well as the relation between the first Afrikaans records and language movements. This includes looking at archival material (especially the J.J. Smith and Melt Brink collections at the US Library archives), the wording of advertisements for Afrikaans records, articles on Afrikaans singers in early Afrikaans magazines and personal letters, as well as processing the information listed in the SAME itself. The series of recordings of Afrikaans songs in 1912 are analysed in a

similar manner. By following this strategy, the relation between early Afrikaans records and the emergence of tangible new Afrikaner cultural identities in the two decades after the Anglo-Boer War is exposed for the first time.

Another element crucial for the dissemination of popular music is radio. The history of radio broadcasting in South Africa has been documented much more thoroughly than the history of popular Afrikaans music records. During the 1920s, local radio broadcasting was mostly in English – for various reasons – but did also include some live broadcasts of Afrikaans music performances. This thesis also looks at the relationship between the development of radio in South Africa (especially Afrikaans broadcasts) and the development of the Afrikaans music recording industry. In the following two decades, both would become fiercely contested political battlefields and their relationship with each other has not yet been sufficiently investigated.

A brief exploration of the linguistic and musical development of Afrikaans

The development of the Afrikaans language was a major source of pride for, and one of the cornerstones of, white Afrikaner nationalist mythology from the 1930s onwards.¹³⁵ Claims of racial and linguistic purity, constructed to serve political needs, have long since been discarded in favour of ethno-linguistic explanations that are unencumbered by such agendas. The complex development of Afrikaans, had by the end of the nineteenth century, been some 250 years in the making and the distinct differentiation between the three original groups involved in this development – European settlers, the Khoikhoi, and imported Malay slaves – had eroded.¹³⁶ This erosion, however, stopped short of true creolisation. Denis Constant-

¹³⁵ For example, see E.C. Pienaar, *Die Triomf van Afrikaans: Historiese oorsig van die wording, ontwikkeling, skriftelike gebruik en geleidelike erkenning van ons Taal* (Kaapstad: Nasionale Pers, 1943) and M.S. du Buisson, *Die Wonder van Afrikaans: Bydraes oor die ontstaan en groei van Afrikaans tot volwaardige Wêreldtaal* (Johannesburg: Voortrekkerpers, 1959).

¹³⁶ P. Roberge, "The Formation of Afrikaans", *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics* 27 (1993), p. 48.

Martin, in his recent *Sounding the Cape*, provides a thoughtful exploration of the complexities of creolisation, hybridity and *mettisage* in the South African context.¹³⁷ Common in the literature is the presence of racial oppression and power struggles that are more reflective of the colonial racial hierarchy than “smooth and gentle transactions generating societies harmonious in their plurality.”¹³⁸

A central theme was the historical racial dominance of Dutch colonists who imposed their language on imported slaves and indigenous local populations.¹³⁹ Racial politics also played an important role in ensuring that the creole development of Afrikaans “was checked halfway by factors such as the influence of Dutch religious language (the *Statenbijbel*) and the colour consciousness of whites.”¹⁴⁰ Despite this racial hierarchy, the diverse historical origins were influential in establishing varying degrees of cultural differentiation among Afrikaans speakers. The language became the mother tongue of Christians and Muslims, of whites, coloureds and blacks, in the cities and on the farms, of workers and landowners. Its earliest written texts even appeared in two different alphabets: Arabic and Roman.¹⁴¹ It was, however, a specific group of white Afrikaans speakers that involved themselves intimately with establishing a linguistic identity that denied its mixed-racial roots:

Afrikaner identity was developed in a period when European civilisation was the model, and when everything African was stigmatised. In a context where Afrikaans was called a “Hotnot’s language” or the bastardised language of “Asian and Mozambican maids”... the supporters of the language reacted by emphasising the racial purity of the language. The racism which was made an element of the identity speaks of the way in which the African aspects of the identity was socially traumatised.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ D. Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa* (Somerset-West: African Minds, 2013), pp. 54 – 95.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹³⁹ G. Stell, X. Luffin and M. Rakiiep, “Religious and secular Cape Malay Afrikaans Literary varieties used by Shaykh Hanif Edwards (1906-1958)”, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 163:2/3 (2007), p. 289.

¹⁴⁰ F. Ponelis, “The Development of Afrikaans”, in R. Dirven, M. Pütz and S. Jäger (eds.), *Duisberg Papers on Research in Language and Culture*, Vol. 18 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1993), p. 69.

¹⁴¹ Stell, Luffin and Rakiiep, “Religious and secular Cape Malay Afrikaans Literary varieties used by Shaykh Hanif Edwards (1906-1958)”, p. 289.

¹⁴² J. van Wyk, “Afrikaans Language, Literature and Identity”, *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* 77 (May 1991), p. 85.

The emerging white version of Afrikaans had to withstand the influence of the racial “other” to maintain its European cultural identity, whilst simultaneously resisting the challenges of British imperialism.¹⁴³

The development of Afrikaans music was subject to similar social forces. Its diverse cultural heritage saw Afrikaans music sung in Afrikaans and played by musicians from across the racial spectrum.¹⁴⁴ Imported Dutch and German (to a lesser extent English) liturgical and secular songs left their mark, as did minstrel songs from America brought to the colony in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Here it was translated, and partially creolised into the emerging vernacular.¹⁴⁵ Traditional *boeremusiek* especially, represented a complex interactional aggregate between the urban and the rural, race and class, much like the language itself.¹⁴⁶ Recorded Afrikaans music did not always reflect these processes. The technological development of the gramophone coincided almost perfectly with the emergence of the *Tweede Taalbeweging* (Second Language Movement) shortly after the Anglo-Boer War, which was instrumental in the codification of Afrikaans and Afrikaner cultural (and political) identities. This placed the first Afrikaans records among a wider constellation of cultural artefacts aimed at “building a nation from words.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ L. Witz, *Apartheid's Festivals: Contesting South Africa's National Past* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 13.

¹⁴⁴ Martin, *Sounding the Cape*, pp. 69-92.

¹⁴⁵ J. Bouws, *Solank daar musiek is: musiek en musiekmakers in Suid-Afrika (1652-1982)* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1982).

¹⁴⁶ W. Froneman, *Pleasure Beyond the Call of Duty: Perspectives, Retrospectives and Speculations on Boeremusiek*, (Unpublished D.Phil thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2012), pp. 49-62.

¹⁴⁷ I. Hofmeyr, “Building a nation from words: Afrikaans language, literature and ethnic identity, 1902-1924”, in S. Marks and S. Trapido (eds.), *The politics of race, class and nationalism in twentieth-century South Africa* (Harlow: Longman, 1987).

The first recordings of Afrikaans music

According to Eric Rosenthal, the well-known photographer Arthur Elliott recorded the voice of Paul Kruger onto a crude cylindrical device, which was subsequently lost, and with it probably the first sound recording of the Afrikaans language.¹⁴⁸ The recording must have been made sometime between 1890 (when Elliott arrived in South Africa) and 1900 (when he moved to Cape Town as a war refugee). It is, however, doubtful whether it was a music recording, seeing that Kruger was not known for his singing. The crude cylindrical device was most likely a phonograph,¹⁴⁹ a technology that became outdated by the development of gramophone records mostly due to the work of German inventor, Erwin Berliner.¹⁵⁰ From the late 1890s onwards, (the influential Gramophone Record Company, for example, was established in 1898),¹⁵¹ mobile gramophone recording units were sent across the globe to capture not just music, but many forms of folk culture. Studios in Europe and the US made numerous recordings of orchestral music and operas, but also lighter, popular, compositions and dialogues. On the choice of material, Kelly is of the opinion that:

... these records – the great majority – were made simply to give a little pleasure to their purchasers and to earn a few pence for the Company. However, even in the very earliest days, many records were made for more serious, even historical purposes.¹⁵²

Of the tens of thousands of recordings made across the globe before 1905, only 15¹⁵³ have an Afrikaans connection, and most of them have a reference to the Transvaal. The two wars between the two Boer Republics and the British Empire in the nineteenth century seem to

¹⁴⁸ E. Rosenthal, *Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa* (London: Frederick Warne & Co. 1967, Fourth Edition), p. 170.

¹⁴⁹ Invented by Thomas Edison in 1877.

¹⁵⁰ F.W. Gaisberg, *Music on Record* (London: Robert Hale, 1948).

¹⁵¹ A. Kelly, "Structure of the Gramophone Company and Its Output, HMV and ZONOPHONE, 1898 – 1954", (2000), p. 3, available at *The Truesound Online Discography Project*, <http://www.truesoundtransfers.de/disco.htm>, accessed 18 July 2014.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ This is as far as can be ascertained by consulting various matrix listings. It is possible that there might be more, since the listings are not complete.

have been a source of inspiration for continental European composers and songwriters.¹⁵⁴ During the second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) especially, pro-Boer sentiments led to the composition of popular songs from all over Europe, including Belgium, Holland, Russia, Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia.¹⁵⁵ Trehwela mentions that the French were particularly inspired by the Boers, to which songs like “Marche Héroïque des Boers”, “Le Patriotisme des Boers”, “Boers, Je Vous Salue!” and “Hommage Aux Armées Héroïques des Républiques du Transvaal et d’Orange” attest.¹⁵⁶ Winfried Lüdemann has written specifically on the “Buren-Marsch”, a German composition by August Bernhard Ueberwasser between 1901 and 1904, an apparent homage to the citizens of the two Boer republics that contains a whole section of the Transvaal anthem.¹⁵⁷

These pro-Boer sympathies reflected anti-British feelings on the continent at the time, which resulted in a number of recordings of Afrikaner national anthems, sung by mostly Dutch singers. The first were recorded in The Hague and Berlin in January 1900. In The Hague, the “Transvaalsch Volkslied” was recorded by J.C. van den Berg, while E. Spieksma recorded “Transvaal en Nederland and Volkslied van den Oranje Vrijstaat”.¹⁵⁸ In Berlin, both Ewald Brükner and H. Cornelli made recordings of the “Transvaalsch Volkslied”.¹⁵⁹ As far as can be determined from discographic evidence, these recordings by Van den Berg, Spieksma, Brükner and Cornelli are the oldest Africana gramophone recordings and pre-date the fall of the Transvaal (or Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek) in September 1900. More recordings followed after the fall. The Municipal Military Band recorded “Boeren Nationale Hymne” on 6 December 1900 in London.¹⁶⁰ The Dutch soprano Betsy Schot recorded “Transvaalisch

¹⁵⁴ J. Bouws, “Nederlandse Komponiste en die Afrikaanse Lied”, *Die Huisgenoot*, 22 November 1946, p. 25.

¹⁵⁵ R. Trehwela, *Song Safari* (Johannesburg: Limelight Press, 1980), p. 26; see also Bouws, *Die Huisgenoot*, 22 November 1946, p. 25.

¹⁵⁶ Trehwela, *Song Safari*, p. 26.

¹⁵⁷ W. Lüdemann, “Buren-Marsch: Die Transvaalse volkslied in Duitse gewaad”, *LitNet Akademies* 5:1 (August 2008), pp. 58-67.

¹⁵⁸ Alan Kelly Catalogue, available at <http://charm.rhul.ac.uk/index.html>, accessed 5 October 2014.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Volkslied” in Berlin on 30 August 1901.¹⁶¹ On 10 September 1901, the Kapel van het 7e Regiment Infanterie from Amsterdam recorded “Het Transvaalsch volkslied” and “Transvaalsch vlaggenlied”, while the Dutch baritone Thomas Denijs also recorded “Het Transvaalsch volkslied” and “Transvaalsche Vierkleur”, in Amsterdam in the same month (although the exact day is unknown).¹⁶² Denijs was a classically trained opera singer, one of Holland’s finest, and joined the Amsterdam Opera in 1901.¹⁶³

Another version of the anthem was recorded in Brussels by Jan Teirlynck on 12 September 1902.¹⁶⁴ The “Transvaalsche Volkslied” was written in 1875 by Catharina van Rees (who was Dutch), upon request by President Burgers,¹⁶⁵ and has the well-known opening lines: “Kent gij dat volk vol heldenmoed, En toch zo lang geknecht?”¹⁶⁶ It remained a popular anthem linked to Afrikaner nationalism throughout the twentieth century. Apart from this one anthem, other songs about the Transvaal were recorded in this early period. Jan Willekens recorded “Vredeliëd over Transvaal” on the same day, possibly in the same studio where Teirlynck recorded the Transvaal Anthem.¹⁶⁷ A possible earlier recording, “Wat zien we in Transvaal”, was made in Brussels by Louis Verstraeten in either 1901 or 1902.¹⁶⁸ The Dutch baritone, Arnold Spoel, recorded his own composition, “Vereenigd Afrika”, in Brussels in 1904.¹⁶⁹ Spoel composed “Vereenigd Afrika” “aan de helden der Transvaal” (for the heroes of the

¹⁶¹ Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol. 1, p. 405; see also *Truesound Online Discography*, available at <http://www.truesoundtransfers.de/disco.htm>, accessed 18 July 2014.

¹⁶² Alan Kelly Catalogue, <http://charm.rhul.ac.uk/index.html>, accessed 5 October 2014.

¹⁶³ E. Blom (ed.), *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. 11 (London: Macmillan, 1954), p. 665.

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.truesoundtransfers.de/disco.htm>, accessed 18 July 2014.

¹⁶⁵ Bouws, *Die Huisgenoot*, 22 November 1946, p. 25.

¹⁶⁶ Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol. 1, p. 350.

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.truesoundtransfers.de/disco.htm>, accessed 18 July 2014.

¹⁶⁸ <http://www.truesoundtransfers.de/disco.htm>, accessed 18 July 2014.

¹⁶⁹ Bauer, *The new catalogue of historical records, 1898-1908/09*, p. 425.

Transvaal)¹⁷⁰ in 1899, and presented it to Paul Kruger on his arrival in The Hague in 1901 during his exile.¹⁷¹

Although these songs were all recorded by classically trained European (mostly Dutch) singers and not actually sung by Afrikaners, their direct relation to politics and the people of the Transvaal, offered support for Afrikaner independence. They also subtextually highlight tension between white Afrikaans speakers precipitated by geographic and class differences:

In the early years of this century many “Afrikaners” maintained that Dutch and not Afrikaans was the language of the Afrikaner. In the Geref. Maandblad of Sept. 1905 a Prof. Marais said referring to Afrikaans: The kitchen language which is glorified in Pretoria ... is not the language of the cultured Afrikaner... Therefore, to the Dutch-orientated Afrikaners Afrikaans had the image of being the language of the lower strata of society, of being a proletarian language or the language of a people fast becoming proletarianised in the cities. On the other hand the language was essential in the communication with and the mobilisation of the white Afrikaans-speaking working class.¹⁷²

The link between early national anthems and the Afrikaner rural working class is strong. Jan Stephanus de Villiers composed many early Afrikaans psalms and hymns, as well as *volksliedere* like “‘n Ieder Nasie” (also known as “Die Afrikaanse Volkslied”) and “Vlaggelied”.¹⁷³ He was a close collaborator of S.J. du Toit of the *Genootskap vir Regte Afrikaners*, which was formed in 1875 and became known as the *Eerste Taalbeweging* (First Language Movement).¹⁷⁴ The *Genootskap* published *Die Afrikaanse Patriot* – the first Afrikaans newspaper – in Paarl, and appealed to Afrikaner nationhood and the acceptance of Afrikaans as language.¹⁷⁵ These early language pioneers stood opposed to the Dutch-speaking elites, who looked down on the Boers and resisted the acceptance of Afrikaans as written

¹⁷⁰ Arnold Spoel, *Vereenigd-Afrika. Lied en koraal voor eene zangstem en koor met piano- of orgelbegeleiding. Op. 18*, ('s-Gravenhage : Van Eck, 1899).

¹⁷¹ *Neerlandia* 25. (Dordrecht: Geuze & Co, 1921), available at <http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/nee>, accessed 16 July 2014.

¹⁷² Van Wyk, “Afrikaans Language, Literature and Identity”, p. 80.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Die Afrikaanse Patriot* 1:1, 15 January 1876, pp. 1-4.

language.¹⁷⁶ De Villiers was responsible for setting to music texts by Du Toit, such as the “Transvaalse Vrijheidslied” in 1881, which was more popular among Transvalers than the official anthem, “Kent gij dat Volk”, by Van Rees.¹⁷⁷ Van Rees’ version was also sometimes known as the “Volkslied van de Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek”, but is different from the “Zuid-Afrikaansche Volkslied”,¹⁷⁸ which can cause some confusion. Rautenbach mentions another “Transvaalsch Volkslied” that is not “Kent gij dat Volk”, and which originated with the *Eerste Taalbeweging*.¹⁷⁹ The lyrics display openly anti-British sentiments, with lines like “In vry Transvaal, bevry van Britse dwinglandy”, “Britse verraad”, “Haal ons die Britse roofvlag neer”.¹⁸⁰ De Villiers composed “Di Vierkleur van die Transvaal” (also known as the “Transvaalse Volkslied”) in 1881, which is not the same composition.¹⁸¹

In the absence of the actual recordings, it is impossible to establish definitely whether the early recordings of “Transvaalsch Volkslied” are indeed Van Rees’ version, or one of the other anthems also known as the “Transvaalsch Volkslied”, or if some recorded the former, while the other recorded the latter. If some are recordings of the latter, it would mean that they are in fact Afrikaans and not Dutch, and will have an even more direct link to early Afrikaner nationalist ideals. Despite the fact that there exists confusion over the titles by which some of the anthems are known, the fact that many were penned by people closely connected with the first *Taalgenootskap*, adds real political significance.¹⁸² Furthermore, a number of these anthems were later invoked during a new wave of Afrikaner nationalism when they were published in the first *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge* (FAK) songbook in 1937. These early records were not, in a strict sense, popular music recordings and it is doubtful

¹⁷⁶ S. C. H. Rautenbach, “Die Kersang as Agtergrond van die Poësie Uit die Eerste Tydperk”, *Tydskrif vir Volkskunde en Volkstaal* III, 1946, p. 87.

¹⁷⁷ Bouws, *Die Huisgenoot*, 22 November 1946, p. 106.

¹⁷⁸ N. H. Theunissen, “Ons Volksliedjies”, *Die Brandwag*, 7 October 1938, p. 17.

¹⁷⁹ Rautenbach, “Die Kersang as Agtergrond van die Poësie Uit die Eerste Tydperk”, pp. 87.

¹⁸⁰ Rautenbach, “Die Kersang as Agtergrond van die Poësie Uit die Eerste Tydperk”, pp. 86-87; see also N. H. Theunissen, *Die Brandwag*, 7 October 1938, p. 17.

¹⁸¹ <http://www.vetseun.co.za/anarkans/nav/toonsetverwerkkomposeer.htm>, accessed 06 August 2014.

¹⁸² For a further discussion on the link between national anthems and political and military conflict, see Lüdemann, “*Buren-Marsch*: Die Transvaalse volkslied in Duitse gewaad”, p. 58.

whether they were even on sale in South Africa. They were also – depending on which version of the Transvaal Volkslied – probably in Dutch, and not Afrikaans.

The earliest undisputed recordings by Afrikaans-speakers in Afrikaans date to 1906 and were made in London. On 9 July 1906 J.F. Smith recorded “Transvaal Dialogue”, “Transvaal Volkslied”, “The Vine: Transvaal recitation”, “Boer melodies”, “Transvaal Volks: Paraphrase”. J.F. Smith was likely actually J.J. Smith – as initials were often noted down incorrectly either by studio engineers or later discographers who had to decipher handwritten documents. J.J. Smith’s initials are known to have been occasionally changed to “J.D.” on record listings.¹⁸³ Smith recorded several Afrikaans dialogues in the following years in London and corresponded with the Gramophone Record Company on copyright issues regarding Afrikaans recordings of English hymns.¹⁸⁴ Judging by his personal letters to his mother, he did not share the same anti-imperialist notions of many Afrikaners of his time. He preferred the English to the Dutch, and was at first a strong supporter of Louis Botha. This changed in the aftermath of Union, when his allegiance switched to Hertzog.¹⁸⁵ Upon returning to South Africa after his studies in London, he became the editor of *Die Huisgenoot* in 1916. He also became the first ever professor in Afrikaans, at Stellenbosch University in 1919, where he happened to lecture a young Hendrik Verwoerd. Smith was also the first editor of the *Woordeboek vir die Afrikaanse Taal* (WAT)¹⁸⁶ and an important figure in the Second Language Movement.

A few months after Smith’s initial recordings, Paul Roos’ Springbok rugby team (on tour to Britain in 1906) recorded *Springbok Chorus and War Cry* in London, released on the

¹⁸³ Alan Kelly Catalogue, <http://charm.rhul.ac.uk/index.html>, accessed 5 October 2014.

¹⁸⁴ US Library Archive, J.J. Smith Collection, MS 333.K.G. 14. The letter refers specifically to the Gezange recorded by Annie Visser.

¹⁸⁵ US Library Archive, J.J. Smith Collection, MS 333.K.F.1 (86), (88), (98).

¹⁸⁶ J.D. Froneman, “H.F. Verwoerd’s student years – cradle of his political career and thought”, *Koers* 65:3, (2000), p. 401.

Gramophone Concert Record series.¹⁸⁷ They also recorded “Springboks Conversing in the Taal”, “Boer Recitation” and “Boer Dialogue”.¹⁸⁸ Recordings of spoken Afrikaans and references to the *Taal*, would become popular themes in later recordings, suggesting that Afrikaans was still something of a curiosity at the time. On *Springbok Chorus and War Cry* the rugby players sing “My matras en jou kombers”, “Die een kant op die ander kant af”, “Al slaan my ma my neer” and “We are marching to Pretoria”.¹⁸⁹ The connection between sport and music would remain strong throughout the history of recorded Afrikaans music. This record appears on what was likely the first advertisement for Afrikaans records (fig. 1) – by the Mackay Brothers Company¹⁹⁰ in November 1910:¹⁹¹

**Nieuwe Gramafoon Platen in
„AFRIKAANS.”**
10" TEGEN 4/- ELK.

Indien gij een Spreek Machine hebt, behoeft gij niet langer Engel-e Platen te kopen, indien gij waarlik goeie Muziek wenst te horen. Deze nieuwe Platen stellen u in staat de fraaiste Liederen van deze tijd te horen en de prachtigste Gezangen in de eigen taal, welke zo na aan het hart van de Boer ligt. Hier is de nieuwe Lijst:

LIEDEREN, Mej. Annie Visser.
GC 3843 Afrikaans Volkslied. GC 3854 Overtuiging.
GC 3844 Groete. GC 3855 Zuid Afrikaans Volkslied.
GC 3845 Afrikaans Bruidstried. GC 3856 Die Afrikaanse Pop.
GC 3846 Gort. GC 3857 Mammas, 'k wil 'n man hê.
GC 3847 Die Veldparadijs. GC 3858 Ou Tante Koes.

GEZANGEN EN PSALMEN, Mej. Annie Visser.
GC 3848 Gezang 68—Zelig, zelig niets te wesen.
GC 3849 Gezang 21—Diepe wijsheid zijn uw paden.
GC 3850 Gezang 96—Halleluja, ewig dank en eere.
GC 3851 Gezang 43—Heer, waar dan heen.
GC 3852 Psalm 68—De Heer sal opstaan tot den strijd.
GC 3853 Gezang 62—Heilige Jesus mij ten leuen.

KOMIES LIED, de heer G. L. Hutchinson.
GC 1431 Toe sé di Magistraat.

HUMORISTIESE GESPREKKEN, de hr. C. V. Becker.
GC 1429 The Gun License. GC 1430 In Self Defence.

GESPREKKEN IN AFRIKAANS.
GC 1330 Springboks conversing in South African Dutch.
GC 1408 Springbok chorus and war cry.
GC 1320 Boer recitation.
GC 1319 Boer Dialogue.



De Wonderlike „Cinch” Zonofoon
is het wonder van het jaar, is de duidelikste van alle Spreek Machines en de zuiverheid van toon en de klank is juist dezelfde als op Hoorn Machines.
Deze kan als een gewoon pakje worden rondgedragen. De meest handige van alle Spreek Machines en de goedkoopste van alle goede soorten. Dit is inderdaad de wonderbaarlijkste waarde verkrijgbaar is en zal enige verlangde Plaat bespelen. **Prijs £4.0.0**

MACKAY BROS.,
MUZIEK HANDEL,
JOHANNESBURG, PRETORIA & POTCHEFSTROOM.
Enig Agent voor de Wereldberoemde Piano's van Bechstein, Steinway en Bluthner.

Figure 1: An early advertisement for Afrikaans gramophone records, 15 November 1910.

¹⁸⁷ Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol. 1, p. 379.

¹⁸⁸ Trehwela, *Song Safari*, p. 35; see also Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol 1, p. 379.

¹⁸⁹ A. Pakendorf, “Afrikaans music: History,” http://myfundi.co.za/e/Afrikaans_music:_History”, accessed 28 August 2011; see also Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol. 1, p. 350.

¹⁹⁰ Mackay Brothers was the local distributor for HMV and Zonophone and one of the first companies to sell records in South Africa.

¹⁹¹ *Die Brandwag*, 15 November 1910, p. ii.

This advertisement was for a collection of recordings done in London at the studios of the Gramophone Company between 1906 and 1910. The caption of the advertisement is revealing:

Indien gij een Spreek Machine hebt, behoeft gij niet langer Engelse Platen te kopen, indien gij waarlik goede Muziek wenst te horen. Deze nieuwe Platen stellen u in staat de fraaiste Liederen van deze tijd te horen en de prachtigste Gezangen in de eigen taal, welke zo na aan het hart van de Boer ligt.¹⁹²

The tension between English and Afrikaans underscored here is indicative of wider political tension between these groups, six months after the Union had been established. The term “Boer” is also significant. The wording used in this advertisement (by an English company) is not coincidental. The influential linguist and Afrikaans language campaigner of the Second Language Movement, Gustav Preller, had the following to say about business opportunities aimed at the Afrikaners:

One of them is the practical businessman. If he wishes to reach the buying and commercial public, he tells the publishers of adverts, “In Boer-language, otherwise people won’t understand.”¹⁹³

Die Brandwag was launched in 1910 by the *Afrikaanse Taalgenootskap* (Afrikaans Language Society), as an important vehicle for language mobilisation in the wake of Union.¹⁹⁴ Isabel Hofmeyr’s perceptive analysis of the development of Afrikaans literary culture and its role in elaborating Afrikaner nationalist ideology brings into focus the way in which publications like *Die Brandwag* and *Die Huisgenoot* repackaged all manner of everyday things as “Afrikaans”.¹⁹⁵ Advertisements like the one above, as well as the records advertised, formed part of this process of defining Afrikaner identity.

Of the 23 songs and dialogues, six are hymns and psalms, two are Afrikaner national anthems,¹⁹⁶ eight popular folk songs, three humoristic songs/ dialogues (two of which have English titles), and four are recordings of the Springboks conversing and/ or singing in “South

¹⁹² “If you have a gramophone player, you no longer have to buy English records if you want to listen to good music. These new records will enable you to listen to the finest songs and the most beautiful hymns of today in one’s own language, so close to the heart of the Boer”, translated by author.

¹⁹³ G. Preller, ‘Laa’t Ons Toch Ernst Wezen’, quoted in I. Hofmeyr, ‘Building a nation from words: Afrikaans language, literature and ethnic identity’, p. 104.

¹⁹⁴ Hofmeyr, “Building a nation from words”, p. 106.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ “Afrikaans Volkslied” and “Zuid Afrikaans Volkslied”.

African Dutch”.¹⁹⁷ As mentioned earlier, the Gezangen were Afrikaans versions of English hymns, and not original. The two English titled dialogues by Clarence Vivian Becker are labelled as “Afrikaans talking” and appear on the flipside of two Afrikaans dialogues recorded by J.J. Smith.¹⁹⁸ According to Trehela, Becker started recording in 1908,¹⁹⁹ although the SAME’s earliest entry dates to 1910, which corresponds with Kelly’s catalogue.²⁰⁰ He did, however, have an earlier connection to Afrikaans recordings as he was one of the Springbok selectors of the 1906 tour, although it is unlikely that he accompanied them to Britain, since he does not appear in the team photos of the tour.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ *Die Brandwag*, 15 November 1910.

¹⁹⁸ US Library Archive, J.J. Smith Collection, MS 333.Pe.2 (7).

¹⁹⁹ Trehela, *Song Safari*, p. 35.

²⁰⁰ Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol 1, p. 357.

²⁰¹ L. Laubscher and G. Nieman, *The Carolin papers: a diary of the 1906/07 Springbok tour* (Pretoria: Rugbyana Publishers, 1990).

31 May 1910. The Union attracted international attention, which might have prompted the Gramophone Company to record such a commemoration.²⁰³

Visser was also a vocal supporter of Hertzog and his National Party.²⁰⁴ In an interview with the *Natal Mercury* she stated that she aimed at "... making the Dutchman proud of his language by singing about it and in it ... the Dutch people need stirring up in this way."²⁰⁵ Her life and career, and her Afrikaner patriotism, solicited new interest in the early 1960s, when two articles about her appeared in *Die Burger*²⁰⁶ and *Die Huisgenoot*.²⁰⁷ Answering a public call for information on her life, State President C.R. Swart himself responded with a letter in which he revealed a number of facts attesting to her close connection to the Afrikaner political elite of the early twentieth century. Visser apparently enjoyed a close relationship with the Hertzogs and often spent time at their home. She also sang at the inaugural congress of Hertzog's National Party in 1915, and was given the honour of choosing the colours of the new party (orange and white).²⁰⁸ Although Stegmann's accounts of Visser's patriotism date to the height of Afrikaner nationalist optimism, her proximity to Afrikaner nationalism of the early decades of the twentieth century is important. Also important is the fact that she features prominently as one of the earliest singers of popular Afrikaans songs on gramophone record.

Another seemingly patriotic Afrikaans singer was Joey Bosman (see figure 4) who, like Visser, received classical vocal training in England, possibly during the Anglo-Boer War. According to a July 1903 article in *De Goede Hoop*, Bosman, during her three year stay there, once responded to anti-boer comments by calmly pinning a ribbon of the *Vierkleur* (the flag

²⁰³ *The South African Audio Archive*, available at <http://www.flatinternational.org/search.php>, accessed 20 June 2014.

²⁰⁴ Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol 1, p. 383.

²⁰⁵ J.P. Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol 4 (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 457; see also I. Grové, "'Making the Dutchman proud of his language...': 'n Honderd jaar van die Afrikaanse kunslied", *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe* 51:4 (December 2011), p. 667.

²⁰⁶ F. Stegmann, "Annie Visser Het Eerste in Londen Opgetree", *Die Burger*, 07 September 1961.

²⁰⁷ Stegmann, *Die Huisgenoot*, 15 March 1963, pp. 9, 61.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*; see also Stegmann, *Die Burger*, 07 September 1961, and Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol 4, pp. 456-457.

of the *Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek*) to her chest.²⁰⁹ Apart from this one article, no other references to Bosman could be found and neither could any indication that she had recorded any music, since she returned to South Africa well before the first Afrikaans recordings. Since Bosman was her maiden name, she could well have made later recordings under a different surname. A certain Joey Marais recorded “Danie en Lenie” and “Nader mijn God bij U” in London in 1910,²¹⁰ while one Joey Stamrood recorded 14 songs, including “Zuid Afrika”, in Cape Town in 1912.²¹¹ This is of course speculation, but Bosman must have been a prominent enough singer to be featured in a printed article. The branding of Bosman and Visser as patriots reminds one of the manner in which *Die Brandwag* and *Die Huisgenoot* “fabricated a tremendous cult of personality around certain literary figures whom they depicted in personalised articles and full-page pictures.”²¹²



Figure 3: Annie Visser – “Een bekwame vrijstaats zangeres en een warm patriot”.

²⁰⁹ *De Goede Hoop*, July 1903, p. 146.

²¹⁰ Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol. 1, p, 374.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

²¹² Hofmeyr, “Building a nation from words: Afrikaans language, literature and ethnic identity”, p. 109.



Figure 4: Joey Bosman – Patriotic Afrikaans singer.



Figure 5: Kate Opperman.

Another seemingly patriotic figure was Kate Opperman (see figure 5), who recorded (among others) “Het Volkslied van de Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek”, “Het lied der Afrikaners” and “Volkslied van de Oranje-Vrystaat” in London c. 1912-1913.²¹³ Originally from Ladybrandt in the Free State, she won a scholarship and left for London in 1911. She apparently performed at the Albert Hall, the Queen's Hall and at Sunday League Concerts at the London

²¹³ Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol. 1, p. 376 .

Palladium during this time.²¹⁴ More nationalist sentiment can be found in another early Mackay Brothers advertisement for an Afrikaans record of a c.1910 London recording of the “Treurmarsch”, a funeral march for Paul Kruger to the music of the “Transvaalsche Volkslied” by the British group The Black Diamonds²¹⁵ (although their name does not appear on the advertisement).²¹⁶ It was priced at two shillings and a sixpence:



Figure 6: Paul Kruger – The first recorded Afrikaans voice?

The SAME has a detailed list of several other pre-1912 recordings, including Ada Forrest’s early recording of “Hondt het fort”, (which is actually misspelled, it should be “Houdt het Fort”), c. 1907.²¹⁷ She also recorded “Die stor van Bethlehem” (again misspelled) in 1908. The majority of Forrest’s recordings were in English and it is doubtful that she had any overt political leanings. Between 1909 and 1913, she performed regularly at the Promenade

²¹⁴ J. P. Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol. 3 (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1986) pp. 353-356; see also http://saoperasingers.homestead.com/Kate_Opperman.html, accessed 28 November 2014.

²¹⁵ Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol. 1, p. 350.

²¹⁶ *Die Brandwag*, 15 June 1912, p. iv.

²¹⁷ Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol. 1, p. 370.

concerts held at the Queen’s Hall, although never in Afrikaans.²¹⁸ Another singer who did, however, perform and record in Afrikaans was Floriel Florean. She recorded “Hul sal dit tog nie kry nie”, “Overtuiging”, “Ou tante Koos”, “Grietjie”, “Mamma, ‘k wil ‘n man hê” and “Toe sê de magistraat”²¹⁹ with orchestra, all dated to c. 1911.²²⁰ Florean was apparently known in London as the “Taal singer”, and performed recitals of exclusively Afrikaans folk songs at the prestigious Bechstein Hall in 1913. Notably, she donated half of the earnings to the Suffragettes.²²¹

The Peerless Orkes’ “Vat jou goed en trek Ferreira” and “Tikkiedraai – selections of popular Afrikaner songs and airs” of 1909–1910 – were also among the earliest Afrikaans music recordings.²²² All these recordings feature a mixture of Afrikaner national anthems, hymns and spirituals, Afrikaans dialogues and popular, light songs. Because they were recorded overseas, the accompanists were seldom South African, let alone Afrikaners. In South Africa, informal popular music performances, especially dance music, were often carried out by coloured musicians,²²³ but were not recorded. Furthermore, if one considers the sensation the first gramophone records caused in South Africa, with people flocking to public record concerts held nationwide,²²⁴ it had to be a profound experience for Afrikaners. Not only did this new technology amaze listeners, but to be able to listen to Afrikaans music – like the anthem of the old Transvaal Republic – sung by sympathetic European singers, or the Springboks’ singing in Afrikaans while the trauma of the war was still raw, must have stirred up strong emotions. Pretorius mentions that Boer commandos were occasionally entertained in the field by music boxes looted from the British or from abandoned farmsteads (in one

²¹⁸ www.bbc.co.uk/proms/archive/performers/search/ada-forrest/1, accessed 20 Oct 2014.

²¹⁹ Song titles were often spelled differently – in another release, this was spelled “Toe sê di magistraat”; see also the variations of spelling of the Transvaal Anthem mentioned earlier.

²²⁰ Malan (ed), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol 1, p. 374.

²²¹ *The British Journal of Nursing*, 11 January 1913, p. 36.

²²² Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol.1, p. 377. With regard to these early London recordings, the *SAME*’s discography provides detailed listings that need not be reproduced here.

²²³ For a detailed discussion on racial identities in the development of popular Afrikaans music, see Froneman, *Pleasure Beyond the Call of Duty: Perspectives, Retrospectives and Speculations on Boeremusiek*, pp. 49-76.

²²⁴ Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol.1, p. 354.

instance they came across a music box that only played three German songs),²²⁵ although it is unlikely that they ever listened to Africana records during the war.

Recordings in South Africa, 1912

The number of Afrikaans recordings increased exponentially from 1912, when the UK-based Gramophone Company sent a mobile recording unit, with recording engineer George Walter Dillnutt, to South Africa to make local recordings. These were probably the first in Africa, and were released under the subsidiary label Zonophone.²²⁶ Over two hundred and sixty recordings were made in Johannesburg and Cape Town during March and April that year and the SAME lists at least 126 Afrikaans tracks that were released as albums.²²⁷ Quite a number of these were of religious songs. The Het Moeder Kerk Koor from Cape Town, conducted by C. Denholm Walker, recorded 28 spirituals mostly directly translated from English, with a smattering of *Psalms en Gezangen*.²²⁸

Amongst these recordings were Afrikaans stories, notably including poet Melt J. Brink's own works, like "Mijn land, mijn volk, en taal", and "Die vrome meid, deel 1/ Deel 2", as well as "Afrikaan talking".²²⁹ Brink was well-known *volksdigter* (folk poet), as well as a prolific playwright, known for his humorous pieces.²³⁰ Singer P.J. du Toit recorded "N' dronkiedjie van 'n Mozambique en N' Jolly Hotnot" in Johannesburg in 1912.²³¹ This song has an overtly racial connotation: a "Mozambique" in such a context is a reference to an imported slave, and "Hotnot" a derogatory term referring to a coloured person. The comic Willem Versfeld

²²⁵ F. Pretorius, *Life on commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Cape Town: Human & Rosseau, 1999), p. 126.

²²⁶ L. Meintjies, *Sound of Africa! Making music Zulu* (London: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 275; see also http://www.flatinternational.org/template_volume.php?volume_id=280, accessed 12 June 2014.

²²⁷ Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie* Vol 1, pp. 356-385.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 360-361.

²³⁰ US Library Archive, Melt J. Brink Collection, MS 9.

²³¹ Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol 1, p. 368.

featured prominently and made at least 26 recordings, including the humorous Bantu song “Sakobong Songki”.²³² Although the themes varied substantially between “a blend of spoken word, humorous monologues, Afrikaans folk songs and other somewhat bawdy and also racist tunes,”²³³ they bear witness to the Afrikaner’s *Weltanschauung* at the time. Also noteworthy is that there are very few recordings of Afrikaner national anthems among these.

From 1 November 1912, Mackay Brothers would also advertise these locally recorded “Zonophone Double Discs” at three shillings and sixpence per 10-inch record and five shillings per 12-inch.²³⁴ Two other advertisements – one by Columbia-Rena Records (at a slightly more affordable three shillings) and another by its local representative Polliack’s, soon followed for South African records in the issue of 15 December 1912.²³⁵ All these companies and their local agencies would be involved in the local record industry for a number of years, which makes them very influential during the early part of the Afrikaans record industry. These examples of cultural ephemera are important because they targeted a specific Afrikaner market. Furthermore, the issue of price is germane. At three shillings and sixpence per record, they were relatively expensive. A later, 1930 advertisement for Gallo’s Singer label Afrikaans records shows that they were priced at four shillings and a sixpence,²³⁶ more than the daily wage of three shillings and six pence for white unskilled labourers during this time.²³⁷

On the other hand, the Carnegie Report showed that poor Afrikaners found access to gramophone players: “Immediately they start living in luxury; instead of saving, they buy a number of things they do not need, such as a gramophone or a piano.”²³⁸ This statement is the

²³² http://www.flatinternational.org/template_volume.php?volume_id=280, accessed 12 June 2014.

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Die Brandwag*, 1 November 1912, p. xv; see also Trehwela, *Song Safari*, p. 44.

²³⁵ *Die Brandwag*, 15 December 1912, p. xiv and p. xcvi.

²³⁶ *Opskommel*, 1992, Vol. 1, p. 16.

²³⁷ H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003) pp. 323-324.

²³⁸ J.R. Albertyn, *The Poor White Problem in South Africa: Report of the Carnegie Commission, Part V* (Stellenbosch: Pro Ecclesia, 1932), p. 42.

only reference to musical activities among poor whites in the 1932 report. Musical instruments and gramophone players were associated with the “improvident care-free life” of poor whites: living lavishly when they had money, and depending on charity when not.²³⁹ Along with other social ills like crime, unemployment and a lack of education, which they were exposed to and/or responsible for, it testified to the maladjustment to the economic decline of alarmingly high numbers of poor whites. Unfortunately, it is impossible to determine exactly how many poor Afrikaners owned gramophone players before the First World War, although the number of Afrikaans recordings and advertisements hints at some demand.

GRAMOFOON PLATEN

Slechts
£5 10.
Geld met bestelling.
Verpakt en vrachtvrij afgeleverd op uw naastbijgelegen Spoorweg Station.



GRA-TIS

£5 10s. is alles wat u betaalt om dadelik de allergekoopste Gramfoon ooit aangeboden, afgeleverd te krijgen. Voor dit bedrag zenden wij naar uw huis, met kosteloze verpakking, onze wereldberoemde Gramfoon, welke een ieder erkent als de krachtigste en beste gramfoon voor de prijs. Met de machine geven wij u present vier platen aan beide kanten bespeelbaar, welke u uit onderstaande lijst kunt kiezen.

Wacht niet, en zend uw bestelling VAN JAAG
GRAMOFOON PLATEN.
Een paar speciaal uitgezochte melodien, alle tegen 3/6 per stuk. Komplete lijsten postvrij toegezonden.

- No. X100. *Vederlands Lied.*
Uns Volklied.
- No. X101. *Zuid Afrikaans Volklied.*
Ons Vaderland.
- No. X102. *Nader Mijn God.*
De Goede Strider.
- No. X103. *Oranje Vrijstaat Volklied.*
Trensvaal Volklied.
- No. X104. *Danie en Lennie.*
Vat jou goed so trek Ferreira.
- No. X105. *Nationale Lied voor Afrikaners.*
Afrikaans Volklied.
- No. X106. *Die Meisies van di Kaap.*
Mamma ik wil een man hê
- No. X107. *Om Jan sijn Eest-partij.*
Een Vlukkse Meid.
- No. X108. *O God van Bethel.*
Roem in het Kruis
- No. X109. *Gezang.*
Gezang 120: Versen 1 en 2.
- No. X110. *Danie en Lennie.*
Nader Mijn God bij U.
- No. X111. *God is ons Hoop en Kracht.*
Leer Mij, O Heer.
- No. X112. *Gezang 28 (Zelig, Zelig niets te vrezen.)*
Gezang 21 (Diep wijsheid zijn uw paden.)
- No. X113. *Gezang 36.*
Gezang 33.
- No. X114. *Zijn sijn Meede.*
De beste Vriend.
- No. X115. *Rings op mij Vingers.*
Afrie, Waar zie Gai.
- No. X116. *Goed Morra.*
Het Lied der Afrikaners.
- No. X117. *On Tanta Kone.*
Grietje.

Schrijf vandaag om wat u nodig hebt aan
THE HENRY WILLIAMS CO.,
BUS 495. KAAPSTAD.

Figure 7: Afrikaner national anthems, folk songs and hymns.

This 1916 advertisement for gramophone records (many of which were probably recorded in London before 1912) shows three main themes: nationalism, folk songs and spirituals.

²³⁹ *ibid.*

Various nationalist anthems were recorded, like “Vaderlands Liefde”, “Unie Volkslied”, “Zuid Afrikaanse Volkslied”, “Oranje Vrijstaat Volkslied”, “Transvaal Volkslied”, and “Afrikaner Volkslied”. Popular folk songs were “Mamma ik wil een man hê”, “Ou Tante Koos” and “Grietjie”.²⁴⁰ These recordings were significant; on the one hand, they played on the nostalgia associated with the independence of the old Free State and Transvaal Republics, and on the other appealed to a separate political identity for Afrikaners inside the Union. They are also significant in the wake of the 1914 rebellion, when many Afrikaners sought independence for the Union from Britain. Furthermore, the prominence of Kruger in early recordings (like the “Treurmarsch”), signifies his prominence as Afrikaner leader. Apart from nationalism, this much larger sample of recordings (including those of the following decades) contain codes of racial dominance, language aspirations, anti-imperialism and religion – all themes that were later invoked during the 1930s and the rise of a more “virulent”²⁴¹ form of Afrikaner nationalism.

The development of the South African recording industry was interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, when it became too difficult to send the recordings back to England for pressing and then back again to South Africa as finished products. It would only resume in 1924, when the Edison-Bell Company sent a recording studio to Cape Town, where 50 double-sided albums were recorded using new acoustic technology. Of these recordings, only eleven were in Afrikaans, and most featured light operatic singers and church choirs.²⁴² The following year would see an increase in the number of local recordings – still mostly in English – with the introduction of electric recording technology. Most of these new recordings were made for the HMV Company.²⁴³ The material differed somewhat from the earlier recordings in that national anthems and folk songs did not feature so prominently. The

²⁴⁰ W. Schultz, *Die Ontstaan en Ontwikkeling van Boeremusiek* (Pretoria: A.V.A. Systems, 2001), p. 183.

²⁴¹ P. Bonner, P. Delius & D. Posel (eds.), *Apartheid's Genesis, 1935 – 1962* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1993), p. 1.

²⁴² Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol. 1, pp. 361-385.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

local recordings were made onto wax discs and sent to London, where they were pressed onto regular shellac discs.²⁴⁴ The quality of these mobile recordings were inferior, which led to record companies in the 1920s and 1930s often sending their artists (including Afrikaans singers like Chris Blignaut)²⁴⁵ overseas, mostly to London, to record at better studios. On the other hand, local recordings were cheaper and meant quicker releases.²⁴⁶

By this time, of course, the Afrikaner political landscape had changed notably. Hertzog's National Party came to power in 1924 and Afrikaans was recognised as one of the two official languages of the Union in 1925. Technological advances, in the recording process and the actual discs themselves, would continue to have substantial impact on the music industry. Interestingly, these phases of technological development show a remarkable correlation with developments in radio broadcasting in South Africa.

“Radio Wars” – The development of Afrikaans Radio broadcasting in South Africa

The South African society of the early twentieth century that saw the establishment of radio broadcasting, displayed extreme class differences among the white population, which was divided by culture, language and different geographic seats of power. Language was an especially important issue. English dominated early broadcasts, which offended some Afrikaners. This was exacerbated by the fact that English speakers were concentrated in the cities (where they dominated the Afrikaner urban poor) and had good reception, while the power base of the Afrikaners remained in the rural areas where reception was limited.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ Trewhela, *Song Safari*, p. 36.

²⁴⁶ Meintjies, *Sound of Africa!*, p. 275.

²⁴⁷ G. Hayman & R. Tomaselli, “Ideology and Technology in the Growth of South African Broadcasting, 1924 – 1971”, in R. Tomaselli, K. Tomaselli & J. Muller (eds.), *Currents of Power: State Broadcasting in South Africa* (Cape Town: Anthropos, 1989), p. 29.

Radio broadcasting in South Africa has a history of proximity to political events, including conditions of war, which dominated its first two decades of development. In 1898, the Field Telegraph Section of the Transvaal State Artillery ordered a wireless apparatus from the Siemens company in Germany, but it arrived too late to be of use in the ensuing Anglo-Boer War. British Forces also intercepted further equipment to Paul Kruger in Cape Town in November 1899.²⁴⁸ Local broadcasting was almost off to a very early start in 1896, when a young Edward Jennings – employed by the Post Office in Port Elizabeth – successfully experimented with wireless signals based on his own independent research.²⁴⁹ This made him one of the world’s very first wireless broadcasters, but, unfortunately for him, this “unique distinction for South Africa”²⁵⁰ did not receive state support and was subsequently largely forgotten. The first legislation regarding the new technology of radio broadcasting was promulgated in 1902, when the Cape Parliament amended the Electric Telegraph Act of 1861 to include it in its “Wireless Telegraphy” systems.²⁵¹ The following years would see the development of wireless technology mostly for military use, with specific restrictions on non-military use during the First World War.

By 1919, when these restrictions on war-time wireless transmissions were lifted, it paved the way for amateur radio enthusiasts, or “hams”, to start experimenting with radio broadcasting. John Samuel Streeter was perhaps the best known of these as he was responsible for South Africa’s first regular weekly broadcasts of selected gramophone recordings of musical concerts from Cape Town.²⁵² He was also the first to make a radio broadcast from Cape

²⁴⁸ E. Rosenthal, *You have been listening: The early history of Radio in South Africa* (Cape Town: Purnell, 1974), p.7; see also P.B. Orlik, in S. Head (ed.), *Broadcasting in Africa: A Continental Survey of Radio and Television* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), p. 140.

²⁴⁹ Rosenthal, *You have been listening*, p.4.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.2.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.8.

²⁵² <http://www.saiee.org.za/content.php?pageID=260#>, p. 1, accessed 20 June 2012.

Town. The first broadcast of a live music performance (a string quartet) was made by a G.D. Walker in 1922 from the dining-room of his home in Uitenhage.²⁵³

Although these early broadcasters were not much more than hobbyists, radio became increasingly popular, which necessitated regulatory legislation by 1922 when it became a legal requirement for amateur radio transmitters to have a license. Streeter was awarded the first: licence number 1 (A1A).²⁵⁴ His broadcasts continued until September 1924 and could be picked up as far away as Pietersburg. Ultimately, these early “hams” operated outside the sphere of Afrikaans culture, as they were mostly middle-class English urbanites, but they were pioneers in what would become a more official technological platform for the mass distribution of Afrikaans culture.

The South African Railways was responsible for the first official radio broadcast on the evening of 18 December 1923, which led to the establishment of the first radio station by 29 December in Johannesburg. This station was taken over by the Scientific and Technical Club on 1 July 1924, and would subsequently be known as “JB”.²⁵⁵ The Cape and Peninsula Broadcasting Association started a similar service in Cape Town on 15 September 1924, followed by the Durban Corporation on 10 December 1924. The income of these three radio stations came from licencing, which turned out to be unsustainable.²⁵⁶

These years also saw the first live performance of Afrikaans music over the radio. The most probable candidate for this achievement is Chris Blignaut, although the year is uncertain. One source dates his first radio performance (in English) to 1923,²⁵⁷ while a JB radio programme

²⁵³ Rosenthal, *You have been listening*, p 2.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

²⁵⁶ P. Hopkins, *Voëlvry – the Movement that Rocked South Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2006), p. 38; see also http://myfundi.co.za/a/Radio-uitsendings_in_Suid-Afrika, accessed 20 June 2012.

²⁵⁷ P. Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek* (Pretoria: Sigma Press, 1987), p. 78.

from 22 January 1926 shows him singing in English, but under his own name and not his pseudonym, “Harold Wise”, with which he started his career.²⁵⁸

All three stations were combined into the African Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on 1 April 1927 by the Schlesinger Corporation, which obtained a five year concession (later extended to ten)²⁵⁹ from Hertzog’s government to control all broadcasting in South Africa. The ABC followed a “hybrid American commercial model of broadcasting”,²⁶⁰ which meant that its programming was primarily determined by popularity and by maximising audience numbers. Radio reception was poor in the rural areas where Afrikaners had their power base, while those Afrikaners in the cities were too poor to afford radio receivers and licence fees.²⁶¹ This meant that by far the most listeners were English, who lived mostly in the cities where reception was good, leading to almost exclusively English programmes. The 1920s was also an important historical phase in Afrikaner politics and language struggles, especially after Afrikaans replaced Dutch as one of two official languages of the Union following the promulgation of the Official Languages of the Union Act on 8 May 1925. This official recognition of Afrikaans was not reflected in the broadcasts of the ABC.

Conclusion

The diversity of Afrikaans music performance is under-represented in early popular Afrikaans music records. This not only bears some testament to the racial politics intimately involved in the development of the Afrikaans language as well as popular Afrikaans music, but also of the contingent nature of these developments. What does appear to be a salient feature in early Afrikaans gramophone records is the close relationship between one emerging section of

²⁵⁸ Trewhela, *Song Safari*, p 37.

²⁵⁹ G. Roos, “Die Uitsaaiwese in Diens van ons Samelewing”, Paper delivered at *the FAK Buitengewone Volkskongres*, 7 August 1957, Stellenbosch, p. 2.

²⁶⁰ Hayman & Tomaselli, “Ideology and Technology in the Growth of South African Broadcasting, 1924 – 1971”, p. 29.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

white Afrikaans speakers and their claims for nationhood in the early twentieth century at a time when white Afrikaans speakers were dominated by the British. Steyn has linked this position with subaltern whiteness.²⁶² The trauma of the Anglo-Boer War and its immediate aftermath determined the socio-political context of these recordings of which the earliest were sung not by Afrikaners, but by sympathetic singers in continental Europe. The recordings of various Afrikaner national anthems in London by patriotic Afrikaans singers around the time of Union, and the subsequent advertisements in *Die Brandwag*, coincided with a rapidly changing cultural landscape. Although few anthems were recorded in South Africa in 1912, the wider range of themes still reflected a growing Afrikaans cultural industry with strong links to Afrikaner nationalism, although the political content of these records should not be overstated. Advertisements for recorded Afrikaner anthems dated to 1916 do suggest some level of nostalgia for a politically independent past, although later recordings of the mid-1920s did not display themes linked to Afrikaner patriotism.

Ultimately, one cannot claim that all pre-WWI Afrikaans and Africana gramophone records represented an acute self-awareness of a developing linguistic identity and political self-determination, but they were nonetheless part of a growing number of cultural products at a particularly sensitive stage in the development of Afrikaner identities.

²⁶² M. Steyn, "Rehabilitating a Whiteness Disgraced: Afrikaner White Talk in Post-Apartheid South Africa", *Communication Quarterly* 52:2 (Spring 2004), p.148.

Chapter Two

Mythology, class division and establishing “authority”

This chapter explores the way in which the fundamental shifts in Afrikaner society during the 1930s manifested in popular Afrikaans music. It looks at the working class elements of early *boeremusiek* records, especially by singers like David de Lange, but also considers the concern such records caused the emerging cultural entrepreneurial class of Afrikaners. Froneman and Allingham have commented on the class elements of *boeremusiek*, with Froneman the more sceptical of a simple class distinction. I argue here that some of the *boeremusiek* records of the early 1930s were indeed representations of class, but agree with Froneman that the emergence of more modern jazz influenced *boeremusiek*, or light Afrikaans music as it became known, during the late 1930s (especially the music of Hendrik Susan) appealed to a wider audience. I also investigate claims that Susan had played with the black jazz group The Jazz Maniacs and its possible influences on him. Other artists who were not *boeremusiek* musicians are also included, like Chris Blignaut, and Cissie and Willie Cooper.

Also central to this chapter, and a theme that has not previously been noted, is the concerted efforts by Afrikaans cultural organisations – most notably the FAK – in prohibiting the release of certain types of Afrikaans music records (such as the working class *boeremusiek*). Here, archival material have been of immeasurable value. The C.C. Cilliers collection at the US Library archives and the FAK collection at the University of the Free State’s Institute for Contemporary History (INCH) yielded important information on the strategies of the executive council of the FAK for establishing some form of control over the cultural lives of Afrikaners. Also important were editions of *Handhaaf en Bou* – a FAK publication – from the Africana section at the US library that included reports on the organisation’s numerous congresses during the 1930s.

The tension over the release of “embarrassing” Afrikaans music records was indicative of a wider struggle for cultural control by middle-class Afrikaner nationalists. This particular version of Afrikaner culture was constructed along continental European models because of still strong anti-British sentiments.

Although initially they were not very effective in establishing their version of *kultuurpolitiek* over the large – and growing – Afrikaner working class, they had some success with the 1938 Centenary Trek. I employ a Gramscian model to highlight the differences between the “sanctioned”, or “authorised” versions of Afrikaner culture as determined by Afrikaner nationalists during this time and the “popular”, or “unauthorised”, versions thereof. By doing so, it puts into perspective the ongoing attempts by Afrikaner cultural leaders to construct Afrikaner cultural hegemony at a time when they lacked any significant political power.

This chapter, like the previous one, also deals with radio broadcasting. The SABC was established in 1936, and a dedicated Afrikaans channel followed in 1937. The political fights over control of this new organisation mirrored wider political fault lines and are given due attention here. By looking at *boeremusiek*, but also other genres, the changing landscape due to the Depression, the emerging new nationalist mythology and the efforts of the cultural organisations related to it and developments in radio, this chapter exposes new and important elements that have been missing in the literature to date.

The Afrikaner cultural milieu of the 1930s was subject to the influence of a diverse range of global and local socio-economic, political, as well as technological factors. The period saw the confluence of various historic elements that would shape Afrikaner identity for decades to come. It represented an uncertain period, characterised by a new phase of competition for control over the future of white Afrikaans-speaking South Africa. The fact that Afrikaans was acknowledged in 1925 as one of two official languages in South Africa empowered Afrikaner political aspirations. The two-streamed language policy was invoked on a regular basis to

defend Afrikaner rights, and Afrikaner cultural life became dominated by language issues. Also by the early 1930s, the disparity between English and Afrikaans on the radio would become a highly contested issue and indicative of a wider political struggle based on Afrikaans language representation in the public sector. The language issue would persist in many ways while the issue of poor Afrikaners remained paramount. Whereas during the first two decades of the twentieth century, poor whites were regarded as the result of inherent weakness in breeding, attitudes changed after the Carnegie Commission's report in 1932.

As the state struggled to subsidise the agricultural sector,²⁶³ many were forced into the cities, where they were economically and politically marginalised. By 1936, 50% of all Afrikaners were living in the cities.²⁶⁴ Their historical agrarian independence was replaced by large-scale urbanisation, which caused a profound sense of displacement. In the cities they were looked down upon as unsophisticated and had to compete against cheap black labour, something which would have been unimaginable a generation before. Although Afrikaners still dominated the agricultural sector – contributing more than 80% of the country's output – the non-agricultural sector in the cities was monopolised by people from British or Jewish descent.²⁶⁵

This, as well as continued social discrimination against Afrikaans as language, stirred up long-simmering anti-British sentiments. On the other hand, English-speaking whites became increasingly worried about their own cultural survival in the face of a growing Afrikaner presence.²⁶⁶ The threat of a black majority was, however, real enough to bring Afrikaners and English speaking whites closer together, regardless of significant mutual mistrust. In broad political terms, two camps emerged among Afrikaners: supporters of the Hertzog and Smuts fusion in 1934 and their inclusive definition of "Afrikaner" (to include English-speaking

²⁶³ H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003), p. 404.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 405; see also W. Beinart, *Twentieth Century South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 355.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

whites), and Malan's *Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party*, with its linguistically exclusive ideology. Furthermore, deep class divisions were a great concern for Afrikaner leaders across the political spectrum. This tumultuous time, and its politics, had a direct influence on popular Afrikaans music.

Popular Afrikaans music during the 1930s

Immediately they start living in luxury; instead of saving, they buy a number of things they do not need, such as a gramophone or a piano.²⁶⁷

The above statement is the only reference to musical activities among poor whites in the Carnegie Report of 1932. According to the report, poor white families made more money in the towns or on “diggings” than on the farm and lacked experience in dealing with money, which led them to squander it. Musical instruments and gramophone players were associated with the “improvident care-free life” of poor whites: living lavishly when they had money, and depending on charity when not.²⁶⁸ The more fortunate men found work as “(s)hepherds, foresters and woodmen, ‘bywoners’, railway labourers, labourers in general, unskilled industrial workers, ‘transport riders’, diggers.”²⁶⁹ Along with other social ills like crime, unemployment and a lack of education, it testified to the maladjustment to the economic decline of alarmingly high numbers of poor whites. Despite these conditions, this era saw a marked increase in the number of Afrikaans music recordings²⁷⁰, including very popular *boeremusiek* albums, which underscored clear heterogeneous elements of class and political affinity.

²⁶⁷ J.R. Albertyn, *The Poor White Problem in South Africa: Report of the Carnegie Commission* (Stellenbosch: Pro Ecclesia, 1932), p. 42.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Albertyn, *The Poor White Problem in South Africa: Report of the Carnegie Commission*, p. vii.

²⁷⁰ R. Allingham, *Opskommel* 1 (August 1992), pp. 13-18.

This heterogeneity, at such a liminal time in the construction of a new Afrikaner cultural identity, was indicative of deeply differentiated social and cultural networks. Record companies were also hit by the depression, and released series of cheaper records. The Regal Company was a subsidiary of Columbia and released cheap early *boeremusiek* records.²⁷¹ Gallo was also under pressure, and had to borrow a significant sum for the production of cheaper records under the Singer label, specifically aimed at the poorer section of Afrikaners. Luckily for the company, one of the first artists to record for Singer was David de Lange, whose albums were so popular that he was almost singlehandedly responsible for its survival.²⁷² The fact that these cheaper albums were aimed at the Afrikaans market is notable, and underscores the relationship between popular Afrikaans records, including *boeremusiek*, and the Afrikaner working class.²⁷³

When Colombia announced that they would be sending their own recording equipment to South Africa in early 1930, with the specific purpose of recording music with a local flavour,²⁷⁴ it sparked the beginning of a productive rivalry in the local recording industry, which in turn led to numerous valuable recordings of early popular Afrikaans music. The Gallo Record Company, who was the local agent for Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company from America, responded to Colombia's announcement by immediately sending some of their artists to London to record at the studio of the Metropole Record Company.²⁷⁵ Here, Lou Davidson, Tredoux Odendaal and Gerald Steyn recorded more than fifty Afrikaans masters with the help of recording engineer John Hecht who, in 1936, would erect the first

²⁷¹ *Opskommel* 4, November 1990, p. 13.

²⁷² <http://www.boeremusiek.org/orkesteenkarakters.html#DawidDeLange>, accessed 23 Aug 2012.

²⁷³ W. Froneman, *Pleasure Beyond the Call of Duty: Perspectives, Retrospectives and Speculations on Boeremusiek*, (Unpublished D.Phil thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2012), p. 29; R. Allingham, *Opskommel*, 1992, p. 13.

²⁷⁴ *Opskommel* 1, August 1992, p. 13.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

gramophone pressing plant in South Africa for Gallo, thereby unwittingly ensuring the survival and growth of the local recording music industry during the Second World War.²⁷⁶

The music recorded ranged from polkas, waltzes, *vastrap*, sentimental songs and a few gospel numbers. The instrumentation was also ground-breaking, in that for the first time, the concertina, violin, ukulele, banjo and mandolin could be heard on Afrikaans records.²⁷⁷ These instruments, especially the concertina, would become synonymous with popular Afrikaans music. English hits of the time were translated into Afrikaans and re-recorded, like “Klein Maat”, which was an authorised translation of Al Jolson’s hit “Little Pal”.²⁷⁸ These three artists were under pressure to record as much material as possible in a short period (to ensure that Gallo released their music before Columbia). This explains the studio dynamics and essential “borrowing” of songs that did not originate in South Africa. When there was a shortage of Afrikaans songs and time pressure to release albums, record companies often followed a pragmatic approach to sourcing material. This strategy would become a regular feature of the Afrikaans record industry, and would later result in many German hits finding an extended shelf-life as reworked Afrikaans songs.

Gallo did manage to release their records a mere four days before Columbia’s recording unit arrived in Cape Town in May 1930.²⁷⁹ They soon sent more musicians, including a group of black musicians, to record in London.²⁸⁰ Two of the Afrikaans musicians sent over in the second wave, known only by their surnames Coetzer and Meyer, seem to have backed the black singers sent over in July 1930.²⁸¹ On another 1930 recording made at the same studio by Griffiths Motsieloa and Ignatius Monare (GE1), the Hawaiian guitars were most likely played

²⁷⁶ J.P. Malan, (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol 1, p. 351.

²⁷⁷ Allingham, *Opskommel* 1, 1992, p. 13.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁸⁰ Gallo would release local black music from an early date and would remain one of the most important role-players in the recording of black artists’ music.

²⁸¹ Allingham, *Opskommel* 1, 1992, p. 17.

by Pieter Burger and Jan van Dyl.²⁸² These two examples of inter-racial collaboration were exceptions to the rule. Despite the fact that the inter-racial nature of popular Afrikaans music performance has a long history, early Afrikaans recordings – and other South African albums – featured predominantly white musicians.

Chris Blignaut

While Gallo was sending its artists to London in 1930, the Columbia Company started to record local Afrikaans artists, including the undisputed star of popular Afrikaans music from this era, Chris Blignaut. He was the first Afrikaans singer to sign a recording contract (with Polliack's, a subsidiary of Columbia Records, in 1930) and he was the first to reach the one million mark in record sales. Between 1929 and 1949, he recorded approximately 250 songs for a number of different record companies, and sold in excess of two million records.²⁸³ Despite these early recordings, a commercial Afrikaans music market only gained effective momentum in Johannesburg in 1932,²⁸⁴ when Gallo built the first recording studio in sub-Saharan Africa and started to produce its own local masters.²⁸⁵ Due to traffic noise, the studio moved to a new address at 150 Market Street in 1933. In 1938, it moved to the sixth floor of a building on the corner of Troye and President Street, where it remained for the next three decades.²⁸⁶

The success of commercial Afrikaans music would cause musicians to take a pragmatic approach regarding their stage names. While Chris Blignaut, who would become so popular

²⁸² R. Allingham, cited in C. Ballantine, *Marabi Nights, Jazz, 'race' and society in early apartheid South Africa* (Scottsville: University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal Press, 3rd Edition, 2012), p. 218.

²⁸³ D.C. Pretorius, *Musieksterre van gister en vandag: Lewensketse En Foto's Van Meer as 100 Musieksterre* (Pretoria: JP & Son van der Walt, 1998), p. 22.

²⁸⁴ Meintjies, *Sounds of Africa!*, p. 276.

²⁸⁵ R. Allingham, "South Africa – Popular Music: Nation of Voice", in S. Broughton, M. Ellingham, & R. Trillo (eds.), *World Music: The Rough Guide. Africa, Europe and the Middle East*, vol.1 (London: Rough Guides, 1999), 639.

²⁸⁶ Meintjies, *Sounds of Africa!*, p. 276.

among Afrikaners, started singing on the radio as Harold Wise,²⁸⁷ by the 1930s a number of English musicians had to change their names to appear Afrikaans:

So he introduced me on the piano, Les Kelly on bass, Billy Wright on guitar and so on. Only three of us were Afrikaans: Susan, Sam Petzer and myself. So we changed the names of the others so the listeners wouldn't say, "Oh, this is just a lot of Rooinekke playing." Les Kelly, for instance, became Les Meintjies, and so on. Chris Lessing was the vocalist. Sam Petzer was on piano accordion. He used to waggle the concertina as well, so as to satisfy the traditionalists.²⁸⁸

Blignaut also acted as a talent scout. Many of the *boere-orkeste* from the Johannesburg area that recorded some of the earliest albums did so after being approached by Blignaut. Unfamiliar with the local *boere-orkeste*, he asked a young musician, Gerrie Snyman, to help him get them together to negotiate recordings on behalf of HMV record company. Blignaut was also responsible for naming many of them since most did not have names.²⁸⁹ Gerrie Snyman had started his own performing career at the Labour Party Club in Johannesburg.²⁹⁰ Whether or not this was the result of political motives, though, is unclear. The fact that Blignaut was removed from the *boere-orkeste* in his native Johannesburg hints at a class distinction. As a successful insurance salesman throughout his music career,²⁹¹ he was a middle-class Afrikaner.

Blignaut's politics, like many other top-selling Afrikaans artists, were probably more pragmatic than ideological. He could also satirise political tension between Afrikaner factions at the expense of both sides, as can be heard on his song "NAT en SAP".²⁹² Such satire was acceptable when presented in a certain non-partisan way, even at times of high political tension. He would also adapt his repertoire, depending on how conservative the audience was:

²⁸⁷ According to Piet Bester, his first radio performance was the song "O'Ruddier and the Cherry", after which he was asked to make records, which he started doing in 1930, this time under his real name; see Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*, p. 78.

²⁸⁸ R. Trehwela, *Song Safari* (Johannesburg: Limelight Press, 1980), p. 50.

²⁸⁹ Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*, pp. 38-39.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁹¹ Trehwela, *Song Safari*, p. 38.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 78.

He had one or two mildly naughty songs and, if he spotted too many stern faces before him, he'd give me the cue and out they'd go.²⁹³

Trewhela's account of his tours with Blignaut is an important source. He mentions that concert tickets in the *platteland* were priced at two shillings and a sixpence and that, while this seems low, audiences would not have been able to afford more,²⁹⁴ which again hints at a class element. Despite his success, none of his hits were included in the first FAK *Volksangbundel* of 1937. Other popular Afrikaans recording artists faced stiffer opposition from the cultural elites, most notably David de Lange.

David de Lange

David de Lange was a singing miner who was extremely popular among the growing Afrikaner working class.²⁹⁵ As mentioned above, his music was released on the cheaper Singer label aimed at the poorer Afrikaner. He was the first artist to record vocals over traditional *boeremusiek* – apparently an old practice that was common at dances where this genre of music was played.²⁹⁶ His musical style was not limited to this genre. According to Froneman, some of his music also bore a strong resemblance to American vaudeville and many of his songs were direct translations of popular American tunes.²⁹⁷ During the Second World War he also translated many popular English wartime hits into Afrikaans.²⁹⁸ Considering this, de Lange was a versatile entertainer and not limited to *boeremusiek*.

De Lange is portrayed as an enigmatic figure today, despite the fact that he had faded into relative obscurity even before his death in 1947. Apart from sporadic re-releases of his music,

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

²⁹⁵ <http://www.boeremusiek.org/orkesteenkarakters.html#DawidDeLange>, accessed 23 Aug 2012.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, see also D.C. Pretorius, *Musieksterre van gister en vandag: Lewensketse En Foto's Van Meer as 100 Musieksterre* (Pretoria: JP & Son van der Walt, 1998), p. 61.

²⁹⁷ W. Froneman, "Seks, Ras en Boeremusiek: agter die retoriek van gebrekkige sanglus by die 1938-Voortrekkereuefees", *Litnet Akademies* 11:2 (2014), p. 428.

²⁹⁸ Pretorius, *Musieksterre van gister en vandag*, p. 60.

he was later re-remembered in a reference to him in one of singer Randall Wicomb's hit songs from the 1980s, "Duitswes Wals", also known as "Dans met die rooi rok" (Dance with the red dress).²⁹⁹ More recently, he served as the inspiration behind the musical *Die Naglopers*, written by Rian Malan and performed by the Radio Kalahari Orkes, who also released a CD of his music in 2007. This added greatly to the mythology behind the man. Romanticised by Malan as an outsider, a hard drinker, fornicator and anti-hero, he epitomised rebellion long before the Afrikaans rock of Anton Goosen and Koos Kombuis.³⁰⁰

During this revival and revisiting of his work, some debate emerged on the online Afrikaans site, *Litnet*, on the spelling of his name and place of birth (and death).³⁰¹ Among the correspondence, music archivist Rob Allingham referred to a letter that was written by the FAK executive to the newly formed SABC – probably in 1937 or 1938 – asking them not to broadcast his music since it was of too low a standard and an embarrassment to the culture of the Afrikaner. Regardless of whether or not this letter was the main motivation (or even if it still exists), other sources do confirm that the SABC never broadcast his music. This was despite the fact that he sold hundreds of thousands of records.³⁰² In 1936, the same year the SABC was established, he released the first recording of "Suikerbossie" (Sugar bush), one of the biggest hits of the 1930s and to this day one of the most famous Afrikaans songs.³⁰³

A possible explanation for this ban was that I.M. Lombard, secretary of the *Broederbond* as well as the FAK, served on the local advisory council of the SABC for Johannesburg.³⁰⁴ De Lange's music was not totally lost for South African radio listeners, since LM Radio in Mozambique broadcasted a daily programme, hosted by Arthur Swemmer (later a well-known

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁰ 3 July 2006, <http://www.oulitnet.co.za/senet/senet.asp?id=48859>, accessed 23 August 2012; see also T. Engelbrecht, "Die Souties wat 'n seties laat swing", *Rapport*, 28 November 2009.

³⁰¹ Various letters were written on the platform between July and September 2006, available at <http://www.oulitnet.co.za/senet/senet.asp?id=48859>, accessed 23 August 2012.

³⁰² <http://www.boeremusiek.org/orkesteenkarakters.html#DawidDeLange>, accessed 23 August 2012.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*; see also Pretorius, *Musieksterre van gister en vandag*, p. 60.

³⁰⁴ University of the Free State, Institute for Contemporary History Archives (INCH), FAK Collection, PV 125 1/13/2/1/1.

actor), of exclusively David de Lange songs.³⁰⁵ This was an early example of LM Radio's role in broadcasting music to South Africa. In fact, many of the programmes were specifically intended for South African audiences.³⁰⁶

De Lange's lyrics could very well have caused the conservative FAK executive to rally against him, since they were often about drunkenness and fornication. The following extracts are good examples:

“...Sewe jaar het ek na haar gevry, en die agste jaar toe verneuk sy vir my...” (“Seven years I courted her, the eighth year she betrayed me”) “...Eers was ek ‘n dronklap...” (“Once I was a drunkard”) “...Ver van Christiana het Pop-eye San gebly, Sy was ook glad nie mooi, maar maggies sy kon vry...” (“Far from Christiana lived Pop-eye San, she really wasn't pretty, but goodness, could she smooch”) “...Babellaas se ouma woon in Boomstraat...” (“Hangover's grandma lived in Boom Street”) “...Hartebeespoortdam is ‘n lekker plek. Dis waar die nooiens van brandsiek vrek...” (“Hartebeespoortdam is a nice place. That's where the girls die of scabs”).³⁰⁷

This ambivalence had no real effect on the record companies. The Singer label released a special album commemorating the Centenary Trek in 1938 with a mixture of Afrikaans music genres, from the “Transvaalse Volkslied” and hymns (with the instruction that they should be sung at Christmas and New Year's celebrations), to songs by David de Lange.³⁰⁸

Despite the price, the records were selling well. Even though his working class references displeased the Afrikaner cultural elites of the FAK, they were a small minority and – during this period at least – not very influential. Giliomee puts the total Afrikaner population during the mid-1930s at just over a million,³⁰⁹ which means that probably one in every two Afrikaners owned a David de Lange record. It is, admittedly, impossible to pinpoint his exact audience. He himself was a miner on the East Rand, but he could just as well have been

³⁰⁵ Pretorius, *Musieksterre van gister en vandag*, p. 59; see also <http://www.boeremusiek.org/orkesteenkarakters.html#DawidDeLange>, accessed 23 August 2012.

³⁰⁶ <http://lmradio.org/History.htm>, accessed 30 April 2013.

³⁰⁷ *Opskommel* 4, 1990, p. 2.

³⁰⁸ Advertisement for Singer records in *Die Transvaler*, 2 December 1938, cited in W. Froneman, “Seks, Ras en Boeremusiek: agter die retoriek van gebrekkige sanglus by die 1938-Voortrekkereuefees”, *Litnet Akademies*, 11:2 (2014), p. 428.

³⁰⁹ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 323.

popular among the rural Afrikaners on the farms as well, since *boeremusiek* had a strong link with the *platteland*.

Cissie and Willie Cooper

It took a World War to stop us.³¹⁰

The song writing couple Cissie and Willie Cooper wrote many popular songs during the 1930s, among them Chris Blignaut's greatest commercial hit, "Die Donkie" (The Donkey).³¹¹ In one interview, Cissie Cooper provided a glimpse of how the Second World War had damaged their career:

Cissie was referring to the disruption caused by German submarines. In 1939 gramophone records were pressed in Britain and sent to Cape Town by sea. Many cargoes found a premature destination at the bottom of the ocean. Inevitably, priority in shipping space had to be allocated to essentials. Cissie recalls that huge crates of "Voortrekker Dans", already loaded on to a vessel in Southampton, went back on shore to make way for more important goods.³¹²

Interestingly, they also wrote songs that referred to political and social events of the 1930s, a rarity among Afrikaans songwriters of the time. Their song "Koalisie" (Coalition) was written after Smuts and Hertzog's fusion in 1933 (which would have far-reaching political consequences), and they wrote "Voortrekker Nooi" and "Voortrekker Dans" (the ill-fated single waiting on the Southampton docks) for the 1938 Centenary Trek celebrations.³¹³ The Smuts-Hertzog fusion split the loyalties among Afrikaners – with the opposition Afrikaner group playing a central role in the organising of the Centenary Trek. As with Chris Blignaut, who could make jokes at the expense of both the *Natte* and the *Sappe*,³¹⁴ the Coopers seemed to have had a pragmatic approach to politics. Hendrik Susan, who would become synonymous with the 1938 Trek and by extension the growing Afrikaner nationalist sentiment, would

³¹⁰ Cissie Cooper, cited in Trehwela, *Song Safari*, p. 43.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

³¹² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

³¹⁴ Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*, p. 78.

demand payment from local NP heads in rural towns if their politics kept the rival *Sappe* from attending his shows.³¹⁵

By pure coincidence, or perhaps not, technological advancements in recording and record pressing, as well as radio broadcasting, made it possible for Afrikaans artists like Chris Blignaut, David de Lange, Hendrik Susan and the Coopers to achieve countrywide fame just as the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism was gaining momentum.

On the other side of the racial spectrum *marabi* – a black urban genre developed in and around Johannesburg – had some elements in common with the *boeremusiek* of the 1930s. Both were regarded as sinful, controversial, low-brow, and associated with the working class (to a degree – *boeremusiek* also had a strong connection with rural Afrikaners).³¹⁶ However, whereas David de Lange sold hundreds of thousands of records, early *marabi* artists did not get to record their music. Others have commented on the mutual influence of *boeremusiek*, *marabi* and *ghoemaliedjies* (which developed among the coloured population of Cape Town).³¹⁷ *Marabi* developed into *mbaqanga* and *kwela*, and would have a significant influence on *boeremusiek* of the 1950s onwards, as would *ghoemaliedjies*. What the desperately poor urban areas – black and white – of the first half of the twentieth century lacked in jobs and income, it made up for in the most vital and vibrant spaces for the development of local music styles, often with multi-racial influences.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

³¹⁶ Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, p. 8.

³¹⁷ See D. Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa* (Somerset-West: African Minds, 2013), p. 143.

Establishing “authority”: The role of the FAK in shaping Afrikaner popular culture

As the number of urban Afrikaners started to grow during the 1930s, “organisation Afrikaners”³¹⁸ like the FAK began to make slow inroads into the mobilisation of Afrikaners as a group under the auspices of Afrikaner ethnic nationalism. One of its initial tasks was the commissioning of an Afrikaans *Volksangbundel*, first published in 1937. This was to be a collection of Afrikaans folk songs that were considered *volksvriendelik* (nation friendly) and an acceptable part of Afrikaner cultural heritage. It excluded songs that were judged *volksvreemd* (foreign to the nation) by the FAK. The irony is that many of the songs included in the *Volksangbundel* were directly borrowed from existing songs from abroad – mostly American or German – and given Afrikaans lyrics, while others had local Malay, thus coloured, origins anathema with the organisation’s policy of racial exclusivity.

It is easy to overestimate the role of the FAK and other affiliated cultural agents in influencing Afrikaner popular culture. At most, their impact during the 1930s was limited. Their impact on popular Afrikaans music is difficult to measure, but the indications (if one looks at David de Lange’s sales figures for instance) suggest that it was probably minimal, despite concerted efforts. The *Volksangbundel* may have become ubiquitous in schools and music classes, but often stood in contrast to the popular songs released on Afrikaans music records. This trend would continue throughout the twentieth century. The popularity of cheap *boeremusiek* records during the 1930s was a source of concern for the Afrikaner cultural elites.

As a result, almost none of the early commercial hits were included in the *Volksangbundel*. As mentioned before, David de Lange’s music did not appeal to the cultural aspirations of the FAK, so that hits like “Suikerbossie”, “Kalfie Wals” and “Waar is moeder?” were omitted, regardless of the fact that most Afrikaners were very familiar with them. Songs by other

³¹⁸ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 400-402.

popular singers, most notably Chris Blignaut – who sold in the region of two million records between 1929 and 1949 – were also omitted in the *Volksangbundel*.³¹⁹ His popular songs “Die Donkie” and “Ou Ryperd” are at least included in the latest edition of the *Volksangbundel*, published in 2012.³²⁰ In fact, of the early Afrikaans songs on record, it was almost exclusively the national anthems that were included in the first edition of the *Volksangbundel*, while most of the popular songs like “Mamma ik wil ‘n man hê”, “Ou tante Koos”, “Vat jou goed en trek Ferreira” and “Toe sê de magistraat” were omitted. The only exception was the song “Grietjie”.³²¹ This disconnectedness suggests that the FAK was primarily concerned with steering the cultural life of Afrikaners in specific directions and towards cultural values that were missing in popular Afrikaans music records. Furthermore, it indicates the inability of cultural organisations like the FAK to establish control over the Afrikaans culture industry.

On the other hand, the FAK commissioned, or sanctioned, numerous studies on Afrikaner culture, including music, since the cultural sphere was initially the only avenue available to nationalists for canvassing support. It also meant that the conventional wisdom on the subject was deeply associated with the cultural values espoused by nationalist mythology. It is therefore imperative that studies on Afrikaner popular culture tread carefully around this problematic historiography.

In partnership with HMV, the FAK commissioned the recording of seven Afrikaans records in Johannesburg in either 1930 or 1931. These were more ‘serious’ records, and included numbers sung by classically trained singers like Nunez Holtzhausen, Anna Steyn, and Stephen Eyssen (who was one of the editors of the *Volksangbundel* and who would become an influential member of the FAK). The orchestra of the ABC (African Broadcasting

³¹⁹ H. Gutsche, W.J. du P Erlank and S. H. Eyssen (eds.), *Die F.A.K.-volksangbundel* (Pretoria: De Bussy 1937).

³²⁰ Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge, *FAK-sangbundel: 'n versameling van Afrikaanse musiek in ses verskillende rubrieke*, Vol. II (Pretoria: FAK, 2012).

³²¹ Gutsche, Erlank and Eyssen (eds.), *Die F.A.K.-volksangbundel*, (1937).

Company) backed the singers.³²² HMV did not limit their recordings to these artists and this genre. They also recorded *boere-orkeste* like *Die Vier Springbokke*,³²³ *Die Vier Transvalers*,³²⁴ and *Die Vyf Dagbrekers*,³²⁵ which underscores the popularity of *boeremusiek* at the time. The FAK not only commissioned more “serious” Afrikaans albums, but also campaigned against the release of “lesser quality” popular Afrikaans music.

An example of this ambivalent relationship with popular Afrikaans music can be found in a report by the chairman of the FAK, Dr. N. J. van der Merwe, at the FAK *Kultuurkongres* of 1931 where he stated the following:

When the Columbia Company made public its plans to make Afrikaans recordings, the FAK felt that the taste of the developed Afrikaner should be tainted as little as possible by frivolity. We ensured the company of our support if they released records of outstanding quality. Yet business and sentiment mostly do not go hand in hand, and we later had to complain in a letter against the release of such songs as “Brandewyn laat my staan” and “Hou jou roksak toe.” Ladies and gentlemen, we can only counteract these inferior records by buying recordings with higher artistic content and to not give the performers of “Brandewyn – en roksak”-songs a personal stage to perform in front of us.³²⁶

“Hou jou roksak toe” was recorded for the Columbia Company by Joe Snyman and appears on record LE 4, along with “Die Aap se Bruilof”.³²⁷ Joe Snyman also recorded with Boy Solomon and the *Voortrekker Danskwartet*, which was one of the very first groups to record for Columbia. Although the FAK would continue to express its concern over the tastes of the Afrikaner masses, it is doubtful whether they had any real influence over record companies by 1931, since the organisation was only two years old.³²⁸ Their influence on radio broadcasts was also very limited at this stage.

³²² Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol 1, p. 352.

³²³ Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*, p. 23.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³²⁶ “Verslag van F.A.K. Kultuurkongres”, *Handhaaf en Bou* 4 (21 - 23 Des 1931), p. 7, translated from original.

³²⁷ Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*, p. 47.

³²⁸ As, indeed, Van der Merwe’s statement shows – the Columbia company did not respond to the FAK’s request.

Radio

This marginalisation of Afrikaans by the ABC led to a campaign in 1931 by the *Broederbond* for more Afrikaans programming.³²⁹ Eventually, the ABC would broadcast 90 minutes of Afrikaans per day which, for the Afrikaans lobbyists, was not enough.³³⁰

The two-stream policy of Smuts and Botha, who saw English and Afrikaans-speaking whites sharing in a general South Africaness, was opposed by the Nationalists, who regarded Afrikaans as a threatened culture, to be kept separate until it had achieved parity with English. This weakness consisted chiefly in the lesser degree of commodisation of Afrikaans culture, which was then more oral and community based. Afrikaans broadcasters, therefore, had far fewer ready-made resources in the forms of books, records, newspapers or even printed music on which to draw.³³¹

Although the ABC had exclusive broadcasting rights in South Africa, the number of licences remained low, causing further financial difficulties in the corporation's early years, prompting Isidor Schlesinger, the company's founder and president, to request the government to buy the organisation from him – a request which was refused.³³²

Compared to the recording industry, the history of radio broadcasting in South Africa has more direct links to the political developments of the twentieth century. Since television arrived very late in South Africa (1976), radio was the only broadcasting medium for more than five decades. During this time, it constituted a continuous ideological battlefield, not only between the two white language groups, but also within the groups, to determine the societal role that this 'constant companion of man'³³³ would play. The very nature of broadcasting makes it extremely susceptible to political power struggles.

³²⁹ G. Hayman & R. Tomaselli, "Ideology and Technology in the Growth of South African Broadcasting, 1924 – 1971", in R. Tomaselli, K. Tomaselli & J. Muller (eds.), *Currents of Power: State Broadcasting in South Africa* (Cape Town: Anthropos, 1989), p. 29.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ Hayman & Tomaselli, "Ideology and Technology in the Growth of South African Broadcasting, 1924 – 1971", p. 29.

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ To quote C. Hamm, "'The constant companion of man': Separate Development, Radio Bantu and music", *Popular Music* 10:2, (1991), pp. 147-173.

By 1933, Hertzog's government, cognisant of the potential power of broadcasting and of the problems regarding the disparity between English and Afrikaans, commissioned Sir John Reith, Director-General of the BBC at the time, to investigate the possibility of a government take-over of the radio service. Reith spent 39 days interviewing more than 250 representatives from around South Africa.³³⁴ His report stated that radio was of vital importance to South Africa, but that technical challenges made it impossible for a private organisation to provide comprehensive programming. He recommended legislation that would allow for the formation of a public broadcaster owned, yet not necessarily dictated, by the government.³³⁵

This advice was based on the BBC model, which differed from the partially commercial American model of the ABC. In general, the South African public seemed to regard the Reith Report positively, but the South African government's decision to buy out the ABC and to establish a national broadcaster was delayed until 1936, following extended negotiations between the two parties. Furthermore, the changing political landscape - especially among Afrikaners after Hertzog and Smuts' fusion - would lead to fierce debates in Parliament during April and May 1936 over the manner in which Radio broadcasting was to be managed. The newly formed *Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party* used the debates to drive the principle of Afrikaner cultural sovereignty – their only political capital at the time – as far as possible.

Paul Sauer, representative of the Afrikaner nationalist opposition, succinctly summarised the concerns of his constituency and would prove to be remarkably prophetic of the tensions that would soon appear after the SABC's formation:

With regard to the African Broadcasting Company, I want to say that after a very long and hard struggle, the Afrikaans language has come partly into its rights. I trust that, so far as this is concerned, we shall have no more complaints when the new Corporation is established... There always was throughout subtle imperialistic propaganda to which many people in South Africa

³³⁴ E. Rosenthal, *You have been listening: The early history of Radio in South Africa* (Cape Town: Purnell, 1974), pp. 153-154; see also G. Roos, "Die Uitsaaiwese in Diens van ons Samelewing", Paper delivered at *the FAK Buitengewone Volkskongres*, 7 August 1957, Stellenbosch, p. 2.

³³⁵ Rosenthal, *You have been listening*, pp. 153-154.

strongly objected. I hope that when we have our own service in South Africa, as regards the broadcasting of news, it will be done in an objective manner...³³⁶

He also raised the issue of class, by motioning that rural (mostly Afrikaner) listeners, who generally had much worse reception, should pay lower licensing fees.³³⁷ Radio licenses in South Africa were the most expensive in the world at the time, which made it difficult for many Afrikaners to afford. If they could get discounted licensing fees, more Afrikaners would listen to the radio. Furthermore, the purified nationalists favoured a radio board consisting of only bilingual representatives. This would have been favourable for the Afrikaans-speaking population, since many Afrikaners were bilingual, while many English-speakers were not. This way, recent English-speaking immigrants could not serve on the Radio Board until they had learned to speak Afrikaans.

On the opposite side of the political spectrum, C. F. Stallard, leader of the Dominion Party and representative for Roodepoort (and often regarded as jingoist), made the following forthright statement regarding the role of cultural organisations, most probably referring to the FAK:

... (W)hat the country desires and looks for is that this utility corporation, when established, shall have no political bias of any sort, kind or description: that it shall represent the people as a whole, and not get into the hands of anybody, the Government included, who can use it for probably propaganda purposes, or as a teaching organisation for teaching what the listeners do not want to be taught. There are plenty of cultural organisations that can do that. I have yet to learn that cultural organisations are best qualified to speak from the public point of view.³³⁸

My information is that the existing broadcasting corporation throughout its career has been deluged with protests and applications from these cultural societies.³³⁹

Although Stallard never indicated exactly which ‘cultural societies’ he was referring to, Hayman and Tomaselli’s reference to the 1931 campaign by the *Broederbond* serves as an

³³⁶ Union of South Africa, Debates of the House of Assembly, Fourth Session, Seventh Parliament, Vol. 26, 29 April 1936, p. 2728.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 2732-2733.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3829.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3838.

example.³⁴⁰ The impact of this campaign was probably limited, since there was no marked increase in Afrikaans programming before the establishment of the SABC's dedicated Afrikaans service in 19.... The essential problem was that, other than in the UK with a culturally homogenous population, white South Africa had deep divisions between the Afrikaans and English-speaking groups and fears of cultural domination by the other dominated debates on the topic.

Despite this, all parties were in agreement that a national broadcaster should be established in the place of the ABC, something which actually suited the Afrikaans contingent. By this time however, Schlesinger had managed to turn the corporation's financial situation around and was less enthusiastic about letting it go, but he was legally powerless following the promulgation of Act no 22 of 1936, which created the SABC and effectively forced him to sell.³⁴¹

Part of the Act was to make provision for a separate Afrikaans service. This led to the establishment of the first exclusively Afrikaans radio broadcasts – a goal of Afrikaner lobbying groups for more than a decade³⁴² – on 27 October 1937, known as the “B” service of the SABC. Because of its powerful potential as propaganda machine, the various interest groups in parliament had to be satisfied that it would be kept neutral before the bill could be passed. As a result, the Act stipulated that the broadcaster would not take any political view. This agreement suited the Afrikaner nationalists who constituted a political minority at the time. The £ 150 000 used to buy out the ABC was fronted by the insurance company Sanlam,³⁴³ which had a strong Afrikaner nationalist corporate identity. Despite Sanlam's involvement, the relationship between the SABC and Afrikaner nationalists during the 1930's

³⁴⁰ Hayman and Tomaselli, “Ideology and Technology in the Growth of South African Broadcasting, 1924 – 1971”, p. 29.

³⁴¹ Rosenthal, *You have been listening*, pp. 154-155.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 159; Hayman and Tomaselli, “Ideology and Technology in the Growth of South African Broadcasting, 1924 – 1971”, p. 31.

was ambivalent. Even though the SABC occasionally acceded to FAK requests – as they apparently did in the case of David de Lange – it was reluctant to get involved in politics during the 1938 Centenary Trek. This neutrality would prove to be a difficult position to maintain. Regardless, the establishment of an exclusively Afrikaans radio broadcasting service was a vital new element in the distribution of popular Afrikaans music to the Afrikaans public.

The highly fragmentary nature of Afrikaner society during the 1930s was also clearly visible in the ways in which different Afrikaans newspapers supported the two main rival Afrikaner political parties. *Die Vaderland*, *Die Suiderstem* and *Die Volkstem* supported the United Party, while *Die Burger*, *Die Volksblad* and *Die Transvaler* were pro-National Party.³⁴⁴ One of the central points of contention was the FAK's efforts to politicise Afrikaner culture:

In fact, the paper took issue with the Christian National definition of culture; cultural advance came through creative individuals, said an editorial, not through class or ethnic organization (*Die Vaderland*, July 6, 1937). More than that, it declared, The F.A.K. had become the political dummy of the purified National Party. If there were a genuine cultural organization, it would have to bridge political divisions and not simply represent one section of the Afrikaner people (*Die Vaderland*, May 27, 1938).³⁴⁵

Less than three months after the latter editorial, an unprecedented cultural event would take place that would significantly boost the cultural capital of the FAK, but also bridge political divisions among Afrikaners.

The 1938 Centenary Trek

An event that impacted greatly on the lives of Afrikaners during what was a tumultuous decade, was the 1938 Centenary Trek.

³⁴⁴ J. Steyn, "Die rol van die Afrikaanse pers in die taalstryd van die 1930's", *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* 7: 1 (1986), pp. 3-16.

³⁴⁵ T. Dunbar Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 175.

Much of the strength and specificity of Afrikaner nationalism as it re-emerged in the 1930s and 1940s can be accounted for by the precise articulation the *volksbeweging* gave to a series of painful and conflict-ridden experiences: the great drought, the Depression, the accompanying large-scale urbanization and social disruption, and the Second World War.³⁴⁶

A master stroke of the cultural entrepreneurs was to organise a Centenary Trek celebrating the 1838 Great Trek, which commenced in Cape Town on 8 August 1938. It was interpreted as the birth of an independent Afrikaner nation, but it was effectively an effort to spread a specific Afrikaner identity, densely coded with cultural tropes – ox wagons, Voortrekker dress, beards, *volkspele* – across South Africa, culminating in its memorialisation at *Monumentkoppie* outside Pretoria and at the site of the Battle of Blood River in Natal. It connected the urban Afrikaner working classes with rural agrarian Afrikaners under the banner of a shared history and drew tremendous support. It was also the first real victory for the emerging new *kultuurpolitiek* of the Afrikaner nationalists in their efforts to unite the *Volk*. These efforts were targeting specific issues:

During the 1930s the Bond initiated two movements which were to give *kultuurpolitiek* a specific class content, politicising class cleavages in cultural terms and finally succeeding in the interpellation of the new subject – the Afrikaner volk. These were the assault on the trade unions, and the economic movement. The first mobilised class support, whilst the second made explicit the economic basis and petty-bourgeois character of Afrikaner nationalism.³⁴⁷

Piet Meyer was instrumental in formalising *kultuurpolitiek* by forming the FAK's *Nasionale Kultuurraad* in July 1936.³⁴⁸ He identified two main threats to Afrikaner unity: the United Party's conciliatory policies and “‘communist-inspired’ class conflicts.”³⁴⁹ The United Party represented not only government, but also capital, whereas “‘communist-inspired’” class conflicts were tied to the opposing ideology of Afrikaner socialism. The efforts by the FAK to address these issues were initially ineffective – especially at the polls in the 1938 election –

³⁴⁶ A. Norval, *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse* (London: Verso, 1996), p. 12.

³⁴⁷ D. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: Class Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934 – 1948* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983), p. 77.

³⁴⁸ Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, pp. 169-170.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

but saw a remarkable turnaround during the Centenary Trek.³⁵⁰ Meyer was an influential arch-nationalist and one of the founding members of the *Afrikaans-Nasionale Studentebond*, which was instrumental in the publication of the FAK's *Volksangbundel*.³⁵¹

Although the FAK was part of the constellation of organisations – political, religious and cultural – that were closely linked to the ideology behind the Trek, it was officially organised by the *Afrikaanse Taal-en Kultuurvereniging* (ATKV – the Afrikaans Language and Culture Association), headed by Henning Klopper. The ATKV was founded in 1930 and had a strong link to the working class Afrikaners employed in the lower strata of the South African Railways, where they faced severe language discrimination.³⁵² This entrenched discrimination, despite the post government's two-stream policy on language, played a significant role in forging nationalist politics. Like the FAK, the ATKV functioned as a public front for the *Broederbond*, of which Klopper was a founding member.

The Trek itself attracted unprecedented support from Afrikaners all the way from the Cape to Pretoria. Every stopover made by the *ossewaens* (ox wagons) became a festival of Afrikaner culture. These were solemn events that included sermons, the singing of the unofficial Afrikaner national anthem *Die Stem*, choir performances and various civil ceremonies.³⁵³ The evenings were spent *braaiing* (barbecuing), and singing *pieknieklidjies* (picnic songs), with *orkeste* (bands) providing entertainment. Men grew beards to resemble the Voortrekkers from a century before, while women dressed in *kappies* and *voortrekkerrokke*.

These fashions were part of the creation of a new imagined *volksgeskiedenis* (ethnic history), along with other cultural activities like *volkspele* (folk dances), which were not historically

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁵¹ In 1935 he received his doctorate from the Vrije University in Amsterdam, from where he often took trips to the rest of Europe, including Germany. In his autobiography he fondly recalls a ski trip in the German Alps with Rudolph Hess, and seeing Adolf Hitler up close, see P. Meyer, *Nog nie ver genoeg nie: 'n Persoonlike rekenskap van vyftig jaar georganiseerde Afrikanerskap* (Johannesburg: Perskor, 1984), pp. 11 – 12.

³⁵² A. Grundlingh and H. Sapire, "From Feverish Festival to Repetitive Ritual? The Changing Fortunes of Great Trek Mythology in an Industrializing South Africa, 1938 – 1988", *South African Historical Journal* 21 (1989), p. 20; see also Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 402.

³⁵³ *Die Burger*, 10 September 1938.

part of Afrikaner life at all, but recently imported by nationalist students returning from their studies in Holland and Germany in the early 1930s:

The revival of folk-dancing under the name of ‘volkspele’ began at Boshof under S. Henri Pellissier, modelled upon the Swedish folk-dances. The adoption of definite rules for the execution of movements and steps and of special garb to be worn ensured uniformity at mass displays on the occasion of national festivals such as the centenary of the Great Trek (1938) and the Tercentenary Festival (1952), but departed from the unpretentious 19th-century traditional folk-dances.³⁵⁴

This re-invented heritage had some overt similarities to what was happening in Nazi Germany in the 1930s:

It is thus tempting to read Christmas in the Third Reich as an obvious exercise in the excesses of National Socialist propaganda. Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann's path-breaking social history of German Christmas (1978) part social history, part nostalgic ethnography adopts this approach. Weber-Kellermann, a well-known scholar of German family history, argued that public Christmas celebrations organized by the Nazis lacked popular appeal and that private festivities remained impervious to political manipulation. Her conclusions have had lasting appeal. As one historian recently concludes, Nazi Christmas “was a time for private authenticity over public conformity.” These interpretations dovetail with more general arguments that Nazi cultural policies and programs offered Germans a “beautiful illusion” that masked the crimes of the racial state. Yet viewing the products of the Nazi culture industry as part of an “illusionary world” (Scheinwelt) that somehow lacked “authenticity” erases the ways Nazi culture opened spaces in which everyday activities fashioned the socio-political boundaries of the racial state.³⁵⁵

Crowds regularly numbering 4 000 or more would show up in small towns, while in Port Elizabeth a crowd exceeding 25 000 was recorded. By 16 December, the day of the Covenant, a total of 200 000 Afrikaners had congregated at *Monumentkoppie* and at Blood River.³⁵⁶ This represented approximately 20% of the total Afrikaner population³⁵⁷ and elicited highly emotional responses:

³⁵⁴ <http://ancestry24.com/history-of-music-in-south-africa/>, accessed 20 June 2012.

³⁵⁵ J. Perry, “Nazifying Christmas: Political Culture and Popular Celebration in the Third Reich”, *Central European History* 38:4 (2005), p. 573.

³⁵⁶ *Die Burger*, 12-15, 17, 19-20 September, 1938.

³⁵⁷ *Die Burger* had calculated that the crowd at *Monumentkoppie* alone represented 10% of the white Afrikaner population, see Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, p. 184.

The Voortrekker celebrations evoked a degree of emotion throughout Afrikanerdom which was almost alarming in its intensity. It penetrated all classes and in certain of its manifestations resembled something akin to mass hysteria.³⁵⁸

Although the Centenary Trek was not strictly speaking a party political manoeuvre, Malan's National Party was the clear beneficiary of the event, since its cultural purchase was stronger than the other ideologies available to Afrikaners. Grundlingh and Sapire identify two other contenders: socialism, as manifested in the Garment Worker's Union, and South Africanism, favoured by government and capital, although both lacked a "historical mythology to mould and manipulate."³⁵⁹ Furthermore, they suggest that this high level of buy-in represents an important populist phase in the development of Afrikaner nationalism. This included:

...a moralistic rather than a programmatic content; a romantic, consciously anti-intellectual and deliberately *de-classed* leadership; an overt alienation from the centres of political and economic power; the launching of co-operative economic ventures, involving the 'small man', such as the Reddingsdaadbond; and a strong nostalgic element in drawing upon an idealized past in attempts to help shape the present and the future.³⁶⁰

Most sources agree that there seems to have been a genuine "coming together" of Afrikaners of different political orientation during the Trek. The enthusiastic reception in the Transvaal, where the United Party was by far the dominant political force,³⁶¹ attests to this. The following year, however, another event united Afrikaners to a much higher degree – the declaration of war against Germany. O'Meara's interpretation of Gramsci's work on ideology puts the efforts by the Afrikaner cultural entrepreneurs during this time into perspective:

...As Gramsci pointed out in a slightly different context (1971:197), the general term 'ideology' encompasses at least two levels: the 'scholarly' or 'literary' on the one hand, and the 'practical' or 'popular' on the other. At the 'literary' level, ideology appears as the product of intellectuals – as a systemised and apparently non-contradictory set of ideas making up a coherent world-view.

³⁵⁸ Report by High Commissioner W.H. Clarke, Public Record Office, Kew, London, Dominion Office Records 114/ 99, 15 March 1940, cited in Grundlingh and Sapire, "From Feverish Festival to Repetitive Ritual?", pp. 20-21

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 26 – 27.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³⁶¹ O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p. 120.

The 'popular' level of ideology refers to the often contradictory forms of popular consciousness in and through which bodies of people act.³⁶²

The ethnic nationalist Afrikaner ideology that emerged in the 1930s manifested in its literary form as the intellectual efforts of a section of the Afrikaner petit bourgeoisie – newspaper editors, members of the FAK, the Broederbond – to unite behind the Purified National Party. Its manifestations in popular form varied, but probably culminated in the large-scale cultural support from many Afrikaners for the Centenary Trek. The importance of Afrikaner culture in political debates leading up to the May 1938 election and then the Trek indirectly elevated the sphere of popular Afrikaans music to the political arena. Whether the popular Afrikaans music artists of this time – especially those that sold in high numbers, such as David de Lange and Chris Blignaut, and later Hendrik Susan – shared in this common ideological discourse is debatable. Although there are examples of music artists actively supporting the nationalist cause, like the Stellenbosche Boereorke and its efforts to raise money for the FAK's *Reddingsdaadbond*, other popular Afrikaans music of this time drew ambivalent responses from early nationalists.³⁶³ The politics of Hendrik Susan, who gained fame by travelling with the Centenary ox wagons and broadcasting performances of Boeremusiek live on radio every night, were much more pragmatic than ideological.³⁶⁴ This differentiation of cultural representation would remain a salient feature in popular Afrikaans music throughout the apartheid era and beyond. Afrikaner popular culture would retain much of its 'unauthorised' nature, even after nationalism would envelop the culture industry through the control of the SABC, censorship and a heavily subsidised formal arts sector.

Even though the cultural tropes invoked by the organisers of the Centenary Trek had succeeded in gathering a high level of support for the cause, and was far more successful than other competing ideologies, some forms of popular Afrikaner culture, especially music,

³⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁶³ Froneman, *Pleasure Beyond the Call of Duty*, p. 22.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 129, see also Trehwela, *Song Safari*, p. 51.

resisted these efforts. References to an idealised past was not a common theme in popular Afrikaans music releases, while working class leisure activities were. Froneman explores the concern of the FAK during the Trek with the Afrikaner's "axiomatic inability to sing", and comes to the correct conclusion that the most likely explanation for this reluctance was the fact that the FAK songs were unfamiliar to most Afrikaners. Although they were enthusiastic in their attendance of festival celebrations, most preferred popular songs that were anathema to the cultural standards required by the Trek's organisers.³⁶⁵ As mentioned before, the most popular songs of the decade, most notably by artists like Chris Blignaut and David de Lange, were omitted from the FAK *Volksangbundel*.

The SABC at this time was deliberately apolitical and uncomfortable with associating itself with the new wave of Afrikaner nationalist sentiment. During the Centenary Trek, speeches containing overtly political content were deliberately not broadcasted. M.C. Botha, chairman of the SABC, reacted to protests by Afrikaner nationalists by stating that anything that could have conceivable political importance should be kept off the air, regardless.³⁶⁶ A prime example of this was a speech by E.C. Pienaar, which was judged unsuitable for broadcasting during the Trek's stopover in Willowmore on Saturday, 10 September 1938.³⁶⁷ As mentioned before, the SABC was founded on the principles of the BBC which, while owned by the state, was supposed to provide objective news independent from politics. Pienaar's speech was judged too political by broadcast standards.

The Centenary Trek played a vital role in mobilising Afrikaners as a significant radio audience. Although broadcasts of the event were initially only planned for the departure of the wagons in Cape Town and selective points along the route, the sudden demand – following

³⁶⁵ Froneman, "Seks, Ras en Boeremusiek: agter die retoriek van gebrekkige sanglus by die 1938-Voortrekkereuefees", pp. 443-444.

³⁶⁶ *Die Burger*, 12 September, 1938

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

the success of the celebrations – led to daily broadcasts.³⁶⁸ These broadcasts were made over landlines and exposed the bad reception in the rural areas that were Afrikaner strongholds – which underscored the disparity between the English and Afrikaans services. Importantly, the popularity of the daily broadcasts played an integral role, not only converting rural Afrikaners to radio, but also in broadcasting a particular brand of Afrikaner cultural identity.³⁶⁹

Hendrik Susan

In 1938, the same year as the Trek, a new type of jazz-influenced *boeremusiek* was regularly broadcast by the SABC. This led to considerable confusion over what constituted *boeremusiek*. Froneman differentiates between three different types during this era.³⁷⁰ Although a musicological analysis of the differences between these three types of *boeremusiek* falls outside the scope of this study, the ideological currents present in the constructing of traditional *boeremusiek* as legitimate and authentic Afrikaner folk music are of interest. So too are the complex origins of this jazz influence.

The artist most responsible for the introduction of this new type of music was Hendrik Susan. He was asked by Pieter de Waal – who was one of the early Afrikaans broadcasters on the JB service of the ABC³⁷¹ – to perform Afrikaans music on the air for the SABC. Susan was not a *boeremusiek* musician, and introduced more modern instrumentation to the genre, like the piano, saxophone, and electric guitar, instead of the normal banjo, concertina and violin. This new type of *boeremusiek* became known as *light Afrikaans music*.³⁷²

As Flippie Luyt, one of his band members recalled:

³⁶⁸ Hayman and Tomaselli, “Ideology and Technology in the Growth of South African Broadcasting, 1924 – 1971”, p. 34.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰ Froneman, “Pleasure beyond the call of duty”, pp. 96-97.

³⁷¹ Rosenthal, *You have been listening*, p. 132.

³⁷² Freddie Luyt coined the term in 1942.

Pieter suggested that he form a group or duo to do Afrikaans music over the air. Susan was enthusiastic but, being a proper musician himself – he had played violin and sax with the Jazz Maniacs at the Orange Grove – he wanted something more than the old Boere-Orkes... That was the start of this sort of music, and it was left to Susan and myself to arrange songs out of the FAK Sangbundel for our programmes.³⁷³

Another source confirms that during the mid-thirties, the Jazz Maniacs enjoyed “the guidance of a European friend once in a while.”³⁷⁴ Although there were apparently two groups called the Jazz Maniacs in Johannesburg at the time, one white and one black, the black Jazz Maniacs were much more renowned.³⁷⁵

What is astonishing is that Susan, regarded as the father of light Afrikaans music, had played with the Jazz Maniacs, and (if Flippie Luyt above can be believed) that he was at least partly influenced by this experience. The Jazz Maniacs (Solomon “Zuluboy” Cele and Wilson Silgee’s band) were a popular black jazz outfit of the time and played a type of *marabi* – a musical style that developed in the black slums of Johannesburg.³⁷⁶

Associated with the illegal liquor dens and with vices such as prostitution, South Africa's early marabi musicians formed a kind of underground musical culture and were not recorded. Both the white authorities and more sophisticated black listeners frowned upon it, much as jazz ("the devil's music") was denigrated as a temptation to vice in its early years in the United States. ...So successful were some of these bands, in fact, that jealous white musicians used the regulations against racial mixing and the liquor laws (which restricted black access to "white" liquor) to hamper their progress.³⁷⁷

Froneman mentions that Susan was sometimes accused of playing *hotnotsmusiek* at his dance venue, the Werda Club, by patrons who were annoyed by the exclusively Afrikaans music that he played:³⁷⁸

³⁷³ Freddie Luyt, interview in Trehwela, *Song Safari*, p. 50.

³⁷⁴ *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 18 March 1939, cited in Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, p. 45.

³⁷⁵ Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, p. 98.

³⁷⁶ R. Allingham, “South Africa - Popular Music: Nation of Voice”, in S. Broughton, M. Ellingham, and R. Trillo (eds.), *World Music: The Rough Guide. Africa, Europe and the Middle East, South Africa - Popular Music: Nation of Voice*, Vol. 1 (London: Rough Guides, 1999), p. 639.

³⁷⁷ <http://www.southafrica.info/about/arts/922563.htm#ixzz21jQfOKh>, accessed 26 June 2012, see also.

Ballantine, *Marabi nights*.

³⁷⁸ Froneman, “Pleasure beyond the call of duty”, p. 132.

The accusation that Susan supposedly “played *hotnotsmusiek*” (“coloured” music) shows that audiences still reacted sensitively to *boeremusiek* because of racial stereotypes adhering to its origins.³⁷⁹

His connection to the Jazz Maniacs and their style of music adds another dimension to this racial stereotyping. Another point to consider is that Susan’s earliest broadcasts for the SABC were heavily dependent on the limited notated Afrikaans music available at the time, of which the newly published FAK *Volksangbundel* was the most important. The picture that emerges suggests that he and his colleagues at the SABC played jazzy versions of the folk songs notated in the *Volksangbundel*. At one point – probably sometime during the Second World War – just before a live broadcast, the news came that the SABC would not continue to broadcast songs from the *Volksangbundel*.³⁸⁰ Although this was a reflection of the tension between the SABC and the FAK at the time, musicians often adapted to shifting policies without getting directly involved:

Both De Waal and Susan’s financial inclinations support the argument that the relationship between politics and popular culture in white Afrikaans twentieth-century South Africa was more complex than merely one of co-optation by the political. Under the influence of De Waal – who, as mentioned earlier, had a keen eye for commercial opportunities – *ligte Afrikaanse musiek* exploited nationalist sentiments.³⁸¹

The link between *boeremusiek* and class also begs closer scrutiny, especially in the way it developed between the 1930s and the 1950s and its reception during this period. Rob Allingham has suggested that traditional *boeremusiek* had a class element only tolerated by middle class (nationalist) Afrikaners under certain conditions:

The audience that preferred concertina dances ... was agrarian and urban working class. In contrast, most Afrikaner nationalists came from a more educated, middle-class background, with musical prejudices fashioned by European culture. Traditional melodies were championed as the true voice of the “volk” but were acceptable only if rendered in “serious” performance.³⁸²

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.134.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p 132.

³⁸¹ Froneman, “Pleasure beyond the call of duty”, p. 135.

³⁸² Allingham, “South Africa - Popular Music: Nation of Voice”, p. 651, cited in Froneman, *Pleasure beyond the call of duty*, p. 122.

Allingham's point is a persuasive one, and is certainly consistent with written correspondence of FAK executive members in the 1930s to the 1950s, but Froneman has suggested that the situation was more complex.³⁸³ She explores the commercialisation of *boeremusiek* in her thesis – the only in-depth academic study on *boeremusiek* to date – which emerged with the modern, jazzy, adaptations of artists like Hendrik Susan and Freddie Luyt at the start of the Afrikaans service of the SABC in 1937. This new style was called *ligte Afrikaanse musiek* (“light Afrikaans music”).³⁸⁴ Froneman is critical of Allingham's “urban/ agrarian” and “politically innocent/ politically conscious” oppositions (mentioned earlier):

On the one hand, *ligte Afrikaanse musiek* resonated with the Afrikaner nationalist obsession with progress and “being on par” with “European standards”. In this sense it represented the socially sanctioned cleaned-up version of *boeremusiek* to which middleclass audiences, dressed in eveningwear during a “sophisticated night out”, could relate. On the other hand, the *boeremusiek* debates of the 1950s show that no consensus existed about the value of a *boeremusiek* that departed from tradition. In fact, a strong (nationalist) faction was vocal against the commercial values and “outlandish” sounds of *ligte Afrikaanse musiek*.³⁸⁵

This undermines the notion that traditional *boeremusiek* was representative of the Afrikaner working class alone, and that *ligte Afrikaanse musiek* was limited to middle class culture. It might, however, be useful to consider the motives behind the later debates on the subject by the cultural elites and their eventual acceptance of traditional *boeremusiek* as a legitimate Afrikaner heritage. This acceptance was a validation based on the re-invention of an ‘authentic’ Afrikaner folk culture that fitted the racially exclusive requirements of the new nationalism. It therefore became part of the “literary”, or “authorised” culture of Afrikaner nationalist ideology, whereas its consumption among working class Afrikaners remained “popular”, or “unauthorised”.

³⁸³ Froneman, “Pleasure beyond the call of duty”, p. 122.

³⁸⁴ This ambivalent relationship between ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ *boeremusiek* still continues to this day between the Boeremusiekgilde (BMG) and the Tradisionele Boeremusiekkklub van Suid-Afrika (TBK).

³⁸⁵ Froneman, “Pleasure beyond the call of duty”, pp. 122 – 123.

An unparalleled opportunity arose for Susan in 1938 in the shape of the Centenary Trek. As stated above, his band travelled with the *ossewaens*, broadcasting live performances daily along the way. Because their repertoire of Afrikaans songs was limited, they consulted the newly released FAK songbook for material. Susan's affiliation with the Trek earned him country-wide fame and his subsequent tours – including South West Africa – were very successful. This made Susan a firm Afrikaner favourite, and for many years afterwards he was considered a crusader for the National Party, a position with which he seems to have been comfortable as long as it was profitable.³⁸⁶

In a possible move to capitalise on the new wave of Afrikaner nostalgia, a request was sent to the FAK officially to affiliate Susan's group with the organisation, which the organisation declined in July 1939. The official explanation was that only cooperative ventures could affiliate with the FAK and Susan's band was a private enterprise.³⁸⁷ In the 1939 annual report of the SABC, however, Susan is praised for his contribution to the revival of old folk songs.³⁸⁸ It is important to mention again that during the late 1930s and early 1940s, the FAK and SABC were not as closely associated as would become the norm later, and would often have strained relations.

Although Susan achieved fame by touring with the *ossewaens*, and was subsequently associated with the Afrikaner Nationalist movement, he turned down offers to stand as a member of the Volksraad and to lead the military's band (which would have earned him the rank of colonel).³⁸⁹ During the Second World War, he would open shows with "God save the King", which was compulsory, and immediately follow it up with "Kent gy dat volk" – the old national anthem of the Transvaal Republic. This brought him briefly to the attention of the

³⁸⁶ *Ibid*, see also Trehwela, *Song Safari*, p. 51.

³⁸⁷ FAK Executive Council meeting agenda, 4 July 1939,(INCH), FAK Collection, PV 1/3/1/1/1/..

³⁸⁸ P.J. van der Walt, "Die S.A.U.K., met spesiale verwysings na sy verhouding tot die staat", (MA Dissertation, Potchefstroom University, 1973), p. 195.

³⁸⁹ Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*, p. 68.

government of the day, which could have resulted in internment, although nothing came of it.³⁹⁰

Susan did, however, often donate money to Afrikaner causes. One was the *Reddingsdaadbond* for which he was criticised by conservatives because the money was raised by dancing.³⁹¹ The other was for the building of an Afrikaans theatre in Johannesburg. Froneman rightly doubts whether or not most of the popular *boeereorkeste* of the late 1930s and 1940s were actively political,³⁹² and it is doubtful whether Susan was politically affiliated with Afrikaner nationalism, although throughout his career he would perform at Nationalist events. This would not stop the FAK from criticising his jazz-influenced style of *boeremusiek*, considered by them a contaminated version of traditional Afrikaner folk music. In this sense, Susan was caught up in the tension between the SABC and the FAK.

Some other Afrikaans artists were more partisan supporters of the nationalist cause. One such an example was the Stellenbosch Boeereorkes, founded in the late 1920s by “Oom Pietie” le Roux. The motto of the *orkes* was “Ons eie” (Our Own), and members were drafted from Stellenbosch University and townsfolk. Members had to speak Afrikaans at all times and adhere to an “erkende Afrikaanse gedragskode” (recognised Afrikaans code of conduct), which forbade things like smoking and wearing nail polish. The group was very popular and toured South Africa and South West Africa numerous times.³⁹³ Not primarily profit driven, the Stellenbosch boeereorkes donated substantial amounts of money to specifically Afrikaner causes, such as the Voortrekker Monument (£6,240) and the *Reddingsdaadbond* (£17, 508).³⁹⁴ It also donated money to the FAK, the ATKV and the ACVV (Afrikaanse Christelike Vrouevereniging).

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

³⁹² Froneman, “Pleasure beyond the call of duty”, p. 129.

³⁹³ B.E. van Blerk, *Handhaaf*, April/ May, 1988, p. 9.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Bester mentions that in total, an amount exceeding the equivalent of R100 000 – a very significant sum at the time - was eventually raised by the Stellenbosch Boereorkes.³⁹⁵ Froneman states that the Stellenbosch Boereorkes was a deliberate vehicle for National Party propaganda leading up to the 1938 Centenary Trek.³⁹⁶ This close affiliation meant that they only performed to specific audiences, and that their performances were dictated by specific cultural requirements that differed from other popular groups of the time.

Conclusion

The combination of the rise of ethnic Afrikaner nationalist identities, the development of a local recording industry, and the establishment of Afrikaans radio – all during the 1930s – had an important influence on popular Afrikaans music. Significantly, the pre-1938 popular Afrikaans music period highlighted the ways in which working class Afrikaners sought agency through leisure activities in the absence of political and economic power. These leisure activities included seeking pleasure in dancing to Afrikaans records by artists like David de Lange. Acting as a vehicle for escaping the realities of working-class life, this genre of music – and the activities associated with it, like drinking, dancing, flirtation, etc. – was anathema to the conservative Calvinist norms proscribed by the Afrikaner elites, many of whom had gained access to the small Afrikaner middle class through the Dutch Reformed Church. In this way, Afrikaans popular music of the 1930s also represented a number of fault lines between Afrikaner elites, focused on establishing a new nationalist mythology, and the working class.

This would start to change in 1938, which would become a very important year for Afrikaans music and radio, as well as the popularisation of new Afrikaner nationalist identities through

³⁹⁵ Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*, p. 62.

³⁹⁶ Froneman, "Pleasure beyond the call of duty", p. 96.

the Centenary Trek. While the National Party was the main political beneficiary of the Trek,³⁹⁷ Afrikaans listeners benefitted most from the increased radio broadcasts and coverage by the SABC. The singing of FAK songs was part of the “eventifying”³⁹⁸ of Afrikaans culture at the celebrations, but so too was the singing of popular songs that were not endorsed by the organisation. The tension between the cultural nationalists and the SABC during the Trek is an important reminder that Afrikaner nationalism was at this stage still in its infancy. The struggle for control of the SABC in many ways mirrored the rise of Afrikaner nationalism. The efforts of the cultural nationalists to establish control over the popular Afrikaans music market were unsuccessful, as were their efforts to exert influence over the SABC shortly after its formation. On the other hand, the broader cultural impact of the Centenary Trek awarded the National Party some political capital at the expense of other available Afrikaner ideologies, which would influence Afrikaner society in the following years.

Although some Afrikaans music artists might have had a pragmatic approach when producing music for Afrikaans audiences – i.e. they made music that was most likely to find an audience among the majority of Afrikaans listeners and thus “creating desire”³⁹⁹ for their product – this pragmatism was dictated by complex socio-political forces. The growing demand for Afrikaans radio broadcasts, even before the Centenary Trek, the growing influence of Afrikaner nationalist organisations, new market possibilities and the need for a new Afrikaner identity were all powerful considerations to take into account. Perhaps the greatest test for the newly formed SABC’s resolve to remain politically neutral would come with the outbreak of the Second World War.

³⁹⁷ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 433.

³⁹⁸ See T. Hauptfleisch, “Festivals and the Making of a Theatrical Event”, *South African Theatre Journal* 15 (2001), pp. 169-177.

³⁹⁹ See M. Drewitt, “Packaging Desires: Album covers and the presentation of apartheid”, in G. Olwage (ed.), *Composing Apartheid: Music for and Against Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), pp. 115-135.

Chapter Three

After the Trek: War, Radio, Apartheid and Boeremusiek

This chapter oversees the ushering in of the apartheid era following the Second World War. Archival sources highlight the failed efforts of the FAK – through its *Radiobond* – to exert influence on the SABC, which followed a pro-British stance that offended many Afrikaners at the time. Musicians like Hendrik Susan adapted a more modern, jazz-influenced style of *boeremusiek* when doing live broadcasts for the SABC, which resulted in some confusion over what exactly constituted *boeremusiek*. Requests by listeners were ambiguous, and the FAK executive members were uncomfortable with such modern influences from abroad. The establishment of the FAK's *Musiekkomitee* (Music Committee) in 1941 was an overt attempt to elucidate these new developments in Afrikaans music, but also to limit its impact. While *boeremusiek* was frowned upon during the 1930s, it was re-interpreted by the *Musiekkomitee* during the 1940s and 1950s as a legitimate Afrikaans folk genre, while the more modern version was guarded against. The SABC also introduced its first commercial radio station, Springbok Radio, in 1950, which increasingly exposed listeners to pop music, both local and imported. This marked a definitive shift in the way popular music was consumed in South Africa against a backdrop of fundamental political change.

This chapter also puts into perspective the influence of racial segregation from the start of the 1950s on Afrikaans music. The destruction of Sophiatown and the cross-racial music influences of genres like *kwela* on Afrikaans musicians are examined, as is the working class music of groups like Die Briels.

The outbreak of the Second World War would have far-reaching political consequences for South Africa. Smuts and Hertzog's coalition split over South Africa's declaration of war against Germany. Hertzog's breakaway *Volksparty* merged with the National Party by January 1940 to form an uncomfortable alliance in the form of the *Herenigde Nasionale Party* (HNP).⁴⁰⁰ At least nominally, this merger united Afrikaner rural capital with the petty bourgeoisie, but in reality, the party was deeply divided between *smelters* (previous supporters of the United Party) and *gesuiwerdes* (supporters of the National Party).⁴⁰¹ Furthermore, the ultra-nationalist *Ossewabrandwag* (OB), founded as a cultural movement in the spirit of the Centenary Trek in February 1939, was growing rapidly (with an estimated membership between 300 000 and 400 000 Afrikaners at its peak) thanks to Afrikaner opposition to the war with Germany.⁴⁰² The OB's broad alignment with *kultuurpolitiek* combined elements of Afrikaner nationalist ideology and culture into a semi-militarised identity. This would have some influence on the workings of the SABC.

The Second World War and the SABC

With the start of the war, the policy of political neutrality at the SABC was suspended – a common practice among other state broadcasters abroad. The fact that the SABC openly supported Smuts' decision to declare war on Germany, despite many Afrikaners' pro-German sentiment, led to tension between Afrikaans and English-speaking listeners. An interesting manifestation of such tensions (although not directly a result of SABC broadcasts) was “radio fights” in various urban centres in South Africa. A newspaper article on 2 September 1939 reports that residents in Cape Town were (illegally) competing with neighbours to receive broadcasts from either Radio Zeesen in Germany, or Radio Daventry in the UK. By tuning

⁴⁰⁰ D. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: Class Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934 – 1948* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983), p. 122.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122–125.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 127.

their radio receiver sets to one of the above signals, residents could spoil the reception of that broadcast on their neighbours' radios by a technique called "oscillation".⁴⁰³ These radio fights were symptomatic of the deep divide among white South Africans regarding the country's participation in the war.

Mia Hartman, in her biography of her uncle Anton Hartman, mentions how he and his family would listen to music broadcasts from Germany, while members of the family read Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and Herman Goering's biography.⁴⁰⁴ Radio Zeesen also had an Afrikaans presenter, Erik Holm, who broadcasted under the name Lord Haw Haw. He often told stories of British war atrocities and how the Afrikaner working class had suffered under Jewish capitalists.⁴⁰⁵ Radio Zeesen had also approached the FAK for suggestions for their Afrikaans programmes, which is a clear indication that South African radio listeners, and Afrikaans listeners in particular, had access to different sources of propaganda.⁴⁰⁶ The growth of Nazism and fascism in Europe during the 1930s was front page news in Afrikaans newspapers, and many Afrikaners were glad to see the rise of anti-British powers. Not many people foresaw the horrors that resulted from this, and the realisation after the war was often met with disgust by former admirers of Hitler.⁴⁰⁷

In a direct reaction to the SABC's pro-war policy, the FAK's *Radiobond* was formed in September 1940.⁴⁰⁸

The Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Organisations have some time ago, especially in the current circumstances surrounding the foregrounding of the broadcasting service for political use

⁴⁰³ *Die Burger*, 2 September 1939.

⁴⁰⁴ M. Hartman, *Anton Hartman: Dis sy storie* (Groenkloof, Mia Hartman, 2003), p. 18.

⁴⁰⁵ D. Harrison, *The White Tribe of Africa, South Africa in perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 126.

⁴⁰⁶ FAK Executive Council meeting agenda, 04 July 1939, University of the Free State, Institute for Contemporary History Archives (INCH), FAK Collection, PV 125 1/3/1/1/1/.

⁴⁰⁷ Harrison, *The White Tribe of Africa*, p. 131.

⁴⁰⁸ Letter circulated by the FAK, 28 September, 1939, INCH, FAK Collection, PV 125 2/3/1/1/1.

and propaganda against an outspoken Afrikaans spirit in the service, decided to organise its radio section more forcefully than was previously necessary.⁴⁰⁹

Formally, the task of the *Radiobond* of the FAK was to assist the *Radioraad* of the SABC, founded in August 1936 in response to requests by the Afrikaans listening public. Furthermore, the *Radiobond* would labour to bring more Afrikaners to the radio, thereby putting more pressure on the SABC, since, up to then, the broadcaster had often resisted requests by the FAK for stronger Afrikaans transmitters and other matters regarding programme content.⁴¹⁰

The *Radiobond* was headed by advocate J.F. (Kowie) Marais, who was a former programmer of the Afrikaans service of the SABC (and responsible for giving a young Anton Hartman his first job at the SABC in 1939)⁴¹¹, and who was dismissed from the SABC in September 1940 amidst growing tension between Afrikaans and English-speaking staff at the Corporation.⁴¹² In that same year Marais joined the *Stormjaers*, the paramilitary wing of the *Ossewabrandwag*, and would be interred in 1941, only to escape and be recaptured in 1942, after which he was interred at Koffiefontein along with a young B.J. Vorster.⁴¹³ Marais' fortunes were reversed after the War, and he would later become Director-General of the SABC.⁴¹⁴ The treatment of Afrikaans staff at the SABC at the start of the War provided ample ammunition for the FAK. In a circulated letter dated 30 September 1940, an emotional account of Marais' dismissal was provided, and reference made to an incident at the SABC in the first week of the War during which a violent attempt was made at removing Afrikaans staff from the station and to end all Afrikaans broadcasts.⁴¹⁵

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid* – translated from original.

⁴¹⁰ Letter circulated by the FAK, 30 September, 1940, INCH, FAK Collection, PV 2/3/1/1/1.

⁴¹¹ Hartman, *Anton Hartman*, p. 21.

⁴¹² *Ibid*.

⁴¹³ Harrison, *The White Tribe of Africa*, pp. 131 – 132.

⁴¹⁴ Hartman, *Anton Hartman*, p. 21.

⁴¹⁵ INCH, FAK Collection, PV 2/3/1/1/1.

Another FAK circular dated 26 November 1940, refers to a December 1939 incident where Afrikaans staff were charged with contravening the Corporation's new pro-War policy, despite the fact that they were not notified of any policy changes.⁴¹⁶ The ideological stance of Marais as head of the FAK's *Radiobond*, while he was simultaneously a member of the *Stormjaers* and effectively an anti-government saboteur, leaves no doubt that this was a statement emanating from the extreme right. While the partiality of this account can be questioned, sources from the opposite side of the political spectrum at least confirm the tensions between staff:

Although no one liked to admit or talk about it, there was very close to the surface an antagonism between Afrikaans and English and a definite belligerence on the part of an Afrikaans speaking group, engendered by a so-called inferiority complex. The English speaking section – rather stupidly condescending at times – blandly ignored the situation but gradually key administrative posts were filled by Afrikaans speaking and/ or sympathetic individuals. It should be remembered that the Smuts Government during the war contained many Afrikaners and that there was a strong dedicated anti-British group... So that while almost all English-speaking people innocently stood by, the ground was thoroughly prepared for an Afrikaner take-over in Broadcasting.⁴¹⁷

A further, rather ironic, outcome of the War was that an increasing number of anti-war Afrikaans employees would take the places of English-speaking staff who had volunteered for military service.⁴¹⁸ In a sense, the SABC was a microcosm that represented a wider South African society. Piet Meyer, who would become a powerful role-player in South African broadcasting history, was, as FAK secretary, always indirectly involved in this early war-time correspondence from the FAK. During the War, Meyer's involvement with the *Ossewabrandwag* and the public expressions of his extreme political views, would compromise his position on the executive boards of a number of Afrikaner cultural organisations. He would be forced to resign from the boards of the FAK and the *Broederbond*

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ Anonymous English radio actor in a personal letter dated 25 June 1968 to P. Orlik, quoted in P.B. Orlik, in S. Head (ed), *Broadcasting in Africa: A Continental Survey of Radio and Television* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), p. 142.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

(although he would later be reinstated and go on to head the organisation), in 1943.⁴¹⁹ The *Radiobond* of the FAK had become ineffective by this time.

Meyer would become chairman of the SABC in 1959, personally appointed by Verwoerd, who was instrumental in removing him from his positions in 1943.⁴²⁰ He also became chairman of the *Broederbond* (of which he became a member as early as 1932) in November 1960.⁴²¹ His early lobbying for political neutrality in the SABC is ironic when considering the fact that under his leadership, the SABC would become fully compliant with the state's apartheid policies.

Post Second World War

Before 1939, almost all locally recorded music was pressed abroad, but war-time shortages of shellac and restricted shipping led to an increase in locally pressed records, albeit of inferior quality.⁴²³ The post-war years – especially after 1948, when overseas masters were used to print albums locally – would usher in a period of substantial growth for the local record industry.⁴²⁴ With regard to Afrikaans music, the SABC would also only gradually become increasingly influential in the local music industry. Up to 1948, some artists would get exposure on the radio – either by performing live or having their records played - but the impact of radio was still limited, since most Afrikaners lived in areas with bad reception.

In 1946, due to financial difficulties related to inefficient strategies of licensing, the Schoch-commission was appointed to investigate the possibility of introducing a commercial station

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ Harrison, *The White Tribe of Africa*, p. 207.

⁴²² P. Meyer, *Nog nie ver genoeg nie: 'n Persoonlike rekenskap van vyftig jaar georganiseerde Afrikanerskap* (Johannesburg: Perskor, 1984), p. 26.

⁴²³ J.P. Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol. 1, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.354.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

in addition to the “A” (English) and “B” (Afrikaans) services. The intention was to use the funds generated by this third station to increase the capacity of the Afrikaans transmitters that had not yet reached parity with the output of the English service. Until the 1950s, radio signals were not sufficient in the rural areas where most Afrikaners lived. The power of radio was thus limited to the cities, where the poorest Afrikaners lived, who could not afford radio receivers or pay licenses. Thus, Afrikaans radio had limited ability to promote new Afrikaans music releases, and this meant that Afrikaans music production was almost entirely in the hands of record companies who were not intimidated by letters from the FAK.

As mentioned before, this disparity was a hotly debated political issue. In 1948, when the National Party unexpectedly won the election, a new board was appointed by the new government, which meant that key positions in the SABC were now occupied by nationalists. Smuts’ government was partly responsible for this state of affairs, since it had not expected to lose the elections and no provisions were made to extend the appointments of the previous board members – who were mostly opposed to the nationalists.⁴²⁵ Despite this, the new director-general, Gideon Roos, firmly believed in the type of relative objectivity employed by the BBC.⁴²⁶ As a result, the policies of the SABC were slow to change after 1948, and it was only in 1959, with Piet Meyer’s appointment as chairman of the board, that the broadcaster lost all semblance of political neutrality. This political take-over of the SABC ushered in an era of complete compliance with state ideology at a time when Afrikaners had successfully narrowed the economic gap with English-speakers.

⁴²⁵ G. Hayman and R. Tomaselli, “Ideology and Technology in the Growth of South African Broadcasting, 1924 – 1971”, in R. Tomaselli, K. Tomaselli and J. Muller (eds.), *Currents of Power: State Broadcasting in South Africa* (Cape Town: Anthropos, 1989), p. 77.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*

The SABC, FAK and Boeremusiek

Afrikaner nationalism, and its affiliated cultural organisations, became increasingly influential after the Centenary Trek and as a result of the unpopularity of the War among Afrikaners. The FAK's position improved significantly as a result, with some consequence at least for popular Afrikaans music. The FAK's policy towards Afrikaans music is summed up by G.G. Cilliers' statement during his inaugural speech after he joined the FAK's executive in 1946:

I do not preach any form of nationalism in the field of music, but it is simply true that no composer, from Palestrina and Bach to Sibelius, has given his best unless he stayed close to his nation and regularly made use of his own nation's culture.⁴²⁷

Cilliers' statement is, perhaps intentionally, a contradictory one. On the one hand he shies away from suggesting that music should be used as a vehicle for nationalist propaganda, but on the other hand he underscores the value of a strong sense of nation and cultural identity in influencing artistic works of high merit. Ironically, the efforts by the FAK to promote Afrikaans compositions of such high merit were in fact attempts to establish a western classical, but foreign, aesthetic in the cultural sphere of Afrikaans music. This reflected the essential contradiction of "authorising" Afrikaner nationalist culture as a whole: the conflict between establishing a locally developed version of "high European" culture to the detriment of locally developed culture. On the other hand, internationalism was regarded as corrosive to ethnic nationalist identity and its influence was carefully managed. This contradiction would separate officially endorsed culture from popular culture, and would alienate Afrikaner youth from Afrikaans music in the following decades. The regular attempts of the FAK to bridge this gap would fail.

Five years prior to Cilliers' speech, the executive of the FAK formed the *Musiekkommissie* (Music Commission) in 1941: "omdat die F.A.K.-bestuur dit noodsaaklik ag dat daar meer

⁴²⁷ Translated from paper given at the *FAK Volkskongres*, Stellenbosch, 1946, US Library Archive, G.G. Cilliers Collection, MS 210, 89a.

gedoen moet word vir die bekendstelling van Afrikaanse musiek.” (“because the F.A.K. management considered it necessary that more should be done regarding the introduction of Afrikaans music.”).⁴²⁸ This was part of a wider strategy to establish “cultural self-sufficiency”⁴²⁹, which brought about a complex set of initiatives summed up by E.C. Pienaar in his *Triomf van die Afrikaanse Taal* in 1943:

Not only our language should be purified from foreign elements, and our literature expanded and improved, our desire to read and our appreciation stimulated, and our own song and music created and practiced... But the houses in which we live, the furniture we use, our place names - in short, our whole outlook and our thoughts and spirituality should portray an indigenous Afrikaans spirit, so that the stranger that comes here would have no doubt that he has to do with an Afrikaner. Our nationhood must be our highest national pride.⁴³⁰

This example shows a strong desire to achieve “personal worth”⁴³¹ and a sense of belonging after what was a traumatic time for Afrikaners during the first three decades of the 20th century. Linked to this cultural self-sufficiency was the sphere of Afrikaans music, which was the responsibility of the Music Commission. Its members would repeatedly express concern over low quality Afrikaans music, and they would labour to stimulate the composition of Afrikaans music of high artistic merit.

Although these Afrikaner intellectuals were becoming more articulate in defining an ethnic, racial and cultural identity, they faced considerable challenges on many fronts. Within the FAK, commissions were established that dealt with a substantial array of social and cultural issues, including education, welfare (through organisations like the *Reddingsdaadbond*), racial policies, music, radio, film, theatre, economics, leisure activities and *volksfeeste*

⁴²⁸ Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge, *FAK Silwerjubileum 1929-1954* (Johannesburg: FAK, 1954), p. 49.

⁴²⁹ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 402.

⁴³⁰ *Die Triomf van Afrikaans: Historiese Oorsig van die wording, ontwikkeling, Skriftelike Gebruik en geleidelike erkenning van ons Taal* (Cape Town, Nasionale Pers, 1943), pp. 380 -381, translated from original.

⁴³¹ As N.P van Wyk Louw puts it in *Versamelde Werke*, cited in Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 402.

(cultural festivals).⁴³² As mentioned earlier, their efforts for equal treatment of Afrikaans at the SABC also increased during this time and led to tension between Afrikaans and English staff at the corporation. Ideologically, they were guided by Christian nationalist ideals that were shared by other organisations like the Dutch Reformed Church and, to some degree, the National Party of Malan. Activities which were anathema to their paternalistic position to the *volk*, were discouraged (dog racing,⁴³³ *boeremusiek*), while at *volkskongresse* (congresses of the people), elites delivered speeches on a variety of topics, often including cultural “threats” from abroad that were eroding the Afrikaner’s identity. These threats could come in popular musical forms like jazz, but also evangelical church songs. Another extract from G.G. Cilliers’ speech from the FAK’s 1946 *Volkskongres* in Stellenbosch, serves as a useful example:

We must not allow our children to sing English hymns and American revival songs on Sundays and during religious studies in schools, and during the week whistle jazz-tunes that they heard over the radio and in the bioscope.⁴³⁴

This was one of the earlier objections to the cultural influence of imported music on the Afrikaner youth. Another regular theme was the contrast between the tastes of working class Afrikaners and the Afrikaner elite. Dirkie de Villiers of the FAK executive partly blamed English-speaking record company owners for this:

Walk into a music shop: the shelves are full of superficial so-called “boeremusiek” songs; but can you walk in and, for argument’s sake buy Hartman’s “Kom vanaand in my drome” from the shelf? The same unbalanced relationship applies to South African produced gramophone records (although the Afrikaner is not solely to blame here, since the big record companies are in English hands). The companies capitalise on the uncritical taste of a large section of the Afrikaans population by releasing an uninterrupted stream of recordings every month in the country – releases that from a music quality perspective, are very low to the ground.⁴³⁵

⁴³² Minutes of FAK board meetings, 1 February 1946 – 14 November 1946, INCH, FAK Collection, PV 125 1/3/1/1/2.

⁴³³ *Die Burger*, 10 September 1938.

⁴³⁴ *Die Burger*, 10 September 1938, p. 4, translated from original.

⁴³⁵ D. de Villiers, “Die Afrikaner se Musiekprestasies die Afgelope Kwarteeu”, paper delivered at the FAK *Silwerjubileumkongres*, Bloemfontein, 29 September – 3 October 1954, translated from original.

Keen on promoting *boeremusiek*, the SABC sponsored up to 30 *boere-orkeste* to produce authentic Afrikaans music as opposed to jazz influenced songs. This influence of jazz on traditional *boeremusiek* would become one of the main issues that concerned the Music Committee of the FAK from the early 1940s to the late 1950s.

Before the advent of broadcasting nothing much was done to trace, systematise and reserve the folk tunes scattered over the wide expanses of South Africa. The SABC considers it an important part of its task to preserve this cultural heritage of the country and has already succeeded to a not inconsiderable extent in making the folk tunes a small but important part of its daily programme output. At least a quarter of an hour per day is devoted to this music which is broadcast under the title of *Boeremusiek*, which, literally translated, means rural music or the music of the farmer. During recent years this music has not escaped the influence of modern jazz and a few years ago the SABC initiated a country-wide organised search for all the remaining folk tunes with the idea of preserving them in unadulterated form, in the central library.⁴³⁶

Between 1951 and 1953, the SABC launched intensive campaigns to collect *boeremusiek*, the result of which was regularly broadcasted on programmes such as *Uit die jaar vroeg* (From the early years) performed by the orchestras of Hendrik Susan and Hansie van Loggerenberg.⁴³⁷ An influential figure in collecting and transcribing these old songs was Jo Fourie.⁴³⁸ An analysis of the SABC's Afrikaans music programmes between 1951 and 1954, shows a preference for *boeremusiek* and other light Afrikaans music, while light organ and piano music and modern dance music from America and Britain were the most popular genres for the English listeners.⁴³⁹

Point 6 (a) of the minutes of the FAK's executive meeting of 25 April 1953 mentions that no certainty exists about what is meant by *boere-orkeste* and *boeremusiek*. The apparent problem with this uncertainty was that the SABC had received requests for more *boeremusiek* by the

⁴³⁶ G. Roos, General report presented to the Fifth Annual Conference of the International Folk Music Council, 14-17 July, 1952, *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*, 5:3 (1953), p. 9.

⁴³⁷ P.J. van der Walt, "Die S.A.U.K., met spesiale verwysings na sy verhouding tot die staat", (Unpublished M.A dissertation, 1973, University of Potchefstroom), p. 192.

⁴³⁸ See W. Froneman, "She Danced Alone: Jo Fourie, Songcatcher of the Groot Marico", *Ethnomusicology Forum* 21:1 (2012), p. 62.

⁴³⁹ Van der Walt, "Die S.A.U.K., met spesiale verwysings na sy verhouding tot die staat", p. 197.

Afrikaans radio listening audience.⁴⁴⁰ This compelled the FAK's executive,⁴⁴¹ as well as their counterparts from the SABC,⁴⁴² to re-examine the musical heritage of *boeremusiek* as the traditional folk music of the Afrikaner. At this stage, the relationship between the FAK and the SABC was close. Anton Hartman was influential in both organisations.⁴⁴³ In a remarkable turnaround, traditional *boeremusiek* was consequently felt to be a legitimate part of Afrikaner heritage – a direct contrast to the way in which it was disregarded by the same FAK as recently as 1931.⁴⁴⁴

You know, a quarter of a century ago, 'O Brandewyn laat my staan' was an ugly song and we were not allowed to sing it. But such snobbery wears off, and with the years such a song develops into an 'antique' work. Out of sentimentality, or love for our heirlooms, it is finally considered good enough for our college and university choirs.⁴⁴⁵

This transition from shameful *lawwighede* (frivolities) to a part of Afrikaner folklore, meant that traditional *boeremusiek* was now part of a cultural heritage that had become ever more sanctified as Afrikaner history was re-written by cultural entrepreneurs during a time when the National Party's grip on power increased. This transition was not sudden. In 1947, the FAK's Music Commission was already planning to organise a gathering for *boere-orke*s enthusiasts and folk singing, which was to be held in Durban from 30 June to 11 July of that year.⁴⁴⁶ The previous year the *boeremusiek* collector Jo Fourie was accepted as a member of the commission.

Fronemann's work on *boeremusiek* in general and her biographical work on Jo Fourie's life and passion for collecting and transcribing *boeremusiek* in particular, remain some of the very few examples of academic studies on the genre and is by far the most extensive. Her account

⁴⁴⁰ FAK minutes of executive meeting 25 April 1953, US Library Archive, G.G. Cilliers Collection, MS 210, 74.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴² Roos, General report, p. 9.

⁴⁴³ Hartman started working at the SABC in 1939 as a compiler of music programmes. He also joined the Music Commission in 1944. It is uncertain when he became a member of the *Broederbond*, but it is likely to have been later.

⁴⁴⁴ See N.J. van der Merwe's letter on page 82.

⁴⁴⁵ C. Rudolph, "Die Afrikaner se plek en taak in die beoefening van Ligte Musiek", *Handhaaf*, August 1972, pp. 27 – 32, translated from original.

⁴⁴⁶ FAK *Musiekkommissievergadering*, 8 Feb, 1947, US Library Archive, G.G. Cilliers Collection, MS 210, 74.

of Fourie's travels through the *platteland* and the sometimes mixed emotions the genre evoked among rural Afrikaners, brings into focus a poignant complexity.

In 1952 Fourie met a woman called Emma Muller, who lived on a farm in the Taaiboschbult area near Potchefstroom. She used to attend dances frequently, but after her son went missing while fighting in Italy during World War II she stopped listening to boeremusiek altogether. The silencing of boeremusiek after the death of a loved one, or some other calamity in the Afrikaans community, is a recurring theme in both Fourie's descriptions and in the whole of boeremusiek discourse.⁴⁴⁷

Furthermore, the genre's position in a society dominated by Calvinist nationalism was also problematic because it was seen as sinful, problematic from a racial perspective (it was often regarded as *hotnotsmusiek*), low class and anathema to the efforts of the Afrikaner cultural elite to develop an Afrikaans folk music with European standards.

For a significant part of the Afrikaner community, *boeremusiek* espoused values that were fundamentally at odds with the form of Calvinist nationalism propagated at the time. This might come as somewhat of a surprise since the genre is today mostly considered as the reactionary underbelly of white superiority and exclusivity. Calvinism treated *boeremusiek*, with its dance associations, as scapegoat for sexual promiscuity or, alternatively, as an unimportant leisure activity that drew one's attention away from serving God through 'real' work. At the same time, the genre was still commonly known as *hotnotmusiek* (hottentot's music) in the 1950s, an indication of its hybrid racial history. Corresponding with the racial abuse the genre suffered, *boeremusiek* was considered to belong to the Afrikaner lower class, a music emphatically not in line with the intelligentsia's efforts to develop an Afrikaans *volksmusiek* (lit. 'music of the nation') in line with European standards.⁴⁴⁸

Seen against this background, the FAK and SABC's legitimisation of *boeremusiek* is remarkable. It might have been a pragmatic response to audience requests to the SABC, or a protective strategy against the growing stylistic influence of jazz – initiated ironically by artists like Hendrik Suson who adapted *boeremusiek* for radio broadcasting by the SABC itself. As mentioned before, from 1938 onwards the jazz-influenced music initiated by Hendrik Suson and others was not seen as part of a legitimate Afrikaans musical heritage and

⁴⁴⁷ Fronemann, "Songcatcher of the Groot Maricho", p. 62.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

constituted a concern for the executive of the FAK for a number of years until a much more threatening foe appeared in the form of imported rock music in 1956.

Whilst it is tempting to see the FAK executive's snobbery towards light Afrikaans music as proof that they regarded this genre as detrimental to the cultural well-being of the *volk*, it should not be forgotten that the difference in taste between radio listeners across a wide social spectrum is one of the main challenges of most radio networks across the globe. It was especially true for the BBC in Britain, whose model was followed by the SABC during its first two decades. In part, radio programmes featured what was popular among a broad base of listeners, but also played an educational role in developing the musical tastes of its listeners. The challenge was to balance the two strategies. Thus one should not necessarily posit light Afrikaans music in a position of resistance to the political agendas of the Afrikaner elites.

An interesting point, which is related to the class division of Afrikaans audiences, is made in Ralph Trehwela's *Song Safari*. In 1949, Susan was approached by producer Pierre de Wet to participate in the Afrikaans film, *Kom saam vanaand* (Come along tonight). Following the film's success, Susan's audiences started changing. Normally, he was only regarded as a *boeremusiek* musician, but after *Kom saam vanaand*, he had doctors, lawyers and professors in the audience.⁴⁴⁹ Again, the uneasy class difference represented by *boeremusiek* is exposed.

Van der Walt states that there was constant uncertainty at the SABC over how to classify different forms of light music, and how to differentiate between "light" and "serious" music. Sometimes *boeremusiek* would also fall under "dance" music, and at other times it would be

⁴⁴⁹ R. Trehwela, *Song Safari: A journey through light music in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Limelight Press, 1982), p. 128.

listed separately.⁴⁵⁰ The following statement by the SABC's director-general Gideon Roos in 1957 adds to the confusion:

When I started in the broadcasting service 24 years ago, the majority of requests were of a sad quality: "Die Boeliebeefblik", "Die Donkie is 'n wonderlike ding", "Die naglamp van Oom Piet", etc. Have a listen yourself today, and you'll realise how many of the requests come from the classical music repertoire. The radio has improved the average music taste in our country and the interest in music has grown immensely.⁴⁵¹

Anton Hartman made the following remark on the creole roots of *boeremusiek*, referring not just to class, but also to race:

In the same way the word "hotnotsmusiek" [Hottentot's music] originated amongst us. The term referred to almost every form of indigenous folk music. And the reason? It was discovered in the early days of white existence in S.A. that some slaves and Coloureds had an innate talent for music and soon the white man's music at dance parties was performed by these people. The white man left it to them, just like he left certain forms of labour to them and eventually people referred to the music as "hotnotsmusiek". ... The music was performed by people of colour for such a long time and on such a large scale that they too put their stamp on it. But in its essence it was Afrikaans folk music and as the walls of prejudice broke down, it resounded from our cities, towns and far-flung plains.⁴⁵²

Although the reference to the "walls of prejudice" is ambiguous, and probably refers to the acceptance of *boeremusiek* as a legitimate part of the Afrikaner's heritage, the importance of this statement lies in the acknowledgement of the mixed-race roots of what was constructed as a legitimate Afrikaans folk music. Also significant is Hartman's assertion that, although the music was mostly played by "people of colour", it was essentially Afrikaner folk music which belonged exclusively to whites. Coloured participation in this arena was accepted as long as it proscribed to the racial – and class – hierarchy dominated by whites. The reference to labour is also important. Hartman essentially places the performance of Afrikaans folk music among coloured labourers. A number of the most famous Afrikaans musicians of the mid-twentieth

⁴⁵⁰ Van der Walt, "Die S.A.U.K., met spesiale verwysings na sy verhouding tot die staat", pp. 193-194.

⁴⁵¹ G. Roos, *Die uitsaaiwese in diens van ons Samelewing* (Johannesburg: SABC, 1957), p. 24.

⁴⁵² A. Hartman, "Waarheen boeremusiek?" *Dagbreek en Sondagnuus*, February 13, 1955, cited in W. Froneman, *Pleasure Beyond the Call of Duty: Perspectives, Retrospectives and Speculations on Boeremusiek*, (Unpublished D.Phil thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2012), p. 49.

century had acknowledged the influence of coloured farm labourers on their own music. The most notable of these is Nico Carstens. Furthermore, white working class musicians played an important role in the development of popular Afrikaans music. Hendrik Susan also played with black musicians, which illustrates how music could cross racial boundaries. This social ability of popular music is vital in understanding how expressions of identity could transcend legal and cultural limitations.

The uncertainties surrounding the definition of *boeremusiek* persisted. As late as 1962, Hartman delivered a paper on foreign influences in Afrikaans music, essentially addressing the confusion over “traditional” *boeremusiek* and “light Afrikaans music”. He felt that *boeremusiek* should be considered true Afrikaans traditional music, and that modern, outside influences on this genre, specifically the influence of jazz, should be guarded against. This was possibly symptomatic of larger fears shared by many of the Afrikaner elite – Anglicisation and the influence of the outside world – things the *volksvaders* were keen to avoid.⁴⁵³ The 1950s would become an important decade that changed the way popular culture from abroad would affect South Africans, eliciting various responses from the Afrikaner cultural elites. These changes coincided with fundamental political changes following the National Party’s victory at the polls in 1948. The onset of apartheid also subjected cultural production to stricter state control.

⁴⁵³ See G.G. Cilliers’ speech, US Library Archive, G.G. Cilliers Collection, MS 210, 74; also US Library Archive, H.B. Thom Collection, MS 191.FAK.1.k(167).

Commercial Afrikaans music, Springbok Radio and politics during the 1950s

It is in the production of audiences that the political and social reality of art can be found.⁴⁵⁴

Although David Coplan employed this quote as a preamble to his effort of developing the notion of the “traditional” in black music styles and audiences, it is just as useful when discussing “white” music and audiences in South Africa. The debates among members of the FAK’s Music Commission and the SABC on *boeremusiek* from the late 1940s to mid-1950s were overshadowed by other developments in the local music scene. Following the Schoch-commission, the establishment of the SABC’s commercial station, Springbok Radio, on 1 May 1950 had a significant influence on the way commercial music was broadcast to the South African public. Before then, the English and Afrikaans services had diverse programmes that included some commercial music (including *boeremusiek*), as well as classical music and other genres.

These programmes were based on the BBC model, which underscored radio’s ability to function as an educational tool, as well as one for entertainment. However, with a dedicated commercial station, which sold advertising time and therefore had to ensure that programming remained in touch with the tastes of the listeners, the dynamics of radio changed. The dedicated English and Afrikaans shows still continued with their traditional programming, while the new commercial station catered for mass taste.

Springbok Radio played commercial pop and rock hits and hosted the official South African weekly charts. It often played local English, and to a lesser extent Afrikaans music, although 30 Afrikaans songs made it onto the charts between 1958 and 1979.⁴⁵⁵ The station actively supported local music if it suited their requirements. According to Boet Pretorius, local

⁴⁵⁴ J. Fiske, *Television and culture* (London: Routledge, 1989), quoted in D. Coplan. “Sounds of the ‘Third Way’: Identity and the African Renaissance in Contemporary South African Popular Traditional Music”, *Black Music Research Journal* 21:1 (2001), p. 107.

⁴⁵⁵ Tertius Louw, electronic communication September 2013. As far as can be ascertained, no official chart lists were published. Chart information was written down by radio listeners and subsequently fell into the hands of collectors such as Tertius Louw, to whom the author is tremendously indebted.

releases (after being approved by the censors) automatically received at least three weeks of airplay on Springbok Radio.⁴⁵⁶ Springbok Radio also broadcasted Afrikaans music programmes, as well as Afrikaans radio dramas, which were very popular. Embedded in Springbok Radio, as in all the SABC's services, was subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) ideology:

The only programmes that had any overt ideological content were *Editorial Comment*, and to a lesser extent, the *News* and actuality programmes such as *Radio Today*, *Monitor* and *Audiomix*. On the English and Afrikaans services, the majority of programmes were confined to light and serious classical music, jazz and a sprinkling of popular music, radio plays, sport and various magazine, comedy and specialist programmes. The tone of most programmes was conservative, implying a neutral stance on socio-political questions. This means that they had a well camouflaged ideological agenda focusing on white petit-bourgeois interests.⁴⁵⁷

If 1950 marked a change in commercial radio it was, if anything, overshadowed by the changing political landscape. It is impossible to talk about popular culture in South Africa from 1950 onwards without due consideration to the sweeping socio-political changes introduced by the National Party, which managed to scrape to a narrow victory in the 1948 elections. The hardening of apartheid during the 1950s and the consolidation of Afrikaner political power under the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism demarcated well-defined parameters for the construction of hegemonic Afrikaner identity. These changes formed the basis of apartheid and were:

... characterised by an avalanche of security legislation which, among other effects, created a massive structure of censorship and self-censorship. This trend was set in motion by the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 ... Furthermore, it allowed the government the luxury of deeming exactly who was a communist, over and above those who professed to be.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁶ Interview with Author, 22 July 2013.

⁴⁵⁷ Hayman & Tomaselli, "Ideology and Technology in the Growth of South African Broadcasting, 1924 – 1971", pp. 103 – 104.

⁴⁵⁸ C. Merritt, *A Culture of Censorship: Secrecy and Intellectual Repression in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers, 1994), p.21.

Another early apartheid-era law, the Group Areas Act of 1950,⁴⁵⁹ laid the foundation for forced removals of non-whites from city centres and the legal separation of white and non-white (to use the racial classifications of the act) residential areas. Under this act, and numerous subsequent amendments, residents were removed from inner-city hubs like Sophiatown in Johannesburg – a vibrant cosmopolitan community of singular importance in the development of black urban cultural identities, including music styles such as *marabi*, *kwela* and *mbaqanga*. Some years later in 1966, in Cape Town, District Six was declared a white neighbourhood, which led to the controversial forced removals of non-whites in 1968. At the same time, substantial limitations were imposed on the culture industry by the apartheid regime and its affiliated ideological allies: the FAK, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and the SABC. Not only did this lead to a “culture of censorship”,⁴⁶⁰ but also to an Afrikaans music industry that in many ways echoed the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism and racial exclusivity.

Many of the commercial Afrikaans music releases of the apartheid era have solicited strong condemnation for its unoriginality and superficial and non-political lyrics. Arguments stating that such songs formed a compliant part of the dominant narrative of apartheid ideology are convincing, and unflattering adjectives such as “bland”, “trite” and “banal” seem appropriate.⁴⁶¹ David Kramer has even referred to such pop songs as “Omo-Afrikaans, whiter than white,”⁴⁶² although this does not adequately explain the complexity of the Afrikaans music industry of that period. White Afrikaans pop was not the only music genre that did not resist the requirements of apartheid’s cultural entrepreneurs:

⁴⁵⁹ Act No. 41 of 1950.

⁴⁶⁰ Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship*, pp. 80-81.

⁴⁶¹ B. Jury, ‘Boys to Men, Afrikaans Alternative Popular Music 1986-1990’, *African Languages and Cultures* 9:2 (1996), p. 99; D. Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa* (Somerset West, African Minds, 2013), p. 145; I. Byerly, “Mirror, Mediator, and Prophet: The Music *Indaba* of Late-Apartheid South Africa”, *Ethnomusicology* 42:1 (1998), p. 14.

⁴⁶² J. Roup, *Boerejood* (Auckland Park: Jacana Media, 2004), p. 161.

Musically, few artists managed to open up any creative space within the rigid, anodyne, formula-bound styles fostered by the SABC's black radio stations. Those who remembered the previous era coined a derogatory term for the bouncy new popular music, mass-produced by the stations with the help of able but guileless musicians from the countryside: they called it *msakazo* (broadcast).⁴⁶³

It is important to state that apartheid placed black music under the patronage of a South African music industry dominated by whites (in terms of broadcasting and access to modes of production) who had their own political agendas. As a result of the destruction of urban centres like Sophiatown, many of the top African artists went into exile, while others found their music restricted in different ways, and just like Afrikaans music developed a distinct 'pop' character, so did popular black music to a large degree. The crucial difference, of course, was that the racial hierarchies constructed in the wider South African society were also present in music, with popular Afrikaans music constituting the soundtrack to Afrikaner nationalism. The tension created by Afrikaner culture's close proximity to the dominant political power during apartheid would persist in considerations about Afrikaner culture in the post-apartheid context.

Set against such a socio-political background, inter-racial dynamics became more complex. Christopher Ballantine's interview with Edward Sililo, who played with the Jazz Maniacs, is especially revealing and shows how black musicians had to navigate complex racial politics and discriminatory laws by learning Afrikaans songs:

Well, you had to prove you were a musician, and if you were a plumber you had to prove you were a plumbing man. They took me to another place and I was told to play a piano. And, well, it's Afrikaner people: you play "Sarie Marais" and they are very happy... 'Kom spiel "Sarie Marais", jong!' [hums] 'Nee man, jy ken! Kom!'... You just had to go do that, and when you come back, "ja, hy's 'n musikant, man!' And then they give it. [laughs] ... And many of us could get these passes, and we used to help the other guys and tell them, 'Oh no, you just tell them you're this, and you play what they [want] you to play.' Because they'll ask you to play. 'Jy moet speel! "Die hand vol vere", jong!' Now if you don't know "Die hand vol vere" – 'Jy's nie

⁴⁶³ C. Ballantine, *Marabi Nights: Jazz, 'race' and society in early apartheid South Africa* (Scottsville, University of KwaZulu Natal Press, 2012), p. 11.

‘n musikant nie!’ You must play an Afrikaner song. There you are, sign! Got my credentials: from there I was a musician.⁴⁶⁴

Ironically, “Die hand vol vere” was a hit for Hendrik Susan’s group and sung by the popular Jurie Ferreira.⁴⁶⁵ As mentioned before, Susan had performed with the Jazz Maniacs – of which Edward Sililo was a member – in the 1930s. Some white Afrikaans musicians were, however, unperturbed by racial politics. As a young man, the late Ollie Viljoen, accordionist and famous *boeremusiek* artist, learned *kwela* from other black musicians in Johannesburg in the 1950s, and even performed with the pennywhistle virtuoso, Spokes Mashiyane.⁴⁶⁶ Dorothy Masuka, legendary exiled jazz singer and co-composer of hits such as “Hamba nontsokolo” and “Pata Pata”, fondly recalled the popularity of *tielikiedraai* – an Afrikaans music genre – among the black musicians of 1950s Johannesburg.⁴⁶⁷

The most successful of all the Afrikaans music artists of the 1950s (and who remained popular in the following decades), was Nico Carstens. Carstens was the first Afrikaans artist to sell more than a million LP’s, a milestone he reached as early as 1959.⁴⁶⁸ The following extract from an interview with Nico Carstens is especially revealing regarding the influence of coloured musicians on his music:

I didn’t follow anybody’s style... but I grew up in Belville South, a very poor area of the Cape, where I came into contact with many Cape Coloureds. I got the movement and everything from them.⁴⁶⁹

And also:

I spent a lot of my youth on farms, and on every farm you’ll find labourers who take out their guitars after work or on weekends. They taught me the basic chords and the strumming of that particular Cape Coloured beat, which I could never find in the Transvaal. The only people who could do it were people like Stan Murray who also grew up in Cape Town. That’s why Stan and

⁴⁶⁴ Interview with Edward Sililo in Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, pp. 68 -69.

⁴⁶⁵ D. C. Pretorius, *Musieksterre Van Gister En Vandag: lewensketse en foto's van meer as 100 musieksterre* (Pretoria: Van der Walt, 1998), p. 224.

⁴⁶⁶ Interview with author, Franschoek, 22 March 2014.

⁴⁶⁷ Personal communication with author, March 2013.

⁴⁶⁸ Pretorius, *Musieksterre Van Gister En Vandag*, p. 40.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

I fitted in so well in those old recordings like ‘Outa in die langpad’. Eddie Wyngaard, also from the Cape, is another.⁴⁷⁰

Kwela

Several historical underpinnings make the mid- to late 1950s a significant time of cultural change. In 1956, Strike Vilakazi composed “Meadowlands”, a political song inspired by the forced removals of Sophiatown residents to what would become Soweto and sung in English and *Tsotsitaal* – an Afrikaans based urban vernacular spoken by black workers in Johannesburg.⁴⁷¹ The following year saw the first releases of *kwela* music for a specifically white audience in South Africa.⁴⁷² *Kwela*’s roots are ambiguous: its best known form developed as a black urban pennywhistle genre in Johannesburg, while another style developed in Cape Town, inspired by coloured carnival music and dance. Both forms of *kwela* became very popular among Afrikaners and numerous white Afrikaans music artists would release *kwela* albums, some with pennywhistles, others without. Lara Allen’s work on the complex identity politics surrounding this popularity of *kwela* among whites during the early apartheid era remains one of the most revealing studies of cross-racial musical influence to date:

The fact that *kwela* was appreciated as meaningful by a number of different identity groups that crossed the racial categories on which apartheid was premised suggests that the reality of South African cultural production and consumption was far more complex than the social engineers acknowledged. It is not surprising that this occurred precisely at the moment that apartheid was being entrenched legally and politically: the 1950s constituted a brief phase during which it was apparent that identities could be chosen, before separate, exclusive racial categorisation became hegemonic.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁴⁷¹ Coplan, *In Township Tonight!*, p. 165.

⁴⁷² These releases were in LP (Long playing) format, favoured by white audiences.

⁴⁷³ L. Allen, “Kwela’s White Audiences: The Politics of Pleasure and Identification in the Early Apartheid Period”, in G. Olwage (ed.), *Composing Apartheid: Music For and Against Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits university Press, 2008), p. 80.

Allen uses the example of the LP, *Something new from Africa*⁴⁷⁴ to illustrate the cross-racial appeal of *kwela*. The LP featured a collection of six different, exclusively black, *kwela* groups. This commercial release of *kwela* music for a specifically white audience not only signifies a deliberate commodification of black urban popular culture for consumption by a white market, but also the establishment of white patronage over it at a time when apartheid politics focused squarely on intensifying racial segregation. The implication that racial identities were still flexible and not hegemonic at this time is very significant, but also begs the question whether or not it *did* become as hegemonic as is believed in the years that followed. In the Afrikaans music industry, several music releases seem to indicate that cultural hegemony was never fully achieved.

While pennywhistle *kwela* was becoming increasingly popular in and around Johannesburg, white Afrikaans musicians from the Cape were releasing what they called *kwela* music, but inspired by coloured musicians. The pianist Albie Louw released *In Tune with South Africa, Vol. 5: KWELA* in 1957. The sleeve note places the origins of *kwela* in the Cape, specifically the Coon Carnival celebrations on New Year's day.

The inborn sense of rhythm, which is a heritage of the peoples of our land, has given us the irresistible lilt of the KWELA. No other pianist in South Africa is probably more qualified to interpret the fascinating charm of KWELA than Albie Louw. Albie was born in the Cape, and all his life he has been in contact with music of this type, listening to it, and absorbing it with appreciative interest. Albie's playing gives us the very essence and spirit of KWELA, which was spontaneously created by the Coons during Carnival time.⁴⁷⁵

Subsequently, many white Afrikaans musicians released "kwela" songs, of which Nico Carstens was the most prominent. *Kwela's* popularity spread wider than just South Africa. In 1958, Elias and his Zigzag Jive Flutes scored a number 2 hit in the UK with their

⁴⁷⁴ Internationally released by Decca (LK 4292) and locally released by Gallotone (GALP1015).

⁴⁷⁵ JDLP 10008 HMV.

kwela tune “Tom Hark”.⁴⁷⁶ Although it is an instrumental song, the introduction has street conversations in *Tsotsitaal*, with a distinct Afrikaans flavour.

Some white Afrikaans music artists also released *kwela* music that was more associated with the pennywhistle style originating in Johannesburg. Fred Wooldrige, with his 1961 release “Penniefluitjie-kwela”⁴⁷⁷ achieved a number 10 hit on the LM Radio charts in April 1962.⁴⁷⁸ It became the theme song of the extremely popular morning radio programme *Flink uit die vere*, presented by Fanus Rautenbach and broadcasted on the SABC’s Afrikaans service. The first broadcast of *Flink uit die vere* was on 16 October 1961 and for the next 13 years “Penniefluitjie-kwela” would be the morning alarm for thousands of Afrikaans radio listeners.⁴⁷⁹ In many ways, this summarises the complexities of the Afrikaner culture industry during apartheid.

Die Briels

The sentimental songs of Die Briels differed significantly from *kwela*. Frans and Sannie Briel, started their recording career in August 1954⁴⁸⁰ with the album *My gryse ou moeder* (“My grey old mother”), and recorded 482 songs in all.⁴⁸¹ Their songs were intentionally sentimental and were regarded by the FAK as an embarrassment. A SABC memo from 6 August 1957 shows that two of their songs, “Saans deur die tralies” (“Through the bars in

⁴⁷⁶ http://www.rock.co.za/files/vinyl_sa_index2.htm, accessed 12 August 2013.

⁴⁷⁷ Pêrel, P203, April 1961.

⁴⁷⁸ Tertius Louw, electronic communication with author, September 2013.

⁴⁷⁹ E. Terblanche, “Fanus Rautenbach, 1928 -2011”, available at <http://www.argief.litnet.co.za/>, accessed 14 April 2013.

⁴⁸⁰ Sannie Briel stated this date as their first album recording (she gives the exact date as 24 August 1954), although other sources put it as 1956, with the release of *Sentimentele wysies*, I. Roggeband, *50 Stemme: Die grootste name in Afrikaanse musiek* (Cape Town: Delta, 2009), p. 39.

⁴⁸¹ J. Kruger, “Die Wegsterf van ‘n Lied”, *Rapport*, 3 June 1990, p. 6.

the evening”) and “‘n Engel in die hemel” (“An angel in heaven”), were banned from being used in radio programmes.⁴⁸²

The Briels were working class Afrikaners – Frans Briel worked on the railways and later for Yskor, while Sannie became a forklift driver,⁴⁸³ and their music often referred to the realities of working class life. According to Boet Pretorius,⁴⁸⁴ Die Briels, as well as artists Danie Pretorius and Koos and Hester Nortje – with record company Troubadour – deliberately scanned newspapers for news of disasters that could serve as themes for songs. Such heavy sentiments were popular and the albums sold well among older listeners, while the younger demographic tended to not listen to Afrikaans music.⁴⁸⁵ Despite the sales, Die Briels remained poor, as artists did not receive royalties and were only paid a set fee for the recording.⁴⁸⁶

In 1961 they released “Die Myner’s lied” (“The miner’s song”), inspired by the Coalbrook mine disaster in January 1960 in which 435 mine workers perished, 429 of which were black migrant workers from Lesotho and Mozambique.⁴⁸⁷ Songs like “Ter nagedagtenis aan 435 mynwerkers” (“In remembrance of 435 mine workers”) and “Die myner’s lied” were sombre reminders of the tragedy, but were nonetheless very popular songs in a time when other Afrikaans music was deliberately light-hearted. Another tragedy, the Sharpeville Massacre, occurred within a few months of the Coalbrook disaster. Perhaps not surprisingly this event did not find its way into any Afrikaans song. Sentimentality aside, Die Briels were part of a select group of Afrikaans music artists of the 1950s and 1960s that made any direct reference to the hardships of South African life.

The Troubadour record company was also responsible for releasing highly political singles by black singers such as Dorothy Masuka, whose song “Dr. Malan” contained the line “Dr.

⁴⁸² SABC Memo, 6 August 1957, courtesy of Stephanus Muller.

⁴⁸³ Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 39.

⁴⁸⁴ Influential record producer and recording engineer.

⁴⁸⁵ Boet Pretorius telephonic interview, 22 July 2013.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁷ B. Pogrand, <http://www.timeslive.co.za/opinion/2010/10/14/the-435-sa-miners-who-didn-t-make-it>, accessed 03 June 2013.

Malan has difficult laws”.⁴⁸⁸ It was banned by the authorities and elicited intensified attention from the security police, which resulted in Masuka going into exile. She continued to write political songs, like “Chief Luthuli” and “Lumumba” (both were subsequently banned) while abroad.⁴⁸⁹ Die Briels experienced a revival in their popularity among the wave of alternative Afrikaans artists of the late 1980s.⁴⁹⁰

Conclusion

The strained politics surrounding the development of Afrikaans radio had a significant impact on popular Afrikaans music. When considering the wider socio-political context of the 1930s and 1940s South Africa, the struggle for control of this powerful medium was emblematic of a larger struggle for legitimacy and power by a group of Afrikaner ideologues who would be instrumental in the establishment of Afrikaner nationalist rule in 1948 and the subsequent ushering in of the apartheid era. Radio was affected by the growing wave of ethnic Afrikaner nationalism and vice versa. The impact of the 1938 Centenary Trek was in a substantial way helped by the daily radio broadcasts on the Afrikaans service, but also led to an increase in Afrikaner listenership. The successful struggle for control of the SABC would eventually result in Afrikaner nationalism embedding itself more firmly in the culture industry.

It is important to realise that these aspirations were mostly those of a small Afrikaner middle-class, and that their ideals for “cultural self-sufficiency” did not necessarily reflect universal Afrikaner values. If one considers how important it was for Afrikaner nationalism to create cross-class alliances, while at the same time creating an Afrikaner “high culture”, Afrikaans

⁴⁸⁸ <http://freemuse.org/archives/957>, accessed 20 May 2015.

⁴⁸⁹ L. Allen, “Vocal Jive and Political Identity during the 1950’s”, in C. Lucia (ed), *The World of South African Music: A Reader* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2005), pp. 308-309; see also F. Zindi, “Dorothy Masuka: Age old inspiration”, 11 March 2011, available at <http://www.herald.co.zw/dorothy-masuka-age-old-inspiration>, accessed 20 May 2015.

⁴⁹⁰ T. Engelbrecht, “Kranse dreun, maar Ouma Briel kom weer”, *Die Burger*, 2 June 1990; B. Hough, “Vir die ‘Orgel’ sê mens nie ‘Sit dit af’ nie!”, *Rapport*, 17 June 1990, p. 5.

music became another one of many contested fields in the complex and highly fractious arena of Afrikanerdom. This prompted the “organisation men” to take on an educational role when it came to musical taste. This is understandable when one considers that the Afrikaner middle-class of the time consisted mostly of teachers and clergy.

Afrikaans had indeed made some remarkable strides, but language activity was marked by energy and enthusiasm rather than by creativity or intellectual depth. The movement was still only narrowly based, spurning any possible contribution from coloured Afrikaans-speakers. Afrikaners were predominantly working class and had very few wealthy businessmen that could fund or participate in cultural initiatives.⁴⁹¹

On the other hand, owing to the contingent nature of music, the situation was much more complex than the middle/working-class division. The following decades would, however, see the successful narrowing of the class gap between white Afrikaners, while their cultural organisations would become much more successful, thanks to the success of their brand of Afrikaner nationalism. This would also mark a shift in the cultural entrepreneurs’ view of popular Afrikaans music. Their discomfort regarding *boeremusiek* was replaced by a new concern with the introduction of rock music in 1956. This was also indicative of a growing distrust of the outside world – a world in which communism posed a dire threat, as did liberal social movements in the West. Afrikaner youth were considered especially vulnerable to these threats and they had to be protected. The popularity of *kwela* and its appropriation by white Afrikaans musicians was not a political act, but their association with black African culture provides a stark contrast to the majority of Afrikaners who associated themselves with European cultures and identities.

⁴⁹¹ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 402.

Chapter Four

“Radio apartheid”: Compliance and resistance in Afrikaans popular music, 1960 – 1979

The period covered by this chapter saw the height of apartheid and Afrikaner political power. It addresses the lacuna of literature on popular Afrikaans music of this era by viewing it against the background of this political might and the social changes it entailed. Furthermore, I attempt to remedy our understanding of popular Afrikaans music during this time by searching for subtle counter-hegemonic tendencies in Afrikaans albums and signs of liberalism among Afrikaner youth that might have reflected the global movements sweeping the West during the 1960s. Class distinctions among Afrikaners were less pronounced, the SABC was fully compliant with the ideologies of the state, and Afrikaner youth had more leisure time and were partially exposed to youth culture from abroad. However, South Africa remained relatively isolated. The changing ideological stance of the SABC during this period is investigated using archival material (mainly from the Douglas Fuchs collection at INCH) and looking at banned albums.

The FAK and the DRC were especially active in trying to limit the influence of rock music on Afrikaner youth. Opening up new perspectives on these events, I present articles (some appearing in magazines such as *Die Huisgenoot*) and papers that underscore the strategies followed by, and ignorance of, these organisations in protecting the cultural integrity of Afrikaner youth. Eventually, the church, cultural organisations and the SABC – although ideologically linked to Afrikaner nationalism – followed very different routes in their respective strategies. What is striking is that Afrikaans music did not enjoy much support from Afrikaner youth – as indicated by polls – and although rock and pop music from abroad

was very popular, it did not link up with wider social movements as it did in the US and Britain.

The National Party and Afrikaner power in the 1960s

During the 1960s, the power of the National Party and its affiliated cultural organisations reached its zenith. The establishment of the Republic of South Africa in 1961 and the country's exit from the Commonwealth, as well as the successful oppression of black political organisations like the ANC and PAC, confirmed Afrikaner nationalist domination. This power did not just translate into political control, but also into massive optimism among Afrikaners about their triumph over the harsh threats of poverty and cultural disintegration scarcely a generation before. One important factor was the economic prosperity and emergence of a large Afrikaner middle class at the height of apartheid, which heralded changing lifestyles and consumer patterns as Afrikaners became more affluent.⁴⁹²

The influence and power yielded by Verwoerd during his term as Prime Minister, which commenced in 1958, was enormous. He stood relatively unopposed by other Afrikaner leaders, and was intellectually superior to most of the politicians in parliament. He did, however, have a vocal critic in Afrikaans poet N.P. van Wyk Louw, whose *Nasionale Liberalisme*, published the same year Verwoerd came to power, embodied the principles of open dialogue and political criticism from within the Afrikaner laager. Van Wyk Louw argued for a moral struggle for the survival of Afrikanerdom, and inspired a few Afrikaans journalists to interrogate Verwoerd's policies in their publications.⁴⁹³ The most prominent were Piet Cillié (editor of *Die Burger*) and Schalk Pienaar (the sub-editor who made a name

⁴⁹² A. Grundlingh, "Are We Afrikaners Getting too Rich? Cornucopia and Change in Afrikanerdom in the 1960s", *Journal of Historical Sociology* 21:2/3 (2008), pp. 143-165; W. Beinart, *Twentieth Century South Africa*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 181-184.

⁴⁹³ A. Mouton, "'Reform from within': Schalk Pienaar, the Afrikaans press and apartheid", *Historia* 45:1 (2000), p. 153.

for himself by covering the 1938 Centenary Trek). As Alex Mouton writes, these men “started to implement Louw’s philosophy that a society was judged by its questioning and exploratory attitude”. Mouton continues:

They initiated a process of gentle persuasion to convince fellow Afrikaners that to ensure the volk’s future, apartheid had to mean more than racially segregated toilets, post office counters and cheap black labour. To ensure the freedom of the Afrikaner it had to ensure freedom for blacks and this could only be found in a compromise between “baasskap” and a common society. Afrikanerdom, extremely conservative and conformist was, however, not ready for an open dialogue about apartheid’s shortcomings. Die Burger’s new attitude led to a direct conflict with premier Hendrik Verwoerd.⁴⁹⁴

Pienaar also criticised Verwoerd for his stance on Afrikaner cultural morals: “As if it was the most natural thing in the world, Verwoerd considered himself the leader of the Afrikaners and the arbiter of what was good and bad for the Afrikaners.”⁴⁹⁵ Verwoerd was certainly influential enough to affect the cultural sphere as well. Van Wyk Louw publicly criticised the wisdom of having the “organisation men” (staunch nationalists) “channel Afrikaans cultural life into the streams the political and cultural leaders wanted it to go”.⁴⁹⁶ These “organisation men” were strong believers in apartheid ideology and were committed to ensuring that Afrikaner cultural life remained compliant with the (by now entrenched), ideas of separate development and the Afrikaner’s dominant role within it. Van Wyk Louw’s criticism, as well as Cillié’s and Pienaar’s, were subtle and situated within the Afrikaner fold and still believed in the legitimacy of apartheid as a whole.

The SABC

One of the apartheid government’s greatest assets in its efforts to exercise control over the population was the national broadcaster. The SABC was a vital tool not only for broadcasting

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁵ Quoted in H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003), p.541

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 554.

culture (as is also the case with other public broadcasters like the BBC), but in shaping it.⁴⁹⁷ It functioned relatively independently from the state from its establishment in 1936 until 1959, when the ultra-nationalist Piet Meyer, previously chairman of the FAK's *Radiokomitee* in the 1940s, and instated as chairman of the *Broederbond* in 1960, was appointed as chairman by Albert Hertzog, Minister of Post and Telecommunications in Verwoerd's cabinet.⁴⁹⁸ Subsequently, the national broadcaster became completely compliant with hard-line apartheid ideology, armed with a mandate to guard broadcasting content against subversive material, especially during the politically volatile early 1960s.

Not only did this affect how artists and record companies approached releases, but it also affected news reportage to the South African public. The power held by the SABC after major technological improvements in the 1960s – like switching to FM – meant that international criticism of the South African government did not reach the population. The international outcry after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 is a good example. Other important international events were interpreted in ways that echoed the government's policies, like the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., who was labelled a “negro civil rights agitator”.⁴⁹⁹ Ingrid Byerly has noted that there was a relation between higher degrees of state clamp down on South African music artists in times of political upheaval, as is evident during 1960 with the Sharpeville Massacre and the banning of the ANC and the PAC.⁵⁰⁰ Censorship would become even stricter after the Publications Act of 1974, which established the influential Directorate of Publications.⁵⁰¹ This isolated white South Africa, especially Afrikaners, from the world and had a clear effect on society:

⁴⁹⁷ R. Tomaselli, K. Tomaselli and J. Muller (eds), *Currents of Power: State Broadcasting in South Africa* (Cape Town: Anthropos, 1989), p. 10.

⁴⁹⁸ P. Meyer, *Nog nie ver genoeg nie: 'n Persoonlike rekenskap van vyftig jaar georganiseerde Afrikanerskap* (Johannesburg: Perskor, 1984), p. 103.

⁴⁹⁹ J. Daniel and P. Vale, “South Africa: Where were we looking in 1968?”, p. 140, in P. Gassert and M. Klimke, eds, *1968 - Memories and Legacies of a Global Revolt* (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2009).

⁵⁰⁰ I. Byerly, “Mirror, Mediator, and Prophet: The Music Indaba of Late-Apartheid South Africa”, *Ethnomusicology* 42: 1 (1998), p. 44.

⁵⁰¹ Publications Act no. 42, 9 October 1974.

... South Africa in 1968 ... (w)as a stark and grim place. Political repression had all but defeated opposition to apartheid; high levels of control and censorship prevented the spread of any literature that hinted at the emancipatory goals that would mark the events in Paris in May 1968. So, to use an apposite example, the reading of Mao, whose book *Quotations From Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*, which was known as the “Little Red Book,” was so important in Europe in 1968, was almost unknown in South Africa.⁵⁰²

Even though this statement is somewhat exaggerated, it is difficult to deny the fact that in a decade of significant liberal social and cultural movements across the globe, South African society went in the opposite direction. Afrikaner organisations were determined to protect their *volk* and youth from a dangerous world outside, and throughout the *lekkerliedjie* was broadcast to convey a subtle message that everything was under control. Record companies such as Brigadiers played a vital role in establishing new Afrikaans artists as commercial success stories by looking to Europe for inspiration, often taking European *Schlager* melodies and writing Afrikaans lyrics to these tunes. This is perhaps most evident in the music of Gé Korsten, who studied opera in Vienna and Munich.⁵⁰³ Korsten, along with Min Shaw, would score a massive hit with the soundtrack to the 1968 movie *Hoor my lied*, in which they both starred. The album sold 200 000 units in six months.⁵⁰⁴

Not only politically subversive songs were banned during this time. The songs of mainstream Afrikaans artists like Die Briels⁵⁰⁵ were censored, as was Gé Korsten’s 1966 tribute to Rhodesian independence, “Songs of Courage”, a particularly strange decision since one would expect some form of solidarity with the only other white-minority ruled country in Africa at the time.⁵⁰⁶ Songs with the word “god” in the title, even if these were gospel songs, could be censored, as happened with Charles Jacobie’s “Its no secret (what God can do)”.⁵⁰⁷ Groep Twee, one of the most popular Afrikaans groups, had their gospel song, “U is ons

⁵⁰² Daniel and Vale, “South Africa: Where were we looking in 1968?”, p. 138.

⁵⁰³ I. Roggeband, *50 Stemme: Die grootste name in Afrikaanse musiek* (Cape Town: Delta, 2009), p. 97.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁵⁰⁵ “Saans deur die Tralies”, and “’n Engel in die Hemel”, SABC Memo, 6 August 1957, courtesy of Stephanus Muller, see chapter four.

⁵⁰⁶ PD. 9086.

⁵⁰⁷ CBS Exp 2126.

Ster”,⁵⁰⁸ banned in 1972. In an interview with Boet Pretorius, producer and record company executive, he stated that censorship was not limited to politically subversive artists. This, and the accompanying evidence, undermines the idea that the regime specifically favoured non-confrontational pop music. In this way, commercial Afrikaans music complied with the *cultural requirements* of Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid, even if artists themselves were not politically motivated.

Although censorship influenced radio broadcasts of the SABC, the South African public could still pick up independent radio broadcasts from outside South Africa. The most prominent was Radio Lourenço Marques (LM Radio) in Mozambique, which was instrumental in exposing South African audiences to music banned, or just not played, by the SABC.⁵⁰⁹ When the SABC bought the majority shares in LM Radio in 1972, it meant the end of an era of independent broadcasting in Southern Africa.⁵¹⁰ Even so, censorship was never comprehensive. Even if the SABC banned particular songs, it did not mean the albums were not available in South Africa. Artists like Bob Dylan, for instance, whose 1963 hit, “Blowin in the Wind”, was banned, remained a big seller with a large following among South African youth.⁵¹¹

In a meeting in January 1963, Douglas Fuchs, Director of Programmes and later Director-General of the SABC, stated that rock and *boeremusiek* were classified as specialised music genres with a marginal audience and should therefore be avoided in favour of light, pleasant and melodic music. Music that was too “esoteric, too rocky, or too rolly or too loud” should be avoided unless there were specific numbers that were making news.⁵¹² The SABC was also under pressure from a conservative society – English and Afrikaans whites especially – that

⁵⁰⁸ BR 3062.

⁵⁰⁹ <http://lmradio.org/History.htm>, accessed 30 April 2013.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹¹ *Personality*, November 11, 1965.

⁵¹² Douglas Fuchs, SABC programme director, meeting of senior SABC programmers, 16 January 1963 (INCH), Douglas Fuchs Collection, PV 851.

was easily offended. Fuchs was forced to prohibit any further broadcasts of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, after a once-off evening broadcast in March 1971 was immediately followed by a flood of complaints by "cultural organisations, churches and individual listeners."⁵¹³ The fact that Fuchs had given permission for it to be broadcast in the first place shows that the SABC was perhaps not as conservative as the "cultural organisations" and the church. The following extract from another meeting at the SABC illuminates that the organisation was nevertheless fully co-opted into the political and ideological views of the government:

We want to try to give the English-speaking conservative student a weekly late-night programme, like "Studentevaria", on the Afrikaans transmission, a kind of student's forum with the type of music students like with "hidden persuasion (sic)" in between. This must be broadcast under the Chairmanship of a live and vital – from Rhodes, Natal Wits, Cape Town etc., and sandwiched in between the music the message of the conservative against Nusas should be put.⁵¹⁴

Despite a long history of cross-racial music influence in popular Afrikaans music, recording and broadcasting studios at the SABC were racially segregated.⁵¹⁵ In this way, live Afrikaans music broadcasted by the SABC became more alienated from its multi-racial roots. Privately owned record companies could not afford to build segregated studios, which resulted in commercial recordings sometimes being made by multi-racial backing groups and furthermore, that the same studios would record black and white music respectively.⁵¹⁶ The following statement by Cecile Pracher, a former SABC censor, explains the effect this had on the record industry:

The effect of the SABC clamping down on information was directly resulting in the record companies taking a particular stance. They were in it for business, that's very clear, and they were protecting their rights. They knew that most often if a song is not given air time it doesn't

⁵¹³ INCH, Douglas Fuchs Collection PV 851.

⁵¹⁴ Fuchs, Special SABC meeting, 30 April 1964, INCH, Douglas Fuchs Collection, PV 851.

⁵¹⁵ Ollie Viljoen, interview with author, Gordon's Bay, 18 September 2013.

⁵¹⁶ Rob Allingham, electronic communication, 26 September 2013.

have the same chance of being as popular as the next one. So they forced a kind of censorship on their artists. I think what happened then was that the artists had their own censorship forced on themselves for bread and butter. If you rely on your income then you very often take the easier road. That had a major effect on SA's music in the 1980's and the 1970's. If censorship wasn't so completely successful, there would sooner have been a reaction from the people. That goes for music, but also much wider.⁵¹⁷

Perhaps the most significant act of censorship was the "total ban on TV prior to 1976 (which ranks as the most drastic act of cultural protectionism in the history of the medium."⁵¹⁸ The debates surrounding the allowance of television into South Africa reflected deeper fault lines within Afrikanerdom. The most vocal opponents, headed by Albert Hertzog, were the ultra-conservative *verkramptes*, while the more enlightened *verligtes* were in favour of increased international outreach.⁵¹⁹

... Afrikaner arguments against TV throw into relief the uneasy relationship between apartheid ideologues and those spectres of American culture that haunted their imaginings. Verwoerd, speaking in 1960, warned that "the effect on our cultural life, particularly of the largely American influences which would go hand in hand with television, is not a matter that one can treat lightly." Such anxieties gathered intensity during the 1960s as the peace movement, anti-war protests, feminism, rock and roll, student uprisings, flower power, Satanism, and the Civil Rights movement could all be projected as degenerate contagions that TV would transmit.⁵²⁰

Despite the restrictions imposed by the SABC it was of course not in such a powerful position that it could eradicate all music that went against the grain of the dominant apartheid narrative. The following album cover represents this complexity.⁵²¹

⁵¹⁷ C. Pracher, "The Censored meet their Censor – Music and Censorship during Apartheid in South Africa", available at <http://freemuse.org/archives/5671>, accessed 8 May 2012.

⁵¹⁸ R. Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African Culture and the World Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 43.

⁵¹⁹ Nixon's in-depth analysis of the politics of television in South Africa during this time is insightful and authoritative.

⁵²⁰ Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood*, p. 45.

⁵²¹ Protea, PALP1004, 1962, courtesy of <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Marq-Vass-Southern-African-Music-Collectibles>, accessed 15 April 2013.



Figure 8: Chris Smit's *Pennie Fluitjie*, 1962.

Released in the first quarter of 1962,⁵²² it is a loaded metaphor that symbolises, among other things, the “strange society” Charles Hamm referred to.⁵²³ Even at a quick glance, the cover contains a number of interesting – and unusual – elements. Regarding the image of the artist, his tattoo signifies a break from the conservative norm of the time and is probably intended to provoke, as it is deliberately facing the camera. Chris Smit is quite obviously white, but he is playing an instrument associated with black musicians and his hairstyle resembles that of a “Ducktail” – a marginal group seen as undesirable by the majority of white South African society.⁵²⁴ The ambiguities extend to the title of the album and the tracks listed on the cover. The title is in both Afrikaans (*Pennie Fluitjie*) and English (*Penny Whistle*), indicating that it is aimed at a cross-over audience; and most of the tracks are reworked Afrikaans favourites, like “Boegoeberg se dam” and “Haak Vrystaat”, while “Loskop Kwela” is a deliberate reference to *kwela*.

⁵²² Marq Vas, electronic communication with author, 16 April 2013.

⁵²³ C. Hamm, “Rock 'n' Roll in a Very Strange Society”, *Popular Music* 5:1 (1985), pp. 159-174.

⁵²⁴ K. Mooney, “Ducktails, flick-knives and pugnacity: subcultural and hegemonic masculinities in South Africa, 1948–1960”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24:4 (1998), pp. 753-774.

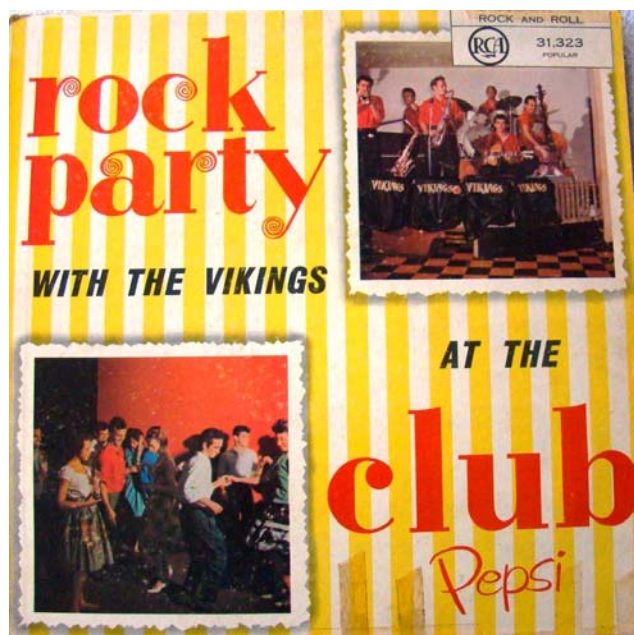


Figure 9: Rock Party with the Vikings at the Club Pepsi, 1958 - the first South African rock album?

Chris Smit was also a member of one of South Africa's first rock groups, The Vikings, whose first album, *Rock Party at the Pepsi Club with the Vikings*, was released in 1959.⁵²⁵ On the sleeve note it states that Smit led his own group by age 16 (he was 20 in 1959) and that he concentrated on saxophone and pennywhistle in "Boere Music (sic) Cape-Malay and Kwela".⁵²⁶ Interestingly, Allen makes reference to the similarities between *kwela* and rock & roll, especially when listened to as dance music. In this way, it functioned as a type of "localised rock & roll".⁵²⁷ Smit's album was not a commercial success. Protea was not one of the major record companies of the time and along with other smaller independent companies like Meteor, would have been more likely to release music that was not part of the mainstream in the hope that it would attract a younger, niche market.⁵²⁸ Lack of commercial success aside, the true interest of this album cover lies in its position within a specific time and space, and the fact that it exists at all. The mixture of inter-racial musical influences, the

⁵²⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Marq-Vass-Southern-African-Music-Collectibles>, accessed 15 April 2013.

⁵²⁶ RCA Victor 31,323, 1959, courtesy of Tertius Louw.

⁵²⁷ L. Allen, "Kwela's White Audiences: The Politics of Pleasure and Identification in the Early Apartheid Period", in G. Olwage (ed.), *Composing Apartheid: Music For and Against Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), p. 83.

⁵²⁸ Boet Pretorius, interview with author, 22 July 2013.

provocative image of the artist, the bilingual album title and English caption, and especially the timing (1962) all add to its poignancy. This was at the height of apartheid and the National Party was in firm control while its cultural allies the DRC, the FAK and the SABC were all conspiring to uphold Afrikaner nationalist identity and to protect it from subversive elements, imagined or real. And yet the ambiguities of signification lodged in music managed to surface even in this restrictive environment. Another poignant release of the late 1950s was Duffy Ravenscroft's *Kwela with Duffy*,⁵²⁹ which was changed by the record company to *Party Time with Duffy*:



Figure 109: "Kwela" with Duffy.

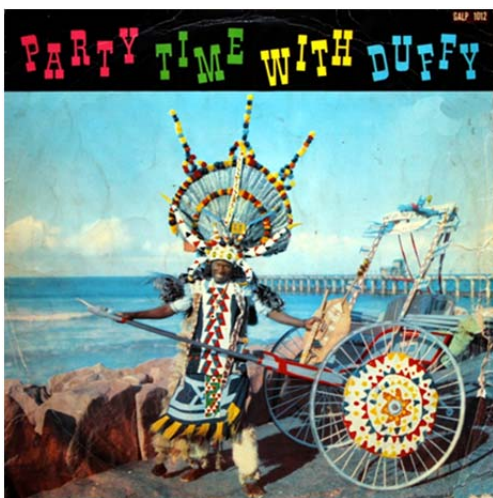


Figure 11: "Party Time" with Duffy.

⁵²⁹ GALP 1012

This change in title suggests that the *kwela* reference might have alienated the album's English audience, or that the record company at least thought so. Although its most prominent members were very opposed to foreign influences on Afrikaner culture, it is interesting to note that there is no direct evidence suggesting that the FAK was concerned about either country or *kwela* music's popularity among whites or its influence on Afrikaans music artists. The SABC, on the other hand, had no qualms about banning from the airwaves an Afrikaans song "Kom kwela vanaand met my" ("Come kwela with me tonight", artist unknown) and the album on which it featured, in December 1957.⁵³⁰ There was obviously not a total ban of Afrikaans *kwela* songs if Fred Wooldridge's "Penniefluitjie kwela" was broadcast every day for thirteen years. Seen against such complex racial politics, the identification of white Afrikaners with the music of the 'other' seems idiosyncratic, but it can also be read as opportunistic and pragmatic, since *kwela* was good business.

Another album that seems idiosyncratic is the following:



Figure 12: Coetzee en Ceronio's *Die Ghitaar Pluk*, c. 1965.

The precise date of its release is unknown (it is somewhere between 1964 and 1966) and is a collection of instrumental guitar covers. Different versions of "Meadowlands" were

⁵³⁰ SABC internal memo to "C" compilers, 04 December 1957, courtesy of Stephanus Muller.

banned,⁵³¹ but the tune was popular enough to include on the album, possibly due to The Meteors, who had a number 13 hit with it on LM Radio in 1963 (despite it also being banned by the SABC).⁵³² The songs “Ghitaar Boogie” and “Vyfhoek Blues” have mixed-language song titles, which is controversial for the time, and the references to “boogie”, “blues” and “rock” clearly indicate that the album is aimed at a younger demographic. “Fanagalo” was also recorded by Nico Carstens, and refers to the pidgin Zulu vernacular spoken by migrant black mine workers.

Rock and country

To add to the complex identity politics of this early apartheid era, 1956 also marks the year that Elvis Presley – and by extension rock music in general – was introduced to South African audiences. Elvis became immensely popular among English and Afrikaans white youth, selling nearly two million albums in just three years.⁵³³ Interestingly, during the years 1957 to 1959, popular music dominated English broadcasts of the SABC. Almost no classical music was broadcast during this time, which is in stark contrast to the years before and since.⁵³⁴

Rock music was also used in the political arena. Visits by early rock singers from abroad caused an outcry among conservative Afrikaners on the one hand, but also curiosity on the other. The visit of Tommy Steele, a British singer, was reported with cautious fascination by Afrikaans newspapers.⁵³⁵ According to Hamm, the National Party used the dangers of rock music as a political tool against the mostly English speaking United Party in the 1958 national elections, holding them responsible for Afrikaner youth turning their backs on Afrikaner

⁵³¹ Strike Vilakazi’s original version, as well as a cover recorded by Nico Carstens in 1968.

⁵³² Tertius Louw, electronic communication with author, September 2013.

⁵³³ Hamm, “Rock ‘n Roll in a strange society”, p. 159.

⁵³⁴ R.J. van den Berg, “Die Musiekaktiwiteite van die SAUK”, (MA Dissertation: University of Potchefstroom, 1976), Diagram 2, p. 203.

⁵³⁵ *Die Burger*, 15, 25 March 1958.

culture.⁵³⁶ This move by the National Party to capitalise on rock music in the political arena was much more pragmatic than papers by various FAK executive members published in *Handhaaf*, or presented at *Volkskongresse*, like the one in Stellenbosch in 1957. Here, Benedictus Kok, FAK executive member, delivered a paper on the influence of radio, the gramophone, composers of light music, and publishers of Afrikaans music, where he referred to pop music as “music pornography”.⁵³⁷ This pragmatic approach by the National Party (as opposed to the ideological approach of the FAK) would continue for a number of years:

Throughout the 1960s, the Government continued this policy, which seemed to work well for its political purposes. Rock 'n' roll was allowed to flourish; the Afrikaans press and the NGK continued to denounce it, always ready to pounce on any excesses or scandalous incidents which could be linked to this music or its performers, at home or abroad, always ready to remind the Afrikaner population that this music was the product of an alien and dangerous culture. Dusty Springfield persisted in making adverse comments on the country's racial policies while performing in South Africa in 1964, and was asked to leave.⁵³⁸

Pragmatism, however, had boundaries. During Steele's tour, 25 boys and girls were arrested in Springs for having a “rock-n-roll session” in the basement of a building, although no charges were made.⁵³⁹ A few days after this incident, the British rock singer Terry Dene was deemed an “undesirable person” by the Department of Home Affairs and prohibited from touring South Africa.⁵⁴⁰ Furthermore, South Africans were only exposed to the mildest rock artists from abroad, ensuring that rock found a wider audience than just the youth.

In the next decade, dozens of British and American singers were persuaded to make the long journey to the tip of the African continent, among them Dickie Valentine, Cliff Richard, Connie Francis, Pat Boone, Billy Fury, Dusty Springfield, Adam Faith, Vera Lynn and Alma Cogan. This roster both reflected and helped to shape the musical taste of white South African youth: middle of the road rock; often more pop than rock; several stages removed from the rhythm and blues and country and western roots of the first wave of American rock 'n' roll of the 1950s; more often British than American. South African “rock” musicians fell into these same patterns. Adults became more and more tolerant of this music as it became evident that no real harm was being

⁵³⁶ Hamm, “Rock 'n Roll in a strange society”, p.162.

⁵³⁷ P. McClachlan, *Matieland*, 1, 3 December 1957, p. 21.

⁵³⁸ Hamm, “Rock 'n Roll in a strange society”, p. 163; *Die Burger*, 07 January 1965.

⁵³⁹ *Die Burger*, 24 March 1958.

⁵⁴⁰ *Die Burger*, 27 March 1958.

done, and that much music labelled “rock 'n' roll” was not too different from the music they had enjoyed during their youth.⁵⁴¹

Many of these artists came under pressure for visiting apartheid South Africa. A prominent actors’ union in the UK was Equity, which succeeded in convincing Billy Fury to cancel his trip. Equity insisted that their artists perform to unrestricted audiences, which was almost impossible under apartheid laws. After a detective removed three coloured teenagers at an Adam Faith concert in Wynberg in January 1965, Faith had to cancel remaining concerts due to pressure from Equity.⁵⁴² This led to a charge of contract breach by the concert promoter, and Faith was arrested on the plane as he was about to leave Johannesburg.⁵⁴³

Rock musicians were not the only overseas artists to visit South Africa during this time. Probably the most popular artist to visit was American country singer Jim Reeves, who visited South Africa (along with pianist Floyd Cramer and guitarist Chet Atkins) in 1962 following staggering album sales in the country. American culture seems to have taken root in the South African imagination, with Westerns being popular at the cinemas and country music appealing to a wide, racially inclusive, audience.⁵⁴⁴ Reeves was mobbed by fans at Johannesburg airport and in front of his hotel.⁵⁴⁵ He subsequently recorded two Afrikaans albums and starred in a local movie: *Kimberley Jim*, a musical with music written by local musicians such as Nico Carstens, Anton de Waal and Gilbert Gibson.⁵⁴⁶ He was even eulogised in a song by sentimental singers Koos & Hester Nortje (mentioned above) after his death in a plane crash in 1964.⁵⁴⁷ Country music has remained very popular among Afrikaners. It is difficult to know how popular Reeves was among a younger demographic. Elvis Presley had no less than eight hits on LM Radio (which had a large audience among the

⁵⁴¹ Hamm, “Rock ‘n’ Roll in a strange society”, p. 162.

⁵⁴² *Die Burger*, 7 January 1965.

⁵⁴³ *Die Burger*, 9 January 1965.

⁵⁴⁴ W. Beinart, *Twentieth Century South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 183.

⁵⁴⁵ M. Titlestad, “The South African Life and Afterlife of Jim Reeves”, *The Journal of South African and American Studies* 15: 4 (2014), p. 499.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 500-503.

⁵⁴⁷ “Vaarwel Jim Reeves” (Farewell Jim Reeves).

youth) in December 1961 (just before Reeves' visit), including the top five,⁵⁴⁸ which indicates strong popularity of rock music in South Africa. This popularity was part of a global impact:

From a more global perspective, the mass production and distribution of Western music has been seen as a form of "cultural imperialism," spreading not only music but with it, U.S. and European values to other parts of the world.⁵⁴⁹

Charles Hamm's work, foundational as it is to opening up these perspectives, does not address the popularity of rock music among Afrikaner youth. Local English rock group The Bats had an Afrikaans hit with the rugby-themed single "Groen en Goud" (Green and Gold) on both LM Radio and Springbok Radio in 1968.⁵⁵⁰ This is probably the first Afrikaans rock song and features a concertina solo that blends rock with *boeremusiek*. The references to popular Afrikaans rugby players and national heroes Dawie de Villiers, Frik du Preez and Tiny Naudé, along with the familiar concertina, made use of powerful Afrikaner cultural icons, ensuring its popularity among Afrikaners. Following the success of "Groen en Goud", The Bats released the first full-length Afrikaans rock album, called *Weltevrede*.⁵⁵¹ Interestingly, eight Afrikaans songs reached the Springbok charts in 1967 and 1968, of which all six imported melodies, and only two – both by The Bats ("Groen en Goud" and "Weltevrede Stasie") – were original music compositions.⁵⁵²

⁵⁴⁸ Louw, electronic communication September 2013.

⁵⁴⁹ http://www.recording-history.org/HTML/impact_recorded_music12.php, accessed 23 August 2012.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵¹ http://www.rock.co.za/files/vinyl_sa_index2.htm, accessed 16 August 2013.

⁵⁵² Louw, electronic communication, September 2013.

Afrikaner youth

Afrikaans youth did not view Afrikaans music as legitimate pop music, especially after the introduction of rock & roll.⁵⁵³ This was an important development that reflected the changing demographics of Afrikaans music audiences. Sentimental songs by Die Briels did not appeal to them; neither did the operatic pop of Gé Korsten and other Afrikaans singers. This concerned the ideologues of the DRC and the FAK considerably. Grundlingh refers to polls conducted in the mid-sixties by the University of Pretoria which showed that almost half of all Afrikaner youth (more than English youth) preferred to listen to LM Radio and that they preferred rock and pop over popular Afrikaans music.⁵⁵⁴ A later poll conducted among Afrikaans students at Stellenbosch confirmed that the Afrikaner youth were “not interested in Afrikaans music”, that “all (Afrikaans pop songs) are too light or of too bad quality to be called pop”, and that “Afrikaans is not suited for pop music.”⁵⁵⁵ Furthermore, some students felt quite strongly that Afrikaans pop should not be presented by singers such as Min Shaw, Gé Korsten, Gert “Pottie” Potgieter, or “Afrikaans ‘trash’ and Bubblegum.”⁵⁵⁶ The idea of making British and American styled pop music in Afrikaans during the 1960s was, to quote Voëlvry artist Koos Kombuis, “As impossible as Monty Python style humour in the Third Reich.”⁵⁵⁷

Other polls by the *Nasionale Jeugraad* (National Youth Council) of the FAK in 1968 show that the Afrikaner youth was, however, still heavily influenced by the DRC. A large majority attended church regularly (almost 60% attended church at least once a week, while a third went more than once). Only a negligible percentage had no religious affiliation, while by far

⁵⁵³ J.E. Pieterse (ed.), *Jeug en vrye tyd III* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1967), pp. 102–103, in A. Grundlingh, “‘Are We Afrikaners Getting too Rich?’ Cornucopia and Change in Afrikanerdom in the 1960s”, *Journal of Historical Sociology* 21: 2/3 (June/September 2008), p. 154.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 154

⁵⁵⁵ FAK Music Commission meeting minutes, year unknown, but probably 1974. US Library Archive, G.G. Cilliers Collection, MS 210, 89a.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁷ K.A. Kombuis, *Seks & Drugs & Boeremusiek: Die Memoires van ‘n Volksverraaier* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 2000), p. 191.

the most were members of the DRC. Afrikaner youth had more conservative lifestyles than white English youth (who also participated in the polls and were less involved in religious activities), and were more directly influenced by church-related activities. A high percentage of Afrikaner youth also respected authority.⁵⁵⁸ Read in conjunction with the results of the other polls mentioned above, the popularity of rock music among Afrikaner youth did not mean they were any less conservative.

Various social factors played a role in the Afrikaner youth gravitating towards new genres from abroad, much to the distress of cultural leaders. The introduction of rock music coincided with the emergence of a white middle class youth culture that was part of a new consumer culture linked to a growing economy.⁵⁵⁹ White middle class suburbia replaced the *blikkiesdorpe* (shanty towns) and the far-off farms on the *platteland* (rural areas), which were the domiciles of the previous generation, as Afrikaners were becoming affluent. This meant that whatever class-based tensions existed between the small Afrikaner elite and the large working class in the first half of the twentieth century, were greatly reduced by the late 1950s as Afrikaners began to benefit from apartheid. Politically, the National Party consolidated their power and influence as South Africa became an increasingly repressive state with a government intolerant of criticism. The FAK and the SABC were ideologically opposed to *volksvreemde* Anglo-Saxon influences and attempted to counter these foreign influences by sponsoring light Afrikaans music competitions and to commission youth radio programmes.⁵⁶⁰

In a paper dated December 1974, G.G. Cilliers, then deputy chairman of the FAK, had the following to say about pop music and the Afrikaner youth:

- 1) The words of some pop songs have a dubious scope, and some are even subversive,

⁵⁵⁸ A.G.S. Gous, "Ons jeug vrees die toekoms", *Die Huisgenoot*, 20 September 1968, pp. 14-15.

⁵⁵⁹ Grundlingh, "Are We Afrikaners Getting too Rich?", p. 153.

⁵⁶⁰ SABC Annual Report, 1968, p. 24, courtesy of Monica van Deventer, SABC Information Library, 18 November 2011.

- 2) For many of our Afrikaner teenagers pop music is their whole music experience. It displaces all other music among them, including serious music and their own folk music,
- 3) Almost all of our teenagers' pop songs come from England and America and thus leaves an Anglo-Saxon imprint on our young people during a very sensitive stage of their development. In the FAK we believe that this holds dangers for the cultural formation and stability of the involved people,
- 4) By singing only pop songs, our teenagers are singing almost exclusively in English, thus neglecting their mother tongue.⁵⁶¹

The FAK also published a songbook of Afrikaans *lekkersingliedjies* aimed at the Afrikaner youth, but it had limited success:

In 1976 the first collection of *Lekkersingliedjies* was released, because the FAK realised that the modern Afrikaans-speaking youth have a great need for light Afrikaans songs. These 30 songs, of which six are traditional folk tunes, were all reworked with a modern idiom by Dirkie de Villiers. The result was a booklet that succeeded in its original goal: entertainment for the widest audience, with favourites such as “Groen koringlande”, “Die padda wou gaan opsit”, “Ai meisie-meisie”, “Liefste Madelein” and “Groen is die land van Natal”.⁵⁶²

This songbook was not a success among young Afrikaners. Groep Twee, the popular duo formed by Sias Reynecke and Gert van Tonder, released a single with “Die padda wou gaan opsit” as the B-side to “Oukraalliedjie” in 1966.⁵⁶³ The single went gold and “Oukraalliedjie” reached number three on Springbok Radio’s national charts. Somewhat ironically, “Die padda wou gaan opsit” was a translation of an old English folk tune called “Froggy went ‘a-courtin”, which was covered by American protest singers Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger and later Bob Dylan.⁵⁶⁴ Even Elvis did a cover of it in 1970, as did Bruce Springsteen in 2006.⁵⁶⁵ It is, however, doubtful that the FAK had knowledge of the way it was used as a protest song in the US.

⁵⁶¹ G.G. Cilliers, “Die musiekkomitee van die FAK en Popmusiek”, *Handhaaf*, December 1974, pp. 6-7, translated from original.

⁵⁶² A. le Roux, *Handhaaf*, April/ May 1988, p. 6, trans.

⁵⁶³ Personal communication with Tertius Louw, 17 September 2014.

⁵⁶⁴ <http://www.bobdylan.com/de/node/26858>, accessed 20 May 2015.

⁵⁶⁵ <http://www.springsteenlyrics.com/lyrics/f/froggiwentacourtin.php>, accessed 20 May 2015.

The SABC was more pragmatic and in 1969 approached the English local rock group, The Peanut Butter Conspiracy, to record instrumental versions of Afrikaans songs in a rock idiom for broadcast on teenage Afrikaans radio programmes.⁵⁶⁶ The Dutch Reformed Church was also gravely concerned about losing touch with the youth. A typical warning against the subversive powers of rock music can be found in *Die Kerkbode*, the newsletter of the DRC. In his article “Psigedeliese Musiek en die Jeug”⁵⁶⁷ (Psychedelic Music and the Youth), Dr. H.G. van der Hoven makes some very questionable observations about psychedelic (or rock) music. Firstly, he defines “psychedelic” as “soul destroying”, although its literal meaning is “soul manifesting”.⁵⁶⁸ He also calls the Beatles satanic communists. The rest of his paper is a highly emotional call to protect Afrikaner children against the evil, satanic, communist hippies and their rock music. Criticisms like these were common, and made an emotional plea to the majority of Afrikaners involved with the DRC (including the youth). Statistics show, however, that in spite of this emotional pressure (and perhaps because of it), the Afrikaner youth embraced the music thus vilified.

The SABC was more practical than the DRC. Although numerous albums were scratched to ensure that radio DJ’s could not play them, offending tracks were just as easily excluded from playlists. Print media followed this example, as can be seen in a letter to *Die Huisgenoot* in 1966 by a group of boarding school pupils from Kimberley bemoaning the fact that there was not enough coverage of pop stars like Elvis Presley, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones.⁵⁶⁹ Afrikaans pop artists had no such problems. Just three weeks prior to this letter, *Die Burger* published a report celebrating the release of Gé Korsten’s new album, *Gé Korsten Sing Erika*, in conjunction with the FAK and Brigadiers record company:

⁵⁶⁶ *Vir die Jong Klomp*, SAUK, LT 12530.

⁵⁶⁷ H.G. van der Hoven, “Psigedeliese Musiek en die Jeug”, *Die Kerkbode*, 26 January 1972, pp. 102 -104.

⁵⁶⁸ From the Ancient Greek *psuchē* (soul), and *dēlōsē* (manifest) <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>, accessed 30 April 2013.

⁵⁶⁹ *Die Huisgenoot*, 23 September 1966, p. 11.

Afrikaans also wants to stand its ground! “Where previously there was a language struggle, there is today a music and singing struggle!” writes Albie Venter in an enthusiastic note on the cover of *Gé Korsten Sing Erika*, a long-playing album recently released by the F.A.K. and completed with the co-operation of Brigadiers Bpk. Although one would personally formulate it differently, you have to largely agree with what Mr. Venter is saying here. Afrikaans has too often in the past been regarded as just suitable for “balke-toe” music.⁵⁷⁰

“Erika” is a marching song of the Waffen-SS from the 1930s, composed by Herms Niel who receives due credit on Korsten’s album. Singer Jurie Ferreira had also covered “Erika” – with Afrikaans lyrics – in the late 1950s, with accompaniment by Nico Carstens and his orchestra.⁵⁷¹ The fact that a German marching song from the Second World War could be repackaged as a successful commercial Afrikaans release in 1966, at the same time as The Beatles were banned following John Lennon’s controversial “Jesus statement”, is noteworthy. It also reaffirms the gap between the tastes of young and old Afrikaans listeners.

In an unusual response to Lennon’s statement, Dr. J.A. Heyns – a senior lecturer in theology at Stellenbosch University – published an article in *Die Huisgenoot* in which he posed the question of whether or not John Lennon was actually correct in asserting that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus.⁵⁷² He used this as a warning against “Beatle worship” and the decline of Christianity in modern times and also mentioned the failed attempts in South Africa to rally mass anti-Beatle support among the public and the DRC’s failure to comment on the matter. The SABC had reacted by banning all broadcasts of music by the Beatles, although their albums were still available in South Africa. It is clear from this article that Lennon’s statement did not invite too much outcry from the South African public and that the music of the Beatles kept on selling regardless.

In 1970, EMI, through their subsidiary MFP, launched the popular series of Springbok Hit Parade albums, which sold extremely well among young South Africans and often featured

⁵⁷⁰ “Afrikaners wil ook in musiek sy man kan staan!”, *Die Burger*, 1 September 1966, translated from the original.

⁵⁷¹ Columbia 11009 & DSA 3003.

⁵⁷² *Die Huisgenoot*, 16 September 1966.

South African artists.⁵⁷³ These albums were cheap and consisted of mostly cover versions of overseas hits recorded by local musicians. Some local hits were also featured, of which the majority were in English, but a small number of Afrikaans songs managed to make it onto the albums, like Gé Kortsens and Ian and Dix's collaboration, "Sonder Jou" (Without you), on the Springbok 30 album of 1976 (MFP 54763).⁵⁷⁴ The albums were also famous for their cover photos of semi-naked white women, which Drewett interpreted as representations of patriarchal patriotism:

For the sexing of album covers followed distinctly racial and ethnic lines: white, never black, women accompanied reference to national symbols as the "springbok" in the belief that these symbols represented white aspirations.⁵⁷⁵

His portrayal of album covers as conveyors of nationalist codes is an important observation and remains relevant when applied to Afrikaans album covers (and other visual media) of the post-apartheid era.⁵⁷⁶ Importantly, South Africa was not totally isolated from global cultural trends: many pop hits from abroad were hits in South Africa, and were put on the Springbok Hit Parade albums, along with local groups. The provocative covers also challenged the conservative norms, and often led to clashes with the Directorate of Publications.⁵⁷⁷ In a circuitous way, however, even these provocations were part of the construct of white supremacy, and represented a dominant white male version of patriotism.

Global movements

The 1960s was an era of significant change for the world far outside South Africa's guarded borders. The social movements that reached their peak mainly in the US and Europe have

⁵⁷³ <http://springbokhits.blogspot.com/p/springbok-hit.html>, accessed 24 July 2013.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁵ M. Drewett, "Packaging Desires: Album covers and the representation of apartheid" in G. Olwage (ed.), *Composing Apartheid: Music for and Against Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), p. 123.

⁵⁷⁶ See D. Pretorius, "The Visual Representations of Masculinities in Huisgenoot Tempo Magazine", *COMMUNICATIO* 39: 2 (2013), pp. 210–232.

⁵⁷⁷ Drewett, "Packaging Desires", p. 122.

proven to be very useful case studies on the dynamics between music and social movements. Herbert Marcuse emphasised the “aesthetic dimension” of these liberal social movements in the 1960s, “(s)uggesting that it was primarily in art and music that social movements ‘re-membered’ traditions of resistance and critique”.⁵⁷⁸ In South Africa, the authorities viewed these movements with suspicion. The main cultural threats to the *Volk* were communism, liberalism and humanism. The FAK’s magazine *Handhaaf*, established in 1963, regularly published articles by leading Afrikaner cultural leaders that warned against the undermining effects these ideologies had on Calvinism, which was the spiritual foundation of Afrikaner nationalism. These threats were often linked to popular music.⁵⁷⁹

In South Africa, however, social dynamics differed substantially from those in Britain and the US. In a sense, rock music from abroad – the same artists who were so influential, like the Beatles and Bob Dylan – meant something different to Afrikaners. Although the music was popular and appealed to rebellious urges in a conservative South African society, the references in the music (place names, events, vernacular terms) but most notably also the politics, were unfamiliar. Initially, rock music of the 1960s had a strong political position as a voice of a leftist youth culture opposing the Tories in Britain and the Republicans in the US,⁵⁸⁰ but there was no such political link in South Africa. Liberalism was not common among Afrikaners. Afrikaner intellectualism centred around in-party debates on reform, or “criticism from within”, not anti-establishment and anti-apartheid debate.⁵⁸¹ Afrikaans university campuses served as academic nurseries for nationalist ideology, not for student activism that could manifest in violent intolerance among students. In 1970, a large group of Afrikaans students at the University of Pretoria kidnapped 30 concert goers (mostly long-haired English speakers) at the first pop festival held in Johannesburg. They were taken to the

⁵⁷⁸ A. Jamison and J. Eyerman, *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 6.

⁵⁷⁹ P. McLachlan, “Die Afrikaner en die Kunste”, *Handhaaf*, January 1974, p. 17.

⁵⁸⁰ S. Frith, “Rock and the Politics of Memory”, *Social Text* 9:10 (1984), pp. 60-61.

⁵⁸¹ A. du Toit, *Die Sondes van die Vaders* (Cape Town: Rubicon Press, 1983), p. 16.

public fountains in Pretoria where a large crowd of Afrikaans students had gathered and were beaten and had their long hair shaved off.⁵⁸²

Seen against the global background of the time, the middle class Afrikaner youth shared at least some characteristics with its overseas counterparts. From 1967, all white males over the age of 16 (who were not attending school) were conscripted into the South African Defence Force. This was at least partially similar to what was happening to American men during the Vietnam War – a catalyst for strong anti-war protests among students. These social movements were intimately linked to protest music. Taking into account these similarities, it is interesting to note that Afrikaans music did not reflect any form of protest at all until the 1980s.

In another ironic twist, the SADF (South African Defence Force) played a role in exposing Afrikaner youth to new subcultures that would otherwise be inaccessible to young white middle class Afrikaner men. A good example is the American singer Rodriguez, whose anti-establishment folk music spread among troops in the army. The Oscar-winning documentary *Searching for Sugarman*⁵⁸³ underscores the resonance his music had among white South Africans from the early 1970s onwards while he was completely ignored in his native United States. The film was a worldwide hit, bringing the politics of music in apartheid South Africa to a global audience and attracting some academic scrutiny.⁵⁸⁴ In the documentary, this popularity – despite the fact that Rodriguez's music was censored in South Africa – is partly linked to a social undercurrent that was displeased with the apartheid establishment and had found in his music a subtle avenue of protest where other means were harshly silenced. This view has drawn harsh criticism from ex-troops who claim that Rodriguez's music was popular

⁵⁸² *The Daily News*, 10 October 1970, pp. 1-2; *Die Burger*, 12 October 1970.

⁵⁸³ DVD, directed by Malik Bendjelloul (Canfield Pictures: The Documentary Company, 2012)

⁵⁸⁴ See J. Hyslop, "‘Days of Miracle and Wonder’? Conformity and Revolt in *Searching for Sugar Man*", *Safundi* 14:4 (2013), pp. 490-501.

among a much wider audience and that even the staunchest racists in the army listened to it.⁵⁸⁵ While the ambiguous signification of Rodriguez's music cautions against over-simplification, it is fair to say that rock music did give voice to unarticulated anti-establishment emotions among white South African youth. This is evident in the formation of English punk and rock groups in the East Rand during the 1970s.⁵⁸⁶ However, it is important to note that being anti-establishment in South Africa during the 1960s and 1970s was different to being anti-establishment in Britain and the US. Geographically isolation – not to mention the cultural isolation brought about by the absence of television in South Africa until 1976 – and life under a political (and class) system which differed markedly from that in the US and Britain, influenced the social lives of South African youth in ways unique to their contexts.

Afrikaner liberals

Even though many countries in the West saw a rapid rise in intellectual leftist organisations during this time, no similar reaction is visible among the Afrikaner youth. Afrikaners were seemingly content with their newly acquired middle class status, thanks to the economic benefits of apartheid. Perhaps the most radical Afrikaner of the time was the anti-apartheid activist and head of the banned SACP, Bram Fischer who, in a letter written in February 1965 to his defence council in a trial he was deliberately not attending, underscored the fact that the economic growth was making white South Africans complacent:

What is needed is for White South Africans to shake themselves out of their complacency, a complacency intensified by the present economic boom built upon racial discrimination. Unless this whole intolerable system is changed radically and rapidly, disaster must follow. Appalling bloodshed and civil war will become inevitable because, as long as there is oppression of a majority, such oppression will be fought with increasing hatred.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁵ A. Kannemeyer, "Suiker-omhulde bog", *Die Burger*, 13 March 2013.

⁵⁸⁶ P. Hopkins, *Voëlvry: The Movement That Rocked South Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2006), p.92.

⁵⁸⁷ Available at <http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/biography/2006/bramug.html>, accessed 13 March 2013.

The other leftist Afrikaner intellectuals consisted mostly of a group of gifted Afrikaans authors called the Sestigers, among whom the poet activist Breyten Breytenbach was the most radical. Similar to the censorship musicians would experience, these writers would be subject to cat-and-mouse games regarding the banning and un-banning of their work, depending on the political climate:

On 29 January 1974, the first significant banning of an Afrikaans literary work, André Brink's *Kennis van die aand*, took place, intensifying opposition to censorship from the Afrikaner intelligentsia. The result was the formation of the Afrikaner Skrywersgilde. By way of contrast, the FAK supported the legislation. In the late 1970s the works of progressive white writers such as Brink, Gordimer and Etienne Leroux were unbanned, in spite of their refusal to participate in the process, because the government wished to project a more liberal façade.⁵⁸⁸

Outside this group, Afrikaner intellectualism was occupied not by anti-apartheid critique, but by in-party debates on reform (in line with Van Wyk Louw's idea of loyal protest mentioned earlier).⁵⁸⁹ Author Etienne Leroux argued that the "unorthodoxy of the mind" that inspired creativity, was subdued by the repressive state education system.⁵⁹⁰ Perhaps one can argue that the "movement" in the US occurred during, and was fuelled by, a time of great socio-political change or flux. This was in stark contrast to white South Africa, which was in a relatively static socio-political period in which Afrikaner nationalism consolidated its power through oppression.

Conclusion

Popular Afrikaans music's association with Afrikaner nationalist identity and its accompanying politics during apartheid cannot be denied. However, the fact that the period between 1960 and 1979 did not give rise to any noteworthy Afrikaans music movements does

⁵⁸⁸ C. Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship: Secrecy and Intellectual Repression in South Africa* (Cape Town, David Phillip Publishers, 1994), p. 80.

⁵⁸⁹ Du Toit, *Die Sondes van die Vaders*, p. 16; Mouton, "Reform from within", pp. 149-176.

⁵⁹⁰ Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship*, p. 207; see also J. Cope, *The adversary within: dissident writers in Afrikaans* (Cape Town, Philip, 1982), p. 123.

not mean that it is without significance from an Afrikaans popular music history perspective. It is important to ask why there was no “movement” phase, as Jamieson and Eyerman puts it or, put differently, why Afrikaans music remained “depoliticised” until long after the global movements of the 1960s. The lack of access to leftist political literature, strict government clampdowns and a weakness of the liberal left are important factors. Grundlingh asserts that although many Afrikaner youths embraced rock music, their activism did not exceed their listening habits.⁵⁹¹ The lack of outspokenness, the affirmative melodies and lyrics, and the non-confrontational attitudes are all indicative and symptomatic of Afrikaner mentality of the time. This attitude came under heavy fire by liberal Afrikaners during the 1980s as the failure of apartheid on all levels – social, political, moral and economic – became apparent.

Blaming the acquiescent attitudes of Afrikaans music artists on the strict censorship by the SABC and other cultural gatekeepers like the FAK, only partially explains its existence. It is also possible to ascribe it simply to the fact that Afrikaners were happy enough with the economic benefits of apartheid, leaving the consequences until later. Although there really is scant evidence that the Afrikaner youth of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s had any overt leftist political agendas, the presence of subtle counter-hegemonic elements in popular Afrikaans music before 1979 and as pointed to in this chapter, undermines the idea of Afrikanerdom’s hegemonic character. The mixed-racial elements so influential in the history of Afrikaans music composition and performance were definitely restricted by segregationist laws, which contributed to the European character of many of the Afrikaans pop hits of this time. In contrast, the subtle, yet unmistakable transgressive album cover of Chris Smit’s *Penniefluitjie*, the release of cover versions of banned political songs like “Meadowlands” by Afrikaans artists Coetzee en Ceronio, and the first Afrikaans rock songs by The Bats, indicate that not all Afrikaans music surrendered to the dominant narrative of apartheid ideology.

⁵⁹¹ Grundlingh, “Are we Afrikaners getting too rich?”, p. 156.

The fact that the SABC censors did not shy away from censoring even Afrikaans gospel songs, undermines the idea that certain genres were targeted politically. The programming of the SABC seems to have been limited at times by the conservative nature of its listeners. As a consequence, the overwhelming majority of popular Afrikaans music releases were non-confrontational, mild melodies that aimed to please older, conservative, listeners. The fact that Afrikaner youth were alienated from this music did not result in any form of dissent among them.

This did not stop the FAK, the DRC and the SABC from trying to steer the Afrikaner youth away from foreign influences. The pragmatic approach by the National Party to make use of rock music's English connection for political gain, as well as the SABC's use of censorship, contrasts with the emotional tactics adopted by the FAK and DRC. The different strategies each organisation followed show that there was a lack of unity at the organisational level, even if these organisations had an ideology in common. The counter-hegemonic identities represented in the examples provided in this chapter were exceptions, and not indicative of significant threats to the establishment. Ultimately, it is more useful to keep in mind that the gatekeepers of Afrikaner ideals achieved mixed results. It was impossible to shut out the world outside South Africa's borders completely, and neither was that their ultimate goal. Domestically, the NP's political domination was such that cultural indoctrination was not its top priority, Afrikaners were perfectly happy to toe the line.

It would thus be incorrect to suggest that the FAK, the DRC and the SABC erected an insurmountable obstacle that only allowed music through that upheld the dominant narrative of apartheid ideology. On the other hand, these measures must have led to forms of self-censorship among music artists when it came to music composition and production. It is perhaps for this reason that commercial Afrikaans pop music remained blissfully close to the bosom of the state and shows how Afrikaner nationalism was firmly embedded in the

Afrikaans culture industry. Most Afrikaans music artists did not break from this mould before the Musiek-en-Liriek movement of 1979. Ultimately, to speak of resistance in popular Afrikaans music before 1979 is really to speak of subtle, often unintentional, expressions of identities more personal than political.

Chapter Five

No longer “Omo-Afrikaans”, no longer “whiter than white.” 1979 - 1989

The Musiek-en-Liriek movement of 1979 deserves more academic scrutiny than the passing references by Laubscher⁵⁹² and Hopkins.⁵⁹³ This chapter aims to remedy this partly by evaluating the validity of claims that it was indeed a “movement”, and to situate the subtle political protest in songs like “Mpanzaville” and “Atlantis” (written by Anton Goosen and recorded by Laurika Rauch), in a wider context of unravelling Afrikaner hegemony at the end of the 1970s into the 1980s. It also looks at developments in literature, like the emergence of *grensliteratuur* (border literature) and the group of Afrikaans poets known as the Tagtigers, at political cabaret and the way in which music artists like James Phillips and the group Wildebeest deconstructed the Border War experience in “Hou my vas Korporaal” and “Bossies” respectively. Although there is a tradition of political literary critique in Afrikaans through the *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde*, no attempt to connect Afrikaans literature, cabaret and rock music of the 1980s has yet been attempted, despite the clear links between these elements.

This chapter includes lengthy interviews with two of the main protagonists of the Musiek-en-Liriek movement, Anton Goosen and Laurika Rauch, both of whom I have worked with. I also interviewed Piet Botha, a member of Wildebeest, and someone with whom I have also performed on many occasions. I also explore the link between rock musicians (including James Phillips) and the End Conscription Campaign, which gave bands a political platform. Other artists who also ventured into the political arena were David Kramer and Amanda

⁵⁹² L. Laubscher, “Afrikaner identity and the music of Johannes Kerkerrel”, *South African Journal of Psychology* 35:2 (2005), p. 313.

⁵⁹³ P. Hopkins, *Voëlvy: The Movement That Rocked South Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2006), p. 56.

Strydom. These artists represented a minority, while the Afrikaans pop mainstream remained neutral (a position interpreted by many as supportive of the regime). The 1980s were years of great political turmoil in South Africa, and the State had strict control over record releases and broadcasts. This affected the Afrikaans music industry as it did all the other segments of the South African music industry, and many songs were censored. This chapter attempts to bring all these different narratives together in order to provide a wider perspective of the socio-cultural changes in Afrikaner society as the National Party's grip on power weakened. It also serves as preamble to the chapter on the Voëlvry movement.

Musiek-en-Liriek, 1979, Cabarets, Literature, the Border

Three years after television was (eventually) introduced in South Africa, Afrikaans music underwent a slight change thanks to a popular programme that showcased a small group of relatively unknown Afrikaans music artists. Directed by Merwede van der Merwe, it was called *Musiek-en-Liriek* (Music and Lyric). Stylistically the music was more like folk, and the lyrics more poetic than the Euro-kitsch styled Afrikaans pop mainstream. Although the artists did not seem to be explicitly involved in political battles with the establishment, subtle political content surfaced intermittently among the folky ballads. Compared to their English speaking counterparts, the political element was much more understated (and should not be overstated with hindsight), but the fact that something of this kind was happening in Afrikaans drew considerable attention.

Contemporary journalists responded enthusiastically to this break with the easy listening and non-confrontational *lekkerliedjies* of the Afrikaans pop mainstream and the introduction of the *luisterliedjie* – songs with deeper lyrical meaning.⁵⁹⁴ There seems to have been a clear

⁵⁹⁴ R. Loots, "Die ewolusie van die Afrikaanse lied, of, tot siens aan 'kom-bly-by-my... moenie weggaan'-musiek" *Die Transvaler en Oggendblad*, June 1979, p. 7; M. Jamneck, "Jana se 'sangstem' nie sonder maatemmer", *Die*

need for rejuvenation in the Afrikaans music industry, especially with the introduction of television in 1976. The demand for local Afrikaans content led to the introduction of television programmes that launched the careers of artists like Laurika Rauch, who sang the theme song of the popular 1979 programme *Phoenix en Kie*.⁵⁹⁵ At least one newspaper article in 1979 claimed that some Afrikaans music artists had been producing more than just kitsch “pop” for a number of years.⁵⁹⁶ Journalist Ronelle Loots mentioned Sonja Herholdt as an example of one of the first Afrikaans artists who bridged the gap between commerciality – represented by “opera singers who want to make a quick buck”⁵⁹⁷ (possibly referring to Gé Korsten, who was the prime exponent of this genre) – and stronger lyrical content.⁵⁹⁸ Loots also mentioned Afrikaans poet and journalist Stephan Boucher’s television programme *Fyn net van die Woord* from early 1977 as being instrumental in establishing a new consciousness in Afrikaans music.⁵⁹⁹ Although Boucher’s programme consisted of little more than Afrikaans poems set to music, and Herholdt’s position as “something new” can be contested, these two examples constituted the early stages of the development of popular Afrikaans music into something other than superficial pop. It was, however, *Musiek-en-Liriek* that had the greatest impact.

The programme *Musiek-en-Liriek* consisted of only four episodes (the first aired on 1 August 1979), but made stars out of the participants. A series of concerts soon followed at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg and at the Oude Libertas Theatre in Stellenbosch.⁶⁰⁰ By this time, more artists had joined the original television cast of Laurika Rauch, Jannie du Toit, Clarabelle van Niekerk and Anton Goosen (who was the music director of the programme).

Vaderland, 26 July 1979, p. 2; J. Bruwer, “Sy skeur bittersoet uit mens se hart”, *Rapport Ateljee*, 9 September 1979, p. 1; S. Boucher, “En hoor jy die magtige dreuning?”, *Rapport Ateljee*, 9 September 1979, p. 6.

⁵⁹⁵ “Kinders van die wind”, written by Koos du Plessis.

⁵⁹⁶ Loots, “Die ewolusie van die Afrikaanse lied”, p. 7.

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁸ Loots’ positioning of Herholdt as a counterpoint to the more commercial artists is not supported by others who have placed Herholdt squarely in the camp of the sentimental pop singers – see M. Slabbert and D. de Villiers, *David Kramer, ’n Biografie* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2011), p. 139.

⁵⁹⁹ Loots, “Die ewolusie van die Afrikaanse lied”, p. 7.

⁶⁰⁰ Anton Goosen, interview with author, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013.

Goosen had only shortly before these concerts made the shift from non-performing songwriter to singer, following the success of his debut album *Boy van die suburbs*. Joining them were a young Anneli van Rooyen (who would become a top-selling pop artist), Louis van Rensburg, Jannie Hofmeyr, Coenie de Villiers, Jan de Wet, Amanda Strydom and songwriter Koos du Plessis. David Kramer would also perform at the second Musiek-en-Liriek concert at the Oude Libertas theatre.⁶⁰¹

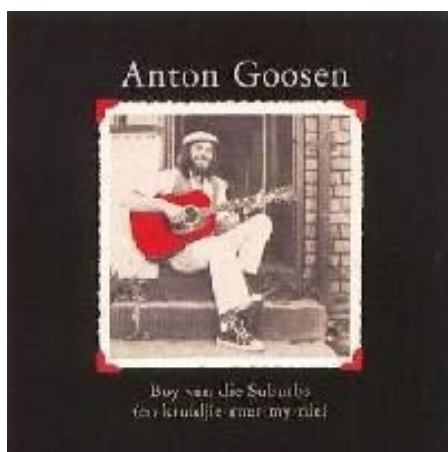


Figure 13: Anton Goosen's debut 1979 album, *Boy van die Suburbs*.

The initial momentum soon dissipated and the various artists went their own ways, but the canon of popular Afrikaans songs was suddenly much richer and less banal. Initially, there seems to have been a reluctance to call this new Afrikaans music a “movement”, with some commentators preferring to call it a “renewal of the Afrikaans song”,⁶⁰² while others had no qualms in calling it a “revival”.⁶⁰³ With time, the Musiek-en-Liriek movement has grown in stature. The newest FAK songbook not only accepts it as a “movement”, but also credits it for “laying the foundations for the explosion in Afrikaans music in the following decades.”⁶⁰⁴ Pat Hopkins in his book on Voëlvry, referred to this phase as “a minor revolution in

⁶⁰¹ Slabbert and De Villiers, *David Kramer*, p. 139.

⁶⁰² Bouwer, “En hoor jy die magtige dreuning?”, p. 6.

⁶⁰³ K. Breytenbach, “Ons musiek skielik is byderwets”, *Die Burger*, 27 February 1980.

⁶⁰⁴ Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings, *FAK-Sangbundel*, Vol. II, (Pretoria: FAK, 2012), p. 3.

mainstream Afrikaans music.”⁶⁰⁵ It is surprising, therefore, that academic literature on *Musiek-en-Liriek* is scarce. Laubscher gives it a cursory nod in his essay on Johannes Kerkorrel and Voëlvry:

Around the early 1980s, two new popular music movements – the *Musiek-en-Liriek* (music and lyrics) movement, and the *Alternatiewe Afrikaanse Beweging* (Alternative Afrikaans Movement), or Voëlvry Movement (as it became known later) – burst upon the musical (and cultural) scene, dramatically challenging and changing its geography. Substituting the bland and inane subject matter of the *lekkerliedjie* with thoughtful lyrics that required careful listening, set over dynamic harmonies and rhythms, the *Musiek-en-Liriek* movement challenged its audience – predominantly older, more conservative Afrikaners – to a reflective engagement with the music.⁶⁰⁶

Despite the fact that discourse on Afrikaans music movements have centered on the more radical Voëlvry movement of the late 1980s, both resonated – at different times and in different ways – with wider fault lines in the power base of Afrikaner politics. What follows will attempt to rectify this imbalance.

The most decisive element determining the popularity of the *Musiek-en-Liriek* programme was the timing of the introduction of television in South Africa in 1976. The need for local Afrikaans content made it possible for a new genre in Afrikaans music to gain access to households nationwide just as Afrikaner unity started to unravel.⁶⁰⁷ As Beinart pointed out:

But by the 1970s a cultural secularism based on consumption, sport, leisure, travel, and personal freedom was beginning to fracture Afrikaner ethnic identity. It is an irony that television, launched only when the National Party felt it could control the medium in 1976, coincided with this gradual dissolution of unity and probably contributed to it.⁶⁰⁸

Froneman has commented on the fact that *boeremusiek* had an ambiguous place in the lives of Afrikaners, especially in the first half of the twentieth century, since the pleasure they derived from dancing to *vastrap* contrasted with feelings of guilt.⁶⁰⁹ This tension between leisure and

⁶⁰⁵ Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 56.

⁶⁰⁶ Laubscher, “Afrikaner identity and the music of Johannes Kerkorrel”, p. 313.

⁶⁰⁷ Laurika Rauch, telephonic interview with author, 22 July 2013.

⁶⁰⁸ W. Beinart, *Twentieth Century South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 187.

⁶⁰⁹ W. Froneman, “She Danced Alone: Jo Fourie, Songcatcher of the Groot Marico”, *Ethnomusicology Forum*

formality among Afrikaners had largely dissipated by the late 1970s. This change manifested in various ways in popular Afrikaans music, of which the new songs of Musiek-en-Liriek were good examples. Koos du Plessis' lyrics especially, employed universal human themes and often focused on human fallibility.⁶¹⁰ His music was often quite sombre, which contrasted with the light moods of the pop mainstream, but he avoided politics. Some of his work even ended up in a Dutch reformed church songbook.⁶¹¹ Andries Bezuidenhout has positioned Du Plessis outside the main group of Musiek-en-Liriek artists; he had respect for them, but they had no influence on his writing. His hit "Kinders van die Wind", for example, was written in 1968 already.⁶¹² He was also painfully uncomfortable with performing in front of an audience.⁶¹³ In spite of this, Du Plessis' work has influenced most subsequent Afrikaans poet singers.

Performance and production during phases of political and cultural change

A number of well-documented political events of the 1970s had precipitated a leadership crisis for the ruling National Party. The 1976 Soweto Uprising, the 1977 arms embargo, Steve Biko's death at the hands of security police in the same year,⁶¹⁴ as well as the information scandal of 1978 (which led to B.J. Vorster's resignation as Prime Minister) delivered powerful blows to the regime. The subsequent influence of international pressure, the Border War and the rise of Black resistance movements during the 1980s exacerbated this crisis. The fact that these events all happened in the new age of television, helped inform

21:1 (2012), p. 63.

⁶¹⁰ A. Bezuidenhout, "Skielik is jy vry: Die lewe en musiek van Koos du Plessis", <http://www.oulitnet.co.za/roof/roof16.asp>, accessed 22 January 2015.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁶¹² *Ibid.*

⁶¹³ Herman Binge, personal communication with author, Stellenbosch, 30 July 2013, as well as Goosen, Gansbaai, 29 April, 2013.

⁶¹⁴ C. van der Westhuizen, *White Power & the Rise and Fall of the National Party* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2007), p. 296.

Afrikaners about what was happening in the country and being perpetrated on their behalf.⁶¹⁵ This, coupled with the end of a three decade-long period of “high economic growth” during the mid-1970s,⁶¹⁶ undermined the apartheid regime’s grip on power.

Before the late 1970s, Afrikaners rarely challenged the legitimacy of apartheid. Apart from the individuals mentioned in the previous chapter, a wider circle of critical voices started to emerge that posed serious questions about the moral basis of “criticism from within”, of which poet N.P. van Wyk Louw and journalists Piet Cillie and Schalk Pienaar were early exponents.⁶¹⁷ This form of criticism was more involved with strategies of reform than with undermining the legitimacy of the apartheid project as a whole. Du Toit argues that by the late 1970s this position had become unsustainable from a moral perspective, and by continuing to focus on the political survival of the Afrikaner, Afrikaans culture would pay the price.⁶¹⁸

Giliomee succinctly summarises this position of Afrikaner culture:

The government’s insistence that power was essential to ensure Afrikaners’ cultural survival would almost inevitably encourage black nationalists to define that culture as its enemy. To survive it was imperative to detach the Afrikaans culture from Afrikaner power.⁶¹⁹

This statement was remarkably accurate, and the tension created by Afrikaner culture’s close proximity to Afrikaner political power would manifest in various ways during the following decade, and would persist in considerations about Afrikaner culture in the post-apartheid context.

Succeeding Vorster in September 1978, P.W. Botha followed an “adapt or die” strategy based on limited reform, though not abandonment, of the apartheid system. Botha “hit South Africa like a storm.”⁶²⁰ He offered the hope of reform, but employed a harsh strategy designed at

⁶¹⁵ H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003), p. 580.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 597.

⁶¹⁷ André du Toit, *Die sondes van die vaders*, (Cape Town: Rubicon Press, 1983), pp. 16-17; Van der Westhuizen, *White Power & the Rise and Fall of the National Party*, p. 86.

⁶¹⁸ Du Toit, *Die sondes van die vaders*, p. 9.

⁶¹⁹ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 609.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 587.

ensuring the political survival of the NP at all costs: “To succeed required that apartheid be reformulated to serve the needs of the security-military laager being drawn around every facet of South African life.”⁶²¹ Whereas in the 1960s Afrikaners were living in a country where they were the masters – a position ordained by God and managed by patriotic ideologues – by the mid-1980s it had become a personal fight for survival. The Musiek-en-Liriek movement happened at a crucial juncture: just after Botha took power (with some hope of reform), but before the political violence and rise of black resistance movements during the mid to late 1980s. Some Afrikaans artists responded to these dramatic social changes, leading to the formation of loosely grouped “movements” in literature, theatre and music. In the case of Afrikaans musicians, this kind of mobilisation had been glaringly absent in the preceding decades.⁶²² These responses were initially subtle and tentative, since Afrikaner society was still very conservative and censors easily offended. Nevertheless it is fair to say that, after the initial impact of the Musiek-en-Liriek movement subsided, the commercial Afrikaans market was more diverse, with new voices and new genres. However, the biggest selling artists remained people like Bles Bridges and Gé Korsten. Perhaps the primary protagonist of Musiek-en-Liriek was Anton Goosen.

Anton Goosen

On a concert programme in early 1980, Anton Goosen is described as “the father of the Afrikaans chanson”, which was then translated as *luisterliedjie* in Afrikaans, and “our very own folk tunes” in English.⁶²³ As Raeford Daniel explains:

Now as any South African knows, a folk song is not necessarily a “volkslied”. The Afrikaans term could be understood as meaning a “national song”; even, more specifically, a national anthem. It could also, in a more colloquial sense, signify a song of the “volkies”, a term once

⁶²¹ Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 54.

⁶²² Especially when considering the abundance of such movements in the West.

⁶²³ R. Daniel, “‘Folk’ – or a fine anomaly”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 22 January 1980.

applied affectionately to black or coloured servants or tenant farmers. Equally, one recognises, the contemporary folk song, as exemplified by the Folk Revival of the Sixties, was held suspect by the conservative Afrikaner ... The curiosity – and the miracle – is that, appealing (and appropriate) as the term “luisterliedjies” may be, Goosen’s work could fit any of the above definitions of the term “Folk”. It is national in that it has its roots in the musical traditions of the Afrikaner (a fact which attains an ambivalent acknowledgement most particularly when he is sending them up). It is colloquially “folk” in that it draws its inspiration from the people – all shades of the people. And it is “contemporary folk” in that, in both idiom and content, it is very much geared to what is happening here and now.⁶²⁴

This description is an accurate one, but also highlights the fact that artists associated with the movement represented many new ideas in Afrikaans music: subversive politics, varying types of “folk” genres, Afrikaans rock, intellectualism, poetry, and counter-culture.

Anton Goosen’s breakthrough in 1979 was not necessarily linked to the *Musiek-en-Liriek* programme. Although he was involved as the music director of the *Musiek-en-Liriek* TV show, his debut album, *Boy van die suburbs*, was already selling by the time it aired and the first single, “Kruitjie roer my nie”, was charting. The album would sell between 80 000 and 90 000 copies before the end of that year.⁶²⁵ Although most *Musiek-en-Liriek* artists shied away from politics, two of Goosen’s songs, “Mpanzaville” and “Atlantis”, were subtle, yet unmistakable, political criticisms of the regime at a time when P.W. Botha’s “total strategy” against such elements was gaining momentum.⁶²⁶ Both songs were recorded by Laurika Rauch on her debut album, *Debuut*. In “Mpanzaville”, the lyrics refer to the evil “crocodile” (Botha’s nickname) who is eventually butchered by the inhabitants of Mpanzaville (a suburb of Soweto).⁶²⁷ In “Atlantis”, the narrator bemoans the forced removals from what was most likely District Six and the dying children in the ghetto’s of Cape Town.⁶²⁸ Goosen confirms that political messages had to be subtle, as there was strict control over music releases:

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁵ Gansbaai, 29 April 2013.

⁶²⁶ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners* p. 588.

⁶²⁷ See Addendum A.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*

Its true. It counts for the music too. Because there were rules. You couldn't use commercial names on the radio, like Coca Cola. You couldn't refer to sex. Religion was taboo and politics were taboo. And this was why things like Mpanzaville had to be hidden. The moment you moved outside of it ... they started tapping the telephone line.⁶²⁹

Anton Goosen can be distinguished from the other artists associated with the Musiek-en-Liriek movement because he represented a direction in Afrikaans music that more directly undermined white Afrikaner hegemony. He recalls how he antagonised the establishment in many ways:

In '79, '80 the ATKV banned me from their stages because I made jokes about the national flag. And the specific joke was because at these schools that you performed at, there was always a photo of the president on the one side and then the national flag on the other side. And I, at one or other stage – at Unisa or something – had uttered something and made jokes about it. In Reitz was an *oom* (older man) in the first row ... when I did “Begrafnis in Zeerust”, and the guy stands up in the front row and says: “The Afrikaner is not like that” and here he comes forward ... It throws you, it throws you. And it is just a song. It's something that someone who works in Zeerust told me.⁶³⁰

Mixed language in songs was frowned upon by the censorship board, even more so when it appeared in an album title, as it did in *Boy van die Suburbs*. The fact that this was a realistic colloquial Afrikaans reference was ignored by cultural custodians like the FAK, highlighting the gap between the Afrikaner elite and the majority of Afrikaners. David Kramer is another important artist who also clashed with the censorship board because he used a mixed-race and mixed-language form in his music.⁶³¹

I suppose the most political thing I did in my work was not the content but the form. Political messages are sought in the content and there is a lot of innuendo and politics but the really radical stuff was in the style and form.⁶³²

Kramer's style, a form of *platteland* coloured influenced music that was very popular, stood in stark contrast to the accepted image of popular Afrikaans singers.⁶³³ This style is described by Kramer as follows:

⁶²⁹ Gansbaai, 29 April 2013, translated from the Afrikaans by the current author.

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶³¹ <http://www.3rdear music.com/lyrics/drywine.html>, accessed 29 April 2013.

⁶³² J. Roup, *Boerejood* (Auckland Park: Jacana Media, 2004.), p. 161.

...a style of singing that was obviously not white and a way of playing the guitar that was influenced by farm music. My purpose was to pull together South African influences into a kind of melting pot that would form a South African sound. Now when Johnny Clegg does it, it's all very obvious to people. When a white man sings Zulu, it's obvious. When a white man sings Afrikaans, it's not. When I started it was the time of the hugely popular Afrikaans singers Gé Korsten and Sonja Heroldt. And that kind of Afrikaans, it was "Omo Afrikaans" – whiter than white. ... Then came two fresh voices. The one was Anton Goosen and the other was me.⁶³⁴

Although strictly speaking, lyrical analyses are beyond the scope of this study, in the case of early Afrikaans protest music, they are extremely useful to gauge the extent to which the political climate had influenced the composition of the music. In "Mpanzaville" and "Atlantis",⁶³⁵ the political comment is very clear. Furthermore, the first person narrator in "Atlantis" is coloured, as is the case in David Kramer's songs "Botteltjie Blou" ("Little blue bottle", referring to the drinking of blue metholated spirits, normally by homeless persons) and "Skipskop", which show a deliberate empathy with the racial "other".

Despite his success as songwriter, Goosen has an uneasy relationship with the Afrikaner establishment. The following extract from an interview with Goosen provides poignant comment on how the Musiek-en-Liriek artists were regarded by the conservative Afrikaner establishment.⁶³⁶

In the middle of this Musiek-en-Liriek highlight the powers to be – Bennie Bierman, who was head of Afrikaans music on television and radio, now look, the FAK's offices, and the Broederbond's offices, were both there by Die Eike, and Brigadiers, Brigadiers Films. Everything under one hat. [They then decided] now "Kruitjie" is going on the charts and *Boy van die Suburbs* comes out, and the whole album and it sells a shitload – 90 000, that kind of thing – and thanks to that I can now sit here and chat to you and you know who I am, that kind of thing. The powers that be then decided it was time for Anton to be brought down to earth. Now we had a symposium – what does the Afrikaner do? You go and you dissect this whole thing and take it apart and see where you can find some fault. So, the symposium is on this new type of music and Hennie Aucamp [Afrikaans writer] is invited to come and talk about cabaret, Laurika [Rauch] is invited to talk about the performing part of the cabaret and Musiek-en-Liriek in Afrikaans, and I was invited to talk ... But in the meantime behind my back, [they] ... had decided that Anton

⁶³³ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁵ See Addendum A.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*

must be brought back to earth since things were getting a bit out of control. And they got Hennie Aucamp en Bennie Bierman to – before I made my speech – deliver critiques on me. And Bennie Bierman spent his time saying that the accent in “Waterblommetjies” was wrong – that “Waterblommetjieeees in die Boland” should be “Waterblommetaaas in die Boland” and that was his main issue. And Hennie Aucamp said that geographically the song was not correct. ... And then after they had their fanfare, I had a chance to answer them first, and then I could do my speech. And, so I just told Bennie Bierman that I did not give a hoot about where the accent lies, about 80 000 people had by now bought covers of this song and for me that was quite enough, thank you very much.... Hennie told me he was sorry, he was instructed to say these things and to bring me back to earth ...⁶³⁷

This kind of response was quite typical from the establishment, considering the number of FAK symposia on Afrikaans music throughout the previous four decades. Interestingly, despite the fact that sixteen of Goosen’s songs have been included in the newest version of the FAK Songbook, his name is not among those listed as the pioneers of the Musiek-en-liriek movement,⁶³⁸ which begs the question whether or not his ambivalent relationship with the organisation has not in some way endured.

Boy van die suburbs is a strong candidate for the first Afrikaans album with rock elements, making Goosen, among other things, the father of Afrikaans rock. This would no doubt have added to his unpopularity with Afrikaner conservatives. Ironically, the rock elements in his music came about coincidentally:

With “Blommetjie gedenk aan my”, I didn’t go and sit and think that I was going to make the first (Afrikaans) rock album. To hell with that! Chris Kritzinger, my producer, told the drummer in the studio “think ‘baby come back’”. [laughs] Do you remember the song? *Ta ta ta dum tak*. So there we had the rhythm, which was coincidentally rock. And it is coincidentally a rock riff.⁶³⁹

While “Blommetjie gedenk aan my” is clearly a rock song, “Kruitjie roer my nie” (the first hit from the album) was not, which suggests that one should not overstate the rock element in his music at this time. However, video footage of a 1980 concert shows how Goosen’s live

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁸ FAK *Sangbundel*, Vol. II, p. 3.

⁶³⁹ Goosen, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013.

concerts were faster and louder with distorted guitar solos and screaming fans – all elements associated with rock music, which he clearly embraced.⁶⁴⁰ Goosen did not shy away from confronting censors, the FAK, the SABC and the establishment in general and thus exposing the banality of the rules imposed on the Afrikaans culture industry up until then. Goosen would also be instrumental in the success of other artists who benefitted more directly from *Musiek-en-Liriek*. On Danie Pretorius' list of the 100 biggest Afrikaans songs,⁶⁴¹ Goosen has contributed thirteen (more than any other Afrikaans songwriter), of which Carike Keuzenkamp sang two⁶⁴² and Sonja Herholdt six.⁶⁴³ As mentioned before, he also penned songs for one of the leading female voices of *Musiek-en-Liriek*, Laurika Rauch.

Laurika Rauch

Laurika Rauch grew up in a happy household. Her parents were quite liberal, and her mother instilled a cultural consciousness and awareness in her children.⁶⁴⁴ This was in contrast with many of the more radical voices of the 1980s who have well-documented difficult upbringings.⁶⁴⁵ Koos Kombuis' following statement is indicative of the extreme sense of rebellion felt by this more radical group:

We did not merely dislike our parents; we despised them, loathed them, we wanted to torture and hurt and discredit them utterly. We had come to that terrible place in a neglected child's life when he loses the final vestige of respect for abusive elders.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14evw09Z3jY>, accessed 12 December 2014.

⁶⁴¹ D. C. Pretorius, *Musieksterre Van Gister En Vandag: lewensketse en foto's van meer as 100 musieksterre* (Pretoria : Van der Walt, 1998), pp. 271-275.

⁶⁴² "Byeboerwa" and "Hoeka Toeka".

⁶⁴³ "Hanoverstraat", "Harlekyn", "Jantjie", "Straattroebadoere", "Tant Mossie se sakkie-sakkie boeredans" and "Waterblommetjies".

⁶⁴⁴ Telephonic interview with author, 25 July 2013.

⁶⁴⁵ K.A. Kombuis, *Seks & Drugs & Boeremusiek: Die memoires van 'n volksverraaier* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 2000), p. 78; A. Grundlingh, "'Rocking the boat'? The 'Voëlvry' music movement in South Africa: Anatomy of Afrikaans anti-apartheid social protest in the eighties", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 37: 3 (2004), pp. 4-5.

⁶⁴⁶ Koos Kombuis, afterword in Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 235.

In this sense, their radical elements were manifestations of the personal as well as the political. Rauch was at the forefront of *Musiek-en-Liriek*, but she did not fit comfortably into the role of political singer, although her debut album contained perhaps the earliest examples of political protest in Afrikaans popular music.

With regard to *Musiek-en-Liriek*, Rauch raises a number of salient points.⁶⁴⁷ Firstly, the arrival of television and the lack of local content made it possible for a group of relatively unknown Afrikaans singers to gain access to that medium. One of the results of being on television was that it had a national impact (before the advent of television, there was a greater sense of provinciality among Afrikaans singers, and what was happening in Cape Town did not necessarily reach Pretoria, and vice versa). With television, artists who might have been working independently of one another suddenly had a wider frame of reference with respect to what other Afrikaans songwriters and singers were doing. Secondly, there was no initial sense of “belonging to a movement” as such. It was created by journalists, some of whom were also influential cultural role players at the time, like Stephan Bouver. Rauch was even reluctant to call it “new”.⁶⁴⁸

With the release of her 1982 album, *Vir Jou* (For you), Rauch’s uneasy relationship with the *luisterliedjie* was further revealed.⁶⁴⁹ One of the songs on the album was her interpretation of a C. Louis Leipoldt poem, “Op my ou Ramkiekie”, which was put to music by Jan Bouws – a Dutch authority on early Afrikaans folk music. The rest of the album is a mixture of pop and *luisterliedjies*. By 1983, Rauch had moved on from the movement that made her a household name:

Today, *luisterliedjie* is a bit of a swearword. The records are still being made – and they are still not selling. The movement has burrowed underground in order to protect itself. ... When I started out I felt obliged to show the public how serious I was. I didn’t want to waver, to diversify at all,

⁶⁴⁷ Telephonic interview with author, 25 July 2013.

⁶⁴⁸ Jamneck, “Jana se ‘sangstem’ nie sonder maatemmer”, *Die Vaderland*, 26 July 1979, p. 2.

⁶⁴⁹ “Rauch se luisterlied, pop ewe bevredigend”, *Die Burger Bylae*, 20 February 1982, p. 14.

only to refine my art. ...But I have had my say. It was a privilege to be on the crest of that wonderful wave, and I have three albums that stand as legacy should anyone be interested.⁶⁵⁰

By this time, the market for “poignant, meaningful songs” had disappeared.⁶⁵¹ Perhaps more than anything else, Rauch sought to produce Afrikaans music that differed from the type of song that was popular when she started her musical career. Rauch performed cabarets before the start of the Musiek-en-Liriek movement and continued doing so after the initial successes of her first three albums, when she performed a number of Brel cabarets. She was also cast in Hennie Aucamp’s 1981 Afrikaans cabaret, *Met permissie gesê*, which had a strong political element. Being part of a specific movement, or confined to its requirements, does not seem to have been an attractive prospect to her. This was probably the reason why Rauch moved away from the *luisterliedjie* by the release of her fourth album in 1983. When considering this in conjunction with the fact that Anton Goosen had also written many pop songs for various pop singers, it undermines the idea that the artists associated with Musiek-en-Liriek were radicals. It is also important to note that by early 1982, the initial energy of Musiek-en-Liriek had expired.⁶⁵²

It is also important to consider generational influence on the growth and demise of Musiek-en-Liriek. Rauch had already turned 29 in the year of her debut album, *Debuut*. She grew up listening to LM Radio and artists like the Beatles, The Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan during her teens,⁶⁵³ and was influenced by contemporary folk artists such as Joan Baez. Her main musical influences remained European and American.⁶⁵⁴ Anton Goosen was 33 with the release of *his* debut album. Koos Kombuis was 34 during the Voëlvry tour a decade later, while Johannes Kerkorrel had just turned 29. Pop singer Steve Hofmeyr also mentions these artists’ age as a reason why he found it difficult to relate to them:

⁶⁵⁰ R. Dean, “Rauch – a new direction”, *The Star*, 1 November 1983, p. 6.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*

⁶⁵³ None of whom could be heard on SABC Radio.

⁶⁵⁴ Interview with author, 25 July 2013.

Everybody from (liberal journalist) Max du Preez and Goosen to Koos Kombuis, Gys de Villiers and Piet Botha were a decade ahead of me. Their music too – a Dylanesque folk of the 70's which was kept alive in the 80's and which wanted to present itself as a rock movement.⁶⁵⁵

Of all the artists with links to Musiek-en-Liriek, Anton Goosen, David Kramer and Amanda Strydom were probably the most outspoken politically. It is, however, problematic to look for Voëlvry-like radicalism among the artists of the late-1970s and early 1980s. With the start of Musiek-en-Liriek, Afrikaans music broke out of the *lekkerliedjie* mode and became more politicised, but the following decade would produce openly subversive, anti-establishment Afrikaans music (albeit disconnected from other anti-apartheid music releases and concerts around the globe) as the apartheid regime was engaged in a losing struggle for survival. It would witness growing political dissent among Afrikaans music artists, including an increasing resentment of anything connected to Afrikaner nationalism, as well as public anti-apartheid statements. This often resulted in Afrikaans songs being banned by the SABC, and by the end of the 1980s took on the form of open hostility between artists that represented the Afrikaans pop mainstream (who were supported by state-sponsored television channels and radio) and a new breed of “alternative Afrikaners” who represented a radical element in Afrikaans music.

“Movement”?

To what extent, then, was Musiek-en-Liriek a “movement”? Eyerman and Jamison define social movements as “central moments in the reconstitution of culture”.⁶⁵⁶ Influenced by Herbert Marcuse, who underscored the aesthetic dimension of the social movements of the

⁶⁵⁵ S. Hofmeyr, *Mense van my Asem* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2008), p. 112, translated from original.

⁶⁵⁶ R. Eyerman and A. Jamison, *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 6.

1960s, they explore the way in which the musical part of social movements act as a “cognitive praxis”, i.e. a way of organising different elements into new knowledge:⁶⁵⁷

...[S]ocial movements challenge dominant categories of artistic merit by making conscious – and problematic – the taken-for-granted frameworks of evaluation and judgment. This they do on a discursive level as well as in performance practices, by experimenting with new aesthetic principles and creating new collective rituals. On the other hand, social movements utilize the media of artistic expression for communicating with the larger society and, by so doing, often serve to (re)politicize popular culture and entertainment. In music, art, literature, social movements periodically provide an important source of renewal and rejuvenation, by implanting new meanings and reconstituting established aesthetic forms and genres. In more general terms, through their impact on popular culture, mores, and tastes, social movements lead to a reconstruction of processes of social interaction and collective identity formation.⁶⁵⁸

In light of this approach to the relationship between music and social movements, *Musiek-en-Liriek* needs to be evaluated in terms of its role as “cognitive praxis” of larger movements of social change. Did it form part of, and link up with, a wider consciousness that challenged the existing order and if so, in which ways did this consciousness and new identity manifest itself in the music? Koos Kombuis provides a reminder of how important context is for those who seek to understand the changing Afrikaans cultural landscape of the late 1970s and 1980s:

Yes, for justice to be served to all the small literary streams of that time ... I’ll have to describe the whole cultural landscape in the South Africa of the early eighties in broader terms. Because the things that happened to us, and what we caused to happen, must be seen against a backdrop of parallel streams in popular music, underground politics and protest theatre.⁶⁵⁹

Despite the decades of conservatism, isolation, fear mongering and censorship demanded and engendered by Afrikaner nationalism, some Afrikaans artists made the intellectual migration out of the *laager*. Afrikaans literature, music and theatre all reflected the changing socio-political conditions in South Africa. It questioned the status quo, resisted the conservatism of a Calvinist society and embodied the feelings of alienation that accompanied those Afrikaners who made this move.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶⁵⁹ Kombuis, *Seks & Drugs & Boeremusiek*, p. 163

During the twentieth century, popular Afrikaans music had undergone almost no academic scrutiny, which contrasted sharply with the attention given to Afrikaans literature. Literary criticism was better equipped, endorsed and positioned during the 1980s to engage critically with an emerging generation of writers known as the Tagtigers. *Brekfis met vier* (published in 1980) for example, was a collection of poetry by four of these prominent young writers: André le Roux du Toit (later known as Koos Kombuis), Etienne van Heerden, Daniel Hugo and Peter Snyders. By this time, there was a sizable body of literature on the various Afrikaans literary movements of the twentieth century: the Dertigers, Veertigers and Sestigers. Although this division by decade remains somewhat clumsy, and has drawn criticism, it has become convention.⁶⁶⁰ Bezuidenhout has likened *Musiek-en-Liriek* more with the Dertigers and Veertigers, and Voëlvry with the more radical Sestigers.⁶⁶¹ There is some merit in this view, since Voëlvry was more radical than *Musiek-en-Liriek*, just as the Sestigers were more radical than the Dertigers and Veertigers. O'Meara, on the other hand, pointed to the irony that while the Sestigers broke the mould of "official" Afrikaans culture and often displayed a harsh critique of Afrikaner nationalism, it elevated Afrikaans (and Afrikaans culture) to new heights, one of the very goals of the establishment they were criticising. In contrast, Voëlvry did not use pure Afrikaans – they sought to undermine the whole Afrikaner cultural project.⁶⁶² A decade earlier, the Tagtigers emerged alongside *Musiek-en-Liriek*, which invites a search for links between the two groups. The Tagtigers' status as true literary movement has, however, been seriously questioned by none other than Etienne van Heerden:

...[T]he "tagtigers" was not a literary generation in the true sense of the word, compared to Dertig and Sestig. For that, the Tagtiger writers rely too much on the themes and narrative techniques of an older generation. They took the things that people like Aucamp, Brink, De

⁶⁶⁰ E. Botha and P.H. Roodt, "Die Tagtigers en die Tydskrif vir Letterkunde – was daar 'n Tagtigerbeweging?", *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* 43:1 (2006), pp. 57-58.

⁶⁶¹ Bezuidenhout, "Skielik is jy vry", *Oulitnet*, 2 March 2004.

⁶⁶² D. O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years: The apartheid state and the politics of the National Party, 1948-1994* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1996), pp. 370-371.

Vries, Haasbroek, Elsa Joubert, Weideman and others, did, further and radicalised it in a postmodern sphere ... Tagtig was a radicalisation rather than a clean break with the past. And an indication of what was to come.⁶⁶³

Van Heerden's assessment is supported by Botha, who opines that although there was no real Tagtiger movement, there was a movement in the 1980s.⁶⁶⁴ Other than the Tagtigers, Musiek-en-Liriek did offer something new that differentiated it from what had gone before in Afrikaans music. Musiek-en-Liriek artists did occasionally move in the same circles as those of the Tagtigers, but their work rarely overlapped. Some Musiek-en-Liriek artists did, however, set to music some poetry of the Sestigers. For example, Stephan Boucher's 1977 television programme featured Laurika Rauch doing a musical version of Ingrid Jonker's "Toemaar die donker man".⁶⁶⁵ Rauch has subsequently set to music a number of poems by Jonker, but also earlier Afrikaans poets associated with the Dertigers.⁶⁶⁶

Afrikaans theatre showed similar developments. Afrikaans playwrights and writers of this time were informed by Western/European art. Most of them had had tertiary education and moved through university and onto the stage, or in behind the typewriter. In essence, they were achieving what the cultural entrepreneurs of apartheid had always wanted: Afrikaans art created in the contemporary traditions of Western Europe. Ironically, Afrikaner archetypal identities were de-constructed by this newly graduated elite, re-cast in post-modern scenarios and sometimes viciously interrogated. In the words of Deon Opperman:

What is Reza de Wet's *Diepe Grond* (Deep Earth) if not an iconoclastic and devastating (especially for Afrikaners) protest play, not against Apartheid, but against Calvinism and conservatism in the Afrikaner family?⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶³ E. van Heerden, "Vier tagtigers hou Brekvis... en jy's genooi!", *Insig*, March 2005, p. 59.

⁶⁶⁴ Botha and Roodt, "Die Tagtigers en die Tydskrif vir Letterkunde", pp. 57-58.

⁶⁶⁵ <http://www.laurikarauch.com/biografie/2/>, accessed 09 February 2015.

⁶⁶⁶ Like I.D. du Plessis and Boerneef.

⁶⁶⁷ D. Opperman, "Revolution and conscience: South African theater, June 1976 to February 1990, Program of African Studies, Northwestern University, 5 1993, pp. 14-16, available at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/passages/4761530.0005.012/>, accessed 02 March 2015.

No one central artistic movement characterised these shifts, but the fact that they overlapped chronologically is significant. Pieter-Dirk Uys rose to prominence with his satirical character Evita Bezuidenhout and his/her one-person theatre shows that mocked the National Party. Notably, Uys' theatre shows were never censored, although much of its content was against the law. It was only with the release of video recordings of the show that it was given a 2-21 age restriction.⁶⁶⁸ Numerous cabarets, like Hennie Aucamp's *Met permissie gesê* (1981), contained political satire and were popular with middle class Afrikaners.

Another factor to keep in mind is that very few artists earned enough income from music – or other forms of art – to pursue it full-time, which explains the pragmatic approach artists often had to follow to survive in the constricted Afrikaans music market. A common theme that arises in interviews with Afrikaans singers like Carike Keuzenkamp and Sonja Herholdt, who had hit releases before *Musiek-en-Liriek*, is that the Afrikaans music industry was very small at the time (early to mid-1970s). Herholdt mentioned that around 1976, she and Glenys Lynne were probably the only full-time singers.⁶⁶⁹ Keuzenkamp only performed live sporadically throughout her career, although she regularly released albums, starting with the release of her first single (which was in English), “Timothy”, in 1967. Her first Afrikaans album, *Almal se Keuse* (Everybody's Choice) was released in 1969.⁶⁷⁰

The artists who became famous with *Musiek-en-Liriek* had to find innovative ways to remain successful. For Laurika Rauch this was achieved by singing Brel. David Kramer famously became associated with the Volkswagen Kombi through a series of television commercials that lasted from 1984 until 1996 – the longest endorsement of a product by a celebrity in South African advertisement history.⁶⁷¹ His public persona, so popular with Afrikaners, was

⁶⁶⁸ P. Uys, *Between the devil and the deep: a memoir of acting and reacting* (Cape Town: Zebra, 2005), p. 89.

⁶⁶⁹ I. Roggeband, *50 Stemme: Die grootste name in Afrikaanse musiek* (Cape Town: Delta, 2009), p. 231.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 43

⁶⁷¹ Slabbert and De Villiers, *David Kramer*, p. 180.

often a cause of unease for Kramer.⁶⁷² His work also became much more political with the release of his 1986 album *Baboondogs*, and he teamed up with coloured musician Taliep Petersen for *District Six - the musical*, the start of a long and fruitful partnership which would tragically end with Petersen's murder in 2006.⁶⁷³ Goosen made ends meet by writing numerous hits songs for other, more mainstream singers like Sonja Herholdt⁶⁷⁴ and Carike Keuzenkamp.⁶⁷⁵

Artists who had no income other than music, had to be constantly aware of market trends and package their music in such a way that it would ensure they sell as many units as possible. This tended to soften any explicit political radicalism. Critics responded with praise, opportunities arose from television, and as long as they produced content that did not trouble the censors at the SABC, these artists remained in the public eye. In this way, they had relatively easy access to mainstream Afrikaans music channels, which ensured some form of commercial success. Compared to Voëlvry a decade later, *Musiek-en-Liriek* was less cohesive and more diverse, and connected with a much wider audience. Ultimately, if you listened to Laurika Rauch, Amanda Strydom, Anton Goosen, or David Kramer during this era, it did not necessarily make you liberal or dissatisfied with apartheid or the National Party. The following years, however, would see an increase in political protest from Afrikaans artists as South Africa entered an era of high political tension.

Wider discontent among Afrikaners during the 1980s

During the politically charged 1980s, Afrikaner support for the National Party decreased and even the Dutch Reformed Church – for decades a crucial pillar of Afrikaner nationalism and

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 11, p. 277.

⁶⁷⁴ Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 231.

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

justifier of racial separation – broke with the doctrine of apartheid.⁶⁷⁶ As this happened, many Afrikaners migrated to the political right. A growing conservative faction in the National Party under Andries Treurnicht led to the formation of the breakaway Conservative Party in 1982, which “signalled the end of Afrikaner nationalist unity.”⁶⁷⁷

While the homogenising forces of the Afrikaner nationalist establishment (by now in power for more than three decades) had started to unravel, Afrikaans artists started to make critical comments about the political system, although outright condemnation of apartheid was still rare. New themes arose, like *grensliteratuur*, which played out against the backdrop of the Border War.⁶⁷⁸ Under P.W. Botha’s “adapt or die” strategy, the state was more intolerant of such critique, and censorship intensified. Although many were subject to bans on their work, Afrikaans musicians were less radical than some white English-speaking counterparts like singer Roger Lucey, who was one of the most outspoken against apartheid specifically, and also the most targeted by the secret police.⁶⁷⁹

A major perceived threat to the state was communism’s “‘total onslaught’ on virtually every area of society,” which had to be “countered by a ‘total strategy’ against subversive elements.”⁶⁸⁰ The communist threat to white South Africa at this stage was rooted in the strong socialist presence in independent African states, the SADF’s conflict with communist backed forces in Angola, and the link between anti-apartheid movements and socialism. Training white men to fight against communists thus became a direct part of the survival of white South Africa. In July 1985, Botha declared a state of emergency due to civil unrest and violence in townships – initially limited to parts of the Eastern Cape and the Witwatersrand, but later extended nationally – which lasted until 1990. White troops were deployed in the

⁶⁷⁶ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 620.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 603; see also Van der Westhuizen, *White Power & the Rise and Fall of the National Party*, p. 296.

⁶⁷⁸ A notable example is Alexander Strachan’s *’n Wêreld sonder grense* (A World without borders) of 1983.

⁶⁷⁹ M. Drewett, “‘Stop this filth’: The censorship of Roger Lucey’s music in apartheid South Africa.” *SAMUS* 25 (2005), pp. 53-70.

⁶⁸⁰ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 588, referring to a 1977 White Paper issued by the Department of Defence when Botha was Minister of Defence.

townships and South African society was becoming even more politicised and divided in the face of an intensifying international outcry against apartheid.

The Border War as background for subversive Afrikaans rock

Since the beginning of the 1980s, growing numbers of Afrikaner national servicemen began to ask: “What are we fighting for?”⁶⁸¹

The social impact of South Africa’s involvement in the Border War on the Namibian/Angolan border during the 1970s and 1980s has drawn new interest in recent years.⁶⁸² Under Botha, the role of the military expanded between 1978 and 1983.⁶⁸³ This militarisation of white South African society, as well as the construction of white militarised masculine identities were powerful societal forces, but grew increasingly unpopular and elicited some resistance from within South Africa’s white population. This resistance was indicative of wider political dissent and opposition to apartheid. Drewett has explored representations of this tension in popular culture by looking at relationships between popular music and resistance, as well as musicians’ roles as “movement intellectuals” within wider circles of political protest.⁶⁸⁴ English bands like Bright Blue, the Kalahari Surfers and the Cherry Faced Lurchers, along with solo artists like Roger Lucy, were openly opposed to apartheid and the conscription of white males into its armed conflicts, and often performed under the banners of the End Conscription Campaign (ECC). These performances were highly politicised and held a considerable element of risk for the artists.

In contrast to this, popular culture in support of the war effort (music, film and literature as propaganda) was of course also common. Numerous music releases in both English and

⁶⁸¹ Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 59.

⁶⁸² M. Drewett, “Battling over Borders: Narratives of Resistance to the South African Border War Voiced through Popular Music”, *Social Dynamics: A journal of African studies*, 2003, 29:1, pp. 78-98.

⁶⁸³ Beinart, *Twentieth Century South Africa*, p. 263.

⁶⁸⁴ Drewett, “Battling over Borders”, pp. 78-98.

Afrikaans subsequently appeared on the market. Among the Afrikaans releases were albums by two of the most popular and big-selling South African singers of all time, Gé Korsten's *Huistoe* (Homewards) and Bles Bridges' *Onbekende Weermagman* (Unknown Soldier). Notably, while some English bands were openly opposed to the army, the war and apartheid, Afrikaans music remained almost completely compliant. Protest among Afrikaners was rare, although there are some exceptions.

In 1983, two acts released Afrikaans songs that parodied the army experience at a time when opposition towards conscription and South Africa's involvement in the Border War was steadily increasing. Bernoldus Niemand (the alternative persona of English speaking musician James Phillips) released his single "Hou my vas Korporaal" (Hold me tight, Corporal) and the rock group Wildebeest released an EP, *Horings op die Stoep* (Horns on the Stoep) containing the song "Bossies" (Bushies). "Bossies" is a vernacular term referring to the psychological trauma of battle during border service.

Although the relationship between popular music and opposition to South Africa's apartheid military machine has been investigated before, most notably by Drewett⁶⁸⁵ (who has specifically commented on the release of "Hou my vas Korporaal"), the specific position of Afrikaans music in this regard has been overlooked. The fact that these are Afrikaans songs, make them a poignant testimony to the unravelling of Afrikaner hegemony. This was a significant change, since Afrikaners as a group arguably had more invested in the apartheid system than their white English counterparts, as Afrikaner society and culture was more directly linked to (and responsible for) the nationalist ideology that upheld it. Thus, counter-hegemonic culture from within Afrikaner society in which monolithic Afrikaner identity

⁶⁸⁵ Drewett, "Battling over Borders", pp. 78-98; see also M. Drewett, "The Construction and Subversion of gender Stereotypes in Popular Cultural Representations of the Border War", in G. Baines and Peter Vale (eds), *Beyond the Border War: New Perspectives on South Africa's Late Cold War Conflicts* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2008), pp. 94-119.

stereotypes as constructed through the army, were deconstructed, was an especially potent issue.



Figure 14: Bernoldus Niemand's 1983 single "Hou my vas Korporaal".



Figure 15: Wildebeest's 1983 EP *Horings op die Stoep*.

By contrast, Afrikaans literary works that deconstructed the Border, have been given due attention.⁶⁸⁶ The two releases mentioned above, regardless of the fact that they were not successful commercially, represent the earliest examples of Afrikaans music that echoed the dissent felt among a large group of troops that questioned the armed conflict they had been dragged into. They also highlight another major theme: the differentiation in the responses between “high” and “low” (or “popular”) art. The post-modern deconstruction of Afrikaner society in Afrikaans literary works and cabarets represented a discourse that resided in established critical artistic circles, whereas bands were wholly unsanctioned and unaccountable. This was in contrast to *Musiek-en-Liriek*, which had the support of mainstream television, and theatre and cabarets commissioned and funded by state-sanctioned provincial performing arts organisations.⁶⁸⁷ The two worlds sometimes overlapped – Koos Kombuis was a leading figure of the *Tagtigers* and had published literary works long before he became known as a musician songwriter – but further links between the literary movements and music movements of the 80s remained indirect, often depending on something as tenuous as what Shaun de Waal calls “tone”:

Many consider Bernoldus Niemand’s album, *Wie is Bernoldus Niemand?* to have started the “Afrikaans new wave” which has climaxed in the *Voëlvry* tour. It was the first record of its kind, and it set the tone: observant, satirical (sometimes gently so, sometimes more biting), and couched in the rebellious language of rock ‘n roll.⁶⁸⁸

“Hou my vas Korporaal” was followed by the release of the album, *Wie is Bernoldus Niemand?*, the next year, again by progressive record company, Shifty.⁶⁸⁹ Even though these were not the first releases by James Phillips – the artist behind the persona Bernoldus Niemand – “Hou my vas Korporaal” was his first Afrikaans release. The album was submitted as a project for his B.Mus degree at Wits University, but was not accepted. Not surprisingly, it

⁶⁸⁶ G. Baines, ““South Africa’s Vietnam’? Literary History and Cultural Memory of the Border War”, *South African Historical Journal* 49 (2003), pp. 172-192; see also H. Roos, “Writing from Within: Representations of the Border War in South African Literature”, in G. Baines and P. Vale (eds), *Beyond the Border War*, pp. 137-157.

⁶⁸⁷ Such as *Kruik* and *Truk*.

⁶⁸⁸ S. de Waal, “Rocking rebels discover R ‘n R”, *The Weekly Mail*, 26 May – 1 June 1989, p. 30.

⁶⁸⁹ http://rock.co.za/files/jp_niemand.html, accessed 21 June 2013.

was banned by the SABC.⁶⁹⁰ The clear satirising of the army experience – which so many young white South Africans could relate to – would become a regular theme for later Voëlvry artists. “Hou my vas Korporaal” also became the unofficial anthem of the End Conscription Campaign after its formation in 1984.⁶⁹¹

Former ECC leader Crispian Olver says their decision to use popular culture as a weapon back then was a deliberate one. “For the serious politicians in the ECC it initially was a nice to have,” he says, but insanity prevailed with the formation of a very active and creative cultural subcommittee early on. “The use of culture grew over the period of the campaign and, by using posters, youth culture and bands, our message reached a much wider audience.”⁶⁹²

Before becoming Bernoldus Niemand, James Phillips played in an English band called Corporal Punishment, which hailed from his hometown of Springs, a mining town on the East Rand of Johannesburg and a hotbed of punk-styled anti-establishment music in the late 1970s.⁶⁹³

The fact that there was an active underground punk scene in this working class area is of special significance. The counter-hegemonic tendencies of the Afrikaner working class have been present in popular Afrikaans music since the beginning of Afrikaner nationalism. The music of David de Lange (who lived in Benoni, not far from Springs) is a good example. As mentioned before, the fact that he offended the Afrikaner elites to such an extent that they managed to keep his music from being played by the SABC, was indicative of class tension. Many other *boere-orkeste* who recorded albums in the early 1930s also hailed from the East Rand. Another group, Die Briels, who started their recording career in the mid-fifties, were working class Afrikaners who sang about the hard realities of working class life at a time when most popular Afrikaans music resonated with the euphoria associated with the rise of Afrikaner political power. As mentioned before, a number of their songs were banned by the SABC, and they had an unexpected revival in 1990 at the Houtstock rock festival, which

⁶⁹⁰ http://rock.co.za/files/jp_niemand.html, accessed 21 June 2013.

⁶⁹¹ <http://mhambi.com/2010/02/ninja-is-the-new-james-phillips/>, accessed 13 August 2013.

⁶⁹² C. Leonard, “Don’t underestimate the power of electric guitar”, *Business Times*, 30 September 2009.

⁶⁹³ Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, pp. 91-92.

mainly featured alternative Afrikaans bands. The music of the other Voëlvry artists Koos Kombuis and Johannes Kerkorrel, mocked the banality of middle class Afrikaner suburbia from the position of rebellious middle class Afrikaners. The white working class character theme in James Phillips' music, especially his Afrikaans work as Bernoldus Niemand, represented a different subversion. In the 1980s working class Afrikaners tended to support the political right of Andries Treurnicht's 1982 breakaway Conservative Party. Phillips did not belong to this class constituency linguistically, culturally or politically. He went on to form the Cherry Faced Lurchers who, as mentioned before, often performed at political rallies and produced very outspoken political music. Although Niemand's influence on Voëlvry might have been debatable (as suggested by Hopkins),⁶⁹⁴ and does not seem to have been the apogee of James Phillips' artistic expression, it remains a very poignant comment on white conscription during apartheid. Phillips resurrected the Bernoldus Niemand persona for the Voëlvry tour and only sang songs from Niemand's repertoire.⁶⁹⁵

Wildebeest, on the other hand, was an enigmatic group in their own way. For one thing, the bassist, Piet Botha, was the son of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pik Botha.⁶⁹⁶ Wildebeest appeared on television programme *Kraaines* (Crow's Nest) in 1981, sporting military style khaki outfits, beating traditional African drums and playing heavy Afrikaans rock.⁶⁹⁷ The songs were all composed by drummer Colin Pratley who, like James Phillips, was also not a first-language Afrikaans speaker, although he was fascinated with Afrikaner culture. Wildebeest was influenced by African genres and rock music, and used a variety of indigenous instruments while singing in Afrikaans. Their first live album, *Wildebeest Bushrock One*, was the *Rand Daily Mail's* album of the year, an unlikely accolade for an Afrikaans band.⁶⁹⁸ They also ran into some trouble with the establishment when a church in

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.91.

⁶⁹⁵ Electronic communication with Dagga-Dirk Uys, organiser of the Voëlvry tour, 14 March 2014.

⁶⁹⁶ He became one of the most recognised Afrikaans songwriters of the last 30 years.

⁶⁹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42wjjQmKC6Q&hd=1>, accessed 24 January 2014.

⁶⁹⁸ Interview with Piet Botha, 05 May 2014.

Potchefstroom wanted to stop them from performing there.⁶⁹⁹ Anton Goosen was the producer of *Horings op die Stoep*, which would be their final album. In contrast to Phillips, however, Wildebeest was not associated with formal opposition to conscription, and did not link up with liberal leftist political movements.

Considering the socio-political atmosphere of the early 1980s, songs like “Hou my vas Korporaal” and “Bossies” were significant releases. Both songs touched on sensitive and realistic aspects of a shared experience between many white South African males conscripted into military service since 1967. This was in stark contrast to the numerous music releases in support of military service that portrayed conscription as the patriotic duty of young white South African males. In a wider context, the sentiments of Niemand and Wildebeest’s songs linked up with a growing body of *grensliteratuur* in which monolithic Afrikaner identity stereotypes as constructed through the army, were deconstructed. It also resonated with wider fault lines in Afrikaner society as the apartheid regime’s grip on power started to slip. The specific significance of “Hou my vas Korporaal” and “Bossies” is that they offered alternative interpretations of the army experience, and by extension white Afrikaner male identity, that resonated with much wider socio-political shifts.

State response and censors

The establishment of the Directorate of Publications in 1974 signalled a new dimension to censorship.⁷⁰⁰ On the cultural front, this meant an increased sophistication in the

⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁰ This section on music censorship focuses primarily on examples of how Afrikaans music artists have interacted with the state censors at the SABC that have up to now not been documented. For a more detailed analysis of the structure of state censorship during apartheid, Drewett’s work is authoritative, as is Merrett’s. See M. Drewett, “An analysis of the censorship of popular music within the context of cultural struggle in South Africa during the 1980s”, (Unpublished D.Phil Thesis, Rhodes University, 2004); also C. Jansen van Rensburg, “Institutional Manifestations of Music Censorship and Surveillance in Apartheid South Africa with Specific Reference to the SABC from 1974 to 1996”, (Unpublished MMus dissertation, Stellenbosch University, 2013),

implementation of censorship. The complex set of security measures, including censorship laws, resulted in much confusion and uncertainty on the sides of the censors, as well as the artists whose work were censored. This manifested for some in a cat-and-mouse game, with the irrational implementation of laws providing ample ammunition to anti-establishment Afrikaners. In a discussion on censorship at the First Freemuse World Conference on Music and Censorship in Copenhagen in November 1998, former SABC censor, Cecile Pracher, shared the following information with the panel:

At the time I was there between the 1980s and 1990s. It was the time of P.W. Botha and Apartheid was in full swing and the state of emergency was declared and everything became tighter and tighter. Things that would have been allowed five years earlier were frowned upon so therefore it was a very unnatural society to live in ... Records weren't banned by the SABC as a record with all the cuts. It was normally one, two or three cuts but sometimes it was eight, nine or ten. But mostly it was about three or four cuts and we had to put on stickers onto the LP's and in fact some of the LP's were scratched so that those cuts weren't played. With CD's of course that opportunity was lost.⁷⁰¹

To an extent, Pracher's statement confirms that the censors were more sensitive during certain periods, as Ingrid Byerly also points out.⁷⁰² For Anton Goosen, the influence of the SABC censors on the composition of his songs up to the early 1990s was very significant. He responded to censorship by deliberately antagonising the censors, which not only undermined their position of power, but belittled them in public. It is doubtful whether this would have been possible a decade before. Goosen explains:

The psychological thing that happens here is that you start to wage this war against the censorship board. The SABC censorship board. Which is not healthy. You must write what is inside of you. ...[Y]ou know you are going to be prohibited, so okay, the first thing we're going

pp. 34-37; also see C. Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship: Secrecy and Intellectual Repression in South Africa* (Cape Town, David Phillip Publishers, 1994).

⁷⁰¹ Drewett, "Stop this filth", pp. 53-70.

⁷⁰² I. Byerly, "Mirror, Mediator, and Prophet: The Music *Indaba* of Late-Apartheid South Africa", *Ethnomusicology* 42:1 (1998), p. 14.

to do is we're not going to go to the radio, the first thing we do is phone *Rapport* and we make a headline story out of it. Like "Boude", or "Gatvol".⁷⁰³

Goosen goes on to reveal more on the interaction between artists and censors. Lucey's outspokenness had brought him to the attention of the secret police, who assigned an officer – Paul Erasmus – with orders to destroy his career.⁷⁰⁴

The moment you moved outside of it, like Roger Lucey, they started tapping telephone lines. And this continued ... Houtstok was in 1990. Even there they were eavesdropping on my phone. If I talked to my girlfriend I could hear these people chip in and out. There were people with guns at the church square with our show.⁷⁰⁵

Boet Pretorius, owner of Decibel Records, also referred to this type of contest between artists and the SABC censors. In his case, they involved *Rapport* – whose journalists “hated the SABC”⁷⁰⁶ – when they were informed that an album by one of his top artists, Leon Schuster, was going to be banned. The headline in the newspaper apparently helped the sales of the album.⁷⁰⁷ A gold-selling recording artist in the mid-1960s, Pretorius was also instrumental as recording engineer and/or producer of albums by artists such as Danie Pretorius, Chris Blignaut, Die Briels, Gé Korsten, Leonora Veenemans, Min Shaw, Groep Twee, Lance James, Sias Reynecke and Sonja Herold in the 1960s and 1970s, before he established his own record company, Decibel, in 1981. Decibel was very influential during the 1980s and released 45 gold and/or platinum selling albums by artists such as Gé Korsten, Danie Botha, Leon Schuster, Anneli van Rooyen, Rina Hugo, Carike Keuzenkamp, Riaan Nienaber, Bill Flynn and André Schwartz.⁷⁰⁸ All of these artists represented the “ligte Afrikaanse musiek” (light Afrikaans music) genre, as opposed to other types of Afrikaans music, like the Musiek-en-Liriek movement, which was less successful commercially. According to Roos, Pretorius controlled up to 90% of the local music market, including English pop music.

⁷⁰³ Interview with author, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013.

⁷⁰⁴ Drewett, “Stop this filth”, p. 25.

⁷⁰⁵ Gansbaai, 29 April 2013

⁷⁰⁶ Telephonic interview with author, 22 July 2013.

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁸ M. Roos, “Lewende legendes - Boet Pretorius”, available at <http://152.111.1.88/argief/berigte/beeld/1999/07/16/3/4.html>, accessed 15 April 2013.

Although no mention is made of the black popular music market,⁷⁰⁹ Pretorius was immensely influential in shaping commercially successful Afrikaans music over a long time.⁷¹⁰

Jansen van Rensburg, in her recent study, made an in-depth study into censorship at the SABC from 1976 to 1996. Based on photographs of unsorted documents, she could construct a graph of songs submitted for airplay on the radio stations of the SABC and how many were considered unsuitable for broadcasting.⁷¹¹ Her study is of considerable importance since, among other things, it provides quantifiable data. In a period spanning from 1986 until 1996, a total of 1619 songs were submitted to the SABC for broadcasting. Of these, a total of 890 songs were considered unsuitable for broadcasting. That means that almost 55% of all songs were kept off the air. These numbers refer to all types of music submitted, not just Afrikaans songs, and it is uncertain whether or not it includes releases from international artists. One memo shows that a song by wrestler-entertainer Mike Schutte (released by Boet Pretorius' Decibel Record Company) was unsuitable for radio, as were a number of David Kramer and Taliip Peterson's songs.⁷¹²

Coenie de Villiers is another artist affiliated with the Musiek-en-Liriek movement. In an ironic twist, he was influenced by Radio Bantu, the black radio service of the SABC which deliberately divided programming between separate ethnic groups. This influence is yet another example of how music managed to cross the fiercely guarded racial boundaries during apartheid. De Villiers recalls:

From childhood I was fascinated by the sounds other ethnic and cultural groups created and grew up with the sounds of the erstwhile Radio Bantoe (!) in the kitchen ... I realised for the first time that this might be problematic when I wanted to make music with the Abasandizi Singers in the Cape, and they shyly suggested that we rather make music "at home" – that it would be

⁷⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁰ A. Vorster, "Boet maak nou musiek op die Springbokvlakte!" available at <http://152.111.1.87/argief/berigte/rapport/2008/02/19/RG/4/Boet.html>, accessed 15 April 2013.

⁷¹¹ Jansen van Rensburg, "Institutional Manifestations of Music Censorship and Surveillance in Apartheid South Africa", p.98.

⁷¹² SABC internal Memo, 28 November 1986, cited in Jansen van Rensburg, "Institutional Manifestations of Music Censorship and Surveillance in Apartheid South Africa", p. 75.

problematic in public. After that I've made a lot of music with the wonderful jazz musicians of the Cape Flats, but it wasn't always well received by the previous regime. My first albums were also saddled with an embargo, since the old SABC saw it as "undesirable".⁷¹³

Cora Marie was a mainstream pop singer who also sang gospel songs. Her song "Ster van Bethlehem" (Star of Bethlehem), written by Anton Goosen, was banned for an apparently bizarre reason, remembers Marie's husband Corrie Myburgh:

They banned it because they said you can't gospel to a beat. Today it is ridiculous, but it was their rule at that time. I still believe to this day the SABC stunted the growth of Afrikaans music due to all the rules and regulations. It was only after 1994 that the language, especially concerning the music, started growing again.⁷¹⁴

All of these examples undermine the idea that only politically subversive music was banned. Myburgh's statement about the SABC doing damage to Afrikaans music because of its restrictive measures is shared by many. Bizarrely, even operatic pieces would sometimes be banned, as in the case of world renowned opera singer Maria Callas' release of *Lucia Di Lammermoor*, sung in Italian, which had one side scratched out.⁷¹⁵

Conservative Afrikaner society also applied other kinds of pressure to artists. In an extraordinary act of political defiance, Amanda Strydom, who was also part of the *Met Permissie Gesê* cast, gave the black power salute and shouted "Amandla" (an isiXhosa and Zulu word meaning "power" and a popular rallying cry in the anti-apartheid struggle), at a performance at the Oude Libertas Theatre (the same theatre that hosted early Musiek-en-Liriek concerts) in Stellenbosch in 1986. It happened after she sang her own composition, "Die pas", written in protest against the Pass Laws. She was heavily criticised by the Afrikaans media as unpatriotic and a blemish on the name of the Afrikaner.⁷¹⁶ Strydom remembers:

⁷¹³ Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 52, translated from original.

⁷¹⁴ Corrie Myburgh in Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 56, translated from original.

⁷¹⁵ <http://soulsafari.wordpress.com/tag/music-and-censorship-during-apartheid-in-south-africa/>, accessed 22 August 2013.

⁷¹⁶ Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, pp. 9-10.

The incident changed my life. Initially, the effects were extremely traumatic – to stand up during the eighties in the then conservative Stellenbosch during the apartheid years and sing my song about the pass laws, was as good as granting myself a death sentence. But it was a conviction of my soul.⁷¹⁷

The gesture came at a price. Following the negative reactions by the Afrikaner community, Strydom had a breakdown and was diagnosed with bipolar depression. She only returned to the stage in the early 1990s.⁷¹⁸ Such political actions stood in stark contrast to the Afrikaans pop mainstream, which tended to “borrow” popular hits from abroad and give it overtly shallow Afrikaans lyrics. The alliance with theatre provided Afrikaans protest voices one of the few outlets for expression:

Indeed, ... the theater became one of the last voices permitted to speak after the media and other avenues of protest had effectively been silenced...Why the theater was allowed to continue, when other voices of protest were banned, imprisoned, murdered, exiled, and tortured is a question frequently debated. A popular explanation — perhaps the most convincing — is that the government used theater, and Black theater in particular, as evidence for their argument before world opinion that conditions within South Africa were not truly repressive. But while the Market Theater and other groups were permitted to mount productions of radical protest and even to tour abroad, plays that threatened to gather popular support in the townships were severely restricted and quickly silenced.⁷¹⁹

The Market Theatre especially, was a space that hosted not only the first live *Musiek-en-Liriek* concert in 1979, but also the political cabaret *Met permissive gesê* in 1981 and a number of other, like *Die van Aardes van Grootoor*, featuring Pieter-Dirk Uys.⁷²⁰

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated that it was only with the slow unravelling of Afrikaner unity towards the end of the 1970s and the 1980s that Afrikaans music started to reflect clear counter-hegemonic identities. It remains difficult to establish the exact nature of the

⁷¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10, translated from original.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*; see also G. Edwards: “Amanda op die Kruin”, *Huisgenoot Tempo* 3 2012, p. 48.

⁷¹⁹ Opperman, “*Revolution and conscience: South African theater, June 1976 to February 1990*”, pp. 14-16.

⁷²⁰ Uys, *Between the Devil and the Deep*, p. 88.

relationship between Afrikaans artists, record companies, apartheid censors and the Afrikaans music buying public at a time when the industry was relatively small. Artists had to be pragmatic if they wanted to survive, which tended to blunt political radicalism. The substantial influence journalists had in positioning artists into different camps, should also be taken into account.

Musiek-en-Liriek was not primarily about politics. Most of the music was slow paced and non-aggressive and was inspired by poetic sources. It was not as commercial as the Afrikaans pop mainstream, but it did get good exposure through a number of TV programmes that preceded *Musiek-en-Liriek* and that focussed on Afrikaans poetry and music with positive responses from Afrikaner society. As mentioned earlier, Anton Goosen was the prominent protagonist of *Musiek-en-Liriek*. Although he clashed with censors, most of the other artists did not directly confront the conservative Afrikaner establishment. This was partly as a result of the fact that the apartheid regime at the time had so successfully established its control over the SABC that even mildly transgressive music content would be censored. Their music did, however, signal the first move away from the *lekkerliedjie* towards the *luisterliedjie*.⁷²¹ What is also clear, is that Afrikaans artists – in theatre, music, cabarets and literature – explored new expressive themes during the 1980s, significantly at a time of severe political clampdown from the state.

Although Afrikaners had been listening to rock and other types of music from abroad, it somehow did not seem viable to sing this type of music in Afrikaans until the late 1970s and early 1980s. The rock music of Anton Goosen and *Wildebeest* in 1980 and 1981 attests to this. Afrikaans was the language of conservative parents, army drill sergeants, angry *dominees*, politicians and apartheid. I argue here that 1979 marked the start of a paradigm shift in the way that Afrikaans music artists expressed opposition to apartheid. The following years would see a proliferation of political themes in Afrikaans music that were not linked to,

⁷²¹ Goosen, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013.

or even influenced by, Musiek-en-Liriek. The character Bernoldus Niemand, with his Afrikaner working class persona, was far removed from the poetic and literary music of, say, Koos du Plessis, and although this music failed commercially, it was an early version of what would culminate in the radical Voëlvry tour of 1989.

Regarding the question of whether or not Musiek-en-Liriek constituted an authentic “movement”, one should consider its relation to what preceded it. Unlike the literary Tagtigers, who built on and radicalised themes already introduced by a previous generation of writers, the Musiek-en-Liriek artists introduced a number of new elements to popular Afrikaans music. There was some rock, some folk, a lot of poetry and generally more intellectual depth. Musiek-en-Liriek ticked many of the boxes required by Eyerman and Jamison:⁷²² it experimented with new aesthetic principles, succeeded in creating new collective rituals and was an important source of renewal and rejuvenation. In this sense, it can be interpreted as more than a single movement, or alternatively, a complex movement that reflected a fundamental shift in Afrikaner society. The fact that it coincided with new developments in other artistic media further indicates a wider social movement. It was *not* as political as the movements of the sixties in the West, or as political as the later Voëlvry, but this should not detract from its influence. Judging by album sales and presence on television, Musiek-en-Liriek made much bigger inroads into a wider Afrikaner society than Voëlvry.

⁷²² Eyerman and Jamison, *Music and Social Movements*, p. 6.

Chapter Six

Explicit politics: Voëlvry, Houtstok and beyond

By the end of the 1980s, Afrikaans music had developed a distinct political edge. The industry was polarised between alternative Afrikaans artists who protested against the pillars of white society and apartheid, and the pop mainstream who subtly underwrote those institutions. In contrast with the material presented in previous chapters, this period, and especially the Voëlvry movement of 1989, has attracted substantial academic interest. This chapter looks at Voëlvry more than 25 years on and reconsiders its cultural and political impact and its memorialisation today. The record label Shifty (which had a number of alternative Afrikaans music artists on their label and released the original Voëlvry compilation album in 1986) played an important role during the 1980s, and was responsible for hosting “Shifty September” in 2014 as a twenty-fifth anniversary of the Voëlvry tour. This anniversary included discussion groups that have not only rejuvenated the discourse on Voëlvry, but also highlighted new themes. In essence then, this chapter adds to the existing literature on the Voëlvry movement by evaluating its impact and legacy a quarter of a century on.

A crucial element that has been overlooked in the literature, is the role of journalists in creating hype around Voëlvry, but also in attacking the pop mainstream and its politics. Many Afrikaans pop songs originated in Europe as *Schlager* songs. Although this practice of writing Afrikaans lyrics to European dance music is commonplace, there has been no study on this to date. The literature on *Schlager* in general is also limited, but Nathaus’ study on *Schlager* in West Germany has provided a valuable wider perspective on the type of criticism against the

genre elicited from certain music artists in Europe. These remind one of the local opposition from journalists and alternative Afrikaans artists against the use of *Schlager* music and the claims that the SABC favoured such non-confrontational pop music. My interview with Boet Pretorius, the former owner of Decibel Records (the main Afrikaans pop label of the 1980s and 1990s), reveals a surprising view on Afrikaans *Schlager* during this time, including the SABC's opposition to its use.

In the second half of this chapter, I focus on the importance of the Houtstok concert in 1990 (and again 1992) and the simultaneous (and ideologically opposed) FAK concert on the same day. The open animosity between the Afrikaans pop mainstream and alternative Afrikaans music culminated in these concerts and clearly revealed the fault lines in white Afrikaner society. The under-representation of Voëlvry artists at the Houtstok concerts suggests that there was also ample support for other alternative Afrikaans artists at the time. These concerts, albums and tours all marked an apogee of political Afrikaans music during apartheid. The political Afrikaans music of the post-apartheid era is fundamentally different.

Voëlvry

He [Johannes Kerkorrel] is busy overrunning South Africa with a shit-hot Afrikaans rock band, to dodge here and duck there, but everywhere he pops up with his message of protest, of dissatisfaction, of rising up against the status quo. Everywhere he goes he releases people from the demons of Calvinistic feelings of guilt and Nationalist racism, he opens them up to new emotions, he knows exactly how to weave his web of nationwide mutiny, he preaches the truth loud and clear, he preaches the gospel that the youth have been yearning for up to now.⁷²³

During April and May 1989, three alternative Afrikaans acts – poet/singer André Le Toit (who later changed his name to Koos Kombuis), Bernoldus Niemand's Swart Gevaar and Johannes Kerkorrel's Gereformeerde Blues Band – toured South Africa (and visited Namibia for one show) to liberate the Afrikaner youth with Afrikaans rock & roll. It was called

⁷²³ K. A. Kombuis, *Die tyd van die Kombi's* (Cape Town: Human & Rosseau, 2009), p. 130, translated from original.

Voëlvry (“feel free; free as a bird; outlaw; free penis; free love”⁷²⁴) and was a deliberate attack on the pillars of a conservative Afrikaner society that was facing an uncertain future as the apartheid regime’s rule was drawing to an end.

The tour attracted a lot of interest because it was markedly different from anything that had gone before in the Afrikaans arts. As the preceding chapters illustrate, there was scant prior antagonism toward the state in the Afrikaans music sector. By the end of the penultimate decade of the twentieth century, it was extremely easy for these alternative Afrikaans artists to shock Afrikaner society. The suffocating conservatism of the Church, the politics of the National Party regime, and their musical rivals in the form of mainstream Afrikaans artists (especially the sentimental crooner Bles Bridges), were all easily identifiable as part of a single enemy. Politically, it was the fifth year of P.W. Botha’s state of emergency, troops had been deployed in the townships across the country to contain widespread black political uprisings, international pressure against apartheid was reaching critical levels and the economy was suffering. By January 1989 Botha had suffered a stroke, resigned as leader of the National Party in February, but refused to acknowledge F.W. de Klerk’s election by the Party as new State President the following month. He eventually resigned in August and F.W. de Klerk came to power on 20 September 1989. By this time, almost half of the white Afrikaans-speakers had left the National Party.⁷²⁵ The term of duty in the army was reduced to one year while the defence budget was halved, which signalled the government’s reluctance to fight against political change.⁷²⁶ In 1990, De Klerk also unbanned the ANC and other black political organisations and released Nelson Mandela, a momentous and much publicised event in South Africa’s history. In the same year, the ethno-political definition of Afrikaner was compromised by the inclusion of non-whites into the National Party.

⁷²⁴ P. Hopkins, *Voëlvry: The movement that rocked South Africa* (Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2006), p. 14.

⁷²⁵ H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003), p. 580.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 597.

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*

A number of books have emerged that either cover the whole Voëlvry movement, like Pat Hopkins' *Voëlvry: The Movement that rocked South Africa*,⁷²⁷ or include it as part of a wider biography, like Koos Kombuis' *Sex, drugs en boeremusiek*⁷²⁸ and *Short drive to freedom*.⁷²⁹ As a non-participant, Hopkins goes further than just a chronicle of events to include a background of Afrikaner nationalism that explains the establishment of the conservative Afrikaner society so directly attacked by these artists. As examples of more academic discourses on the subject, Grundlingh's,⁷³⁰ Jury's,⁷³¹ Laubscher's⁷³² and Bezuidenhout's⁷³³ work have been core sources. This stands in stark contrast to the Musiek-en-Liriek movement, on which there exists almost no academic discourse. Although Voëlvry never became part of the mainstream, this body of academic work alone bears testament to its significance as a movement. It has also bestowed on Voëlvry the label of the most definitive example of politicised Afrikaans music of the apartheid era, a position that has (problematically) remained largely unchallenged. As subject matter, Voëlvry has offered an attractive opportunity to explore the various intersections of changing Afrikaner identities and political unravelling at an almost apocalyptic time for white Afrikaners. Perhaps because of this specific historical positioning, it has been *too* attractive, *too* obvious, leading to neglect of the work of other Afrikaans music artists who expressed their political identities in more subtle ways. Such approaches were too mild for those directly involved in the *Voëlvry* movement. In the words of Max du Preez:

⁷²⁷ *Voëlvry: The Movement that rocked South Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra press, 2006).

⁷²⁸ *Seks, drugs en boeremusiek: die memoires van 'n volksverraaier* (Cape Town: Human & Rosseau, 2000).

⁷²⁹ *Short drive to freedom : a personal perspective on the Afrikaans rock rebellion* (Cape Town: Human & Rosseau, 2009).

⁷³⁰ "Rocking the boat'? The 'Voëlvry' music movement in South Africa: Anatomy of Afrikaans anti-apartheid social protest in the eighties", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 37:3 (2004), pp. 483-514.

⁷³¹ B. Jury, "Boys to Men: Afrikaans Alternative Popular Music, 1986-1990", *African Languages and Cultures* 9:2 (1996), pp.99-109.

⁷³² L. Laubscher, "Afrikaner identity and the music of Johannes Kerkerrel", *South African Journal of Psychology* 35:2 (2005), pp. 308-330.

⁷³³ A. Bezuidenhout, "From Voëlvry to De la Rey: Popular Music, Afrikaner Nationalism and Lost irony", Stellenbosch University seminar, 2007.

We had a general fuck-you attitude, and didn't believe the 1980s was a time for subtlety and good manners.⁷³⁴

The less obvious, more understated approach (rather than outright shock tactics) was, in general, far more popular among the broader Afrikaans public. The muted political commentary of *Musiek-en-Liriek*, David Kramer's use of musical form as a means of subverting racial hierarchies, the release of Bernoldus Niemand's "Hou my vas Korporaal" in 1983 and Amanda Strydom's black power salute at a concert in Stellenbosch in 1986 are examples of critical, counter-hegemonic Afrikaans music performance that pre-dated Voëlvry. Cabarets like *Met permissive gesê* were subtly critical of the state (with some links to *Musiek-en-Liriek*), while *Piekniek by Dingaen* (which premiered at the 1988 National Arts Festival in Grahamstown and featured the music of Johannes Kerkerrel and André Letoit/Koos Kombuis) was an openly subversive political text that defied the dominant narratives of the National Party and apartheid. According to the philosopher Johan Degenaar, *Piekniek by Dingaen* was the quintessential post-modern Afrikaans text of the 1980s since it contravened the schism between what was considered "high art" and "popular art". Literary scholars Elize Botha and P.H. Roodt wrote:

[*Piekniek by Dingaen*] slaughtered holy cows with a slight touch, deconstructed the values of the establishment, reversed hierarchies, gave back to words the ability to sting, and illustrated the inter-textuality between the language and the body.⁷³⁵

Although not all Afrikaans cabarets of this era were political, those that were, were instrumental in the development of the type of alternative Afrikaans music that peaked with Voëlvry. Seen in this context, Voëlvry was not the first anti-establishment Afrikaans music of the apartheid era. Neither was it the last. In May 1990, the alternative Afrikaans rock concert, Houtstok (literally translated as "Wooden stick", but an overt reference to "Woodstock"), was held outside Pretoria. Houtstok certainly predicated upon Voëlvry to some extent, although

⁷³⁴ M. Du Preez, in Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 6.

⁷³⁵ E. Botha and P.H. Roodt, "Die Tagtigers en die *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* – was daar 'n Tagtigerbeweging?", *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* 43:1 (2006), p. 59, translated from original.

the most prominent voices of Voëlvry were not on the line-up. It was certainly successful, since the concert attracted more than 20 000 people, a figure almost ten times higher than any single concert of the Voëlvry tour. Yet Voëlvry occupies a special place in the memories of those who witnessed it. This is no doubt because Voëlvry explicitly opposed the apartheid regime, and took place at a time when apartheid was rapidly unravelling, making it part of a constellation of organisations that are today venerated in the new South Africa. However, Voëlvry had no direct link to international anti-apartheid music movements associated with exiled black and coloured South African artists. Abroad, popular music concerts played an important role in harnessing support for the anti-apartheid struggle. A prime example is the 1988 Free Mandela concert in Wembley Stadium that attracted a crowd of 72 000 people, and featured a number of international stars like Peter Gabriel (who sung his hit “Biko”) and exiled South African artists like Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masakela. The concert was a major international event, broadcast to sixty countries and viewed by almost one billion people. Significantly, no Afrikaans artists were included in the line-up.⁷³⁶ This fact puts into perspective statements like the following by Koos Kombuis:

We wanted the same thing as freedom fighters – to be free. In that respect we knew about them and they knew about us. But our contribution to their cause must not be underestimated, because at a crucial point in history we took from government its greatest power base, the youth. Never in their wildest dreams did the Bothas expect their own kids to turn against them and spit in their faces – and not with the gentle “loyal protest” envisaged by NP van Wyk Louw, mind you, but with real hatred, with all the pent-up rage our young hearts could muster.⁷³⁷

Here, Kombuis embodies, perhaps unintentionally, one extreme pole in the discourse on Voëlvry. His assertion – which he shares with many of those who took part in the tour – that they “took from government its greatest power base”, is a good example. As is his assertion that they contributed to “their cause”. It is hard to imagine white Afrikaans artists as comrades of ANC freedom fighters during the 1980s, or even to think that they had any impact on black

⁷³⁶ <http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/british-anti-apartheid-movement-hosts-concert-mandela>, accessed 20 January 2014.

⁷³⁷ Kombuis, cited in Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 19.

society in South Africa at all. Albert Grundlingh has even pointed out that the movement lacked wider social purchase within white Afrikaner society itself.⁷³⁸ That Voëlvry “spat in the face of the state”, however, is not in dispute. Such rebellion against the political system today is not as straight forward. Francois Van Coke, lead singer of Afrikaans rock groups Fokofpolisiekar and Van Coke Kartel, which represents the next generation of Afrikaans rockers of the 2000s, has admitted that, as Afrikaners, they are wary of criticising the government in case they come across as racist.⁷³⁹ Considering the complexities of post-apartheid South Africa, and because of Voëlvry’s re-emergence in the public sphere more than twenty-five years on, a re-assessment of the “Movement that rocked South Africa”⁷⁴⁰ is due.

Reconsiderations

In April 2014, at the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK), a panel of Afrikaans music experts consisting of writers, journalists and musicians gathered to discuss the significance of the Voëlvry tour in celebration of its twenty-fifth anniversary. Earlier, in February, three of the surviving members of the Gereformeerde Blues Band – Willem Moller, Gary Herselman and Jannie “Hanepoot” van Tonder – appeared together onstage at the Fiesta awards, broadcast live on television, also as an appreciative nod to the movement. This was the first time in more than two decades that all three of them were in the same room. Even though it also lay mostly dormant for almost two decades, Shifty Records – the small record company to which the Voëlvry artists were signed – celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in September 2014 with “Shifty September”, an array of offerings from its archives including the screening of live footage of performances by politically subversive South African music artists during

⁷³⁸ Grundlingh, “Rocking the boat?”, p. 17.

⁷³⁹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_XekcXPBQs, accessed September 2014.

⁷⁴⁰ To quote Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, (Cape Town, Zebra press, 2006).

the 1980s.⁷⁴¹ Serendipitously, it also coincided with the Voëlvry anniversary, and a number of panels and discussions took place in celebration and contemplation of this milestone. Direct connections were drawn between Voëlvry and post-1994 alternative Afrikaans music culture, specifically the Oppikoppi rock festival and rebellious Afrikaans rock group Fokofpolisiekar.⁷⁴²

One of these panel discussions attracted criticism and the accusation from Niren Tolsi and Lloyd Gedye that what was an opportunity for “non-racial musical culture turned out to be not much more than a bastion for Afrikaner Bohemia and a liberal pathology for denial.”⁷⁴³ Tolsi and Gedye are certainly correct in their observation that the discussion was a white affair. Whatever subversion there was among the political Afrikaans writers, musicians and playwrights of the 1980s, they very seldom used the sharpest tool available for undermining a racist regime: collaboration with black artists. The most likely explanation is that they simply did not move in the same circles as black artists, one of the intended results of a racially segregated society.⁷⁴⁴ One major exception was David Kramer and his collaboration with Taliep Petersen. Another was Anton Goosen, who collaborated with black artists such as Lucky Dube and Margaret Singana and even joined the ANC in 1992. Regardless, the criticism on the racial make-up of the discussion group relates to only a fraction of what Voëlvry represented. As Gary Herselman mentioned in one of the discussion panels, it wasn’t an inter-racial movement, but rather an act of standing up to their own parents and the society and politics which they represented, and saying “Fuck, man, there must be a better way.”⁷⁴⁵

Grundlingh has suggested that:

While “Voëlvry” rejected a certain form of Afrikaner identity, at the core of what they represented was a broader formulation of Afrikaansness in line with the pressures of the time.

⁷⁴¹ <https://www.facebook.com/shiftyseptember?ref=ts&fref=ts>, accessed September 2014.

⁷⁴² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_XekcXPBQs, accessed September 2014.

⁷⁴³ N. Tolsi and L. Gedye, www.theconmag.co.za/201/09/12/white-noise-and-lost-irony/, accessed 15 September 2014.

⁷⁴⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_XekcXPBQs, accessed September 2014.

⁷⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Although they sought to recast Afrikaner identity in a different mould, they were well aware that the very success of their enterprise depended on them being Afrikaans.⁷⁴⁶

Laubscher's deconstruction of Kerkorrel's music on an identity level, for example, offers an insightful glance into the unravelling of the hegemonic horizon of the late-apartheid era and puts into perspective the ferocity with which the Voëlvry artists attacked the status quo.⁷⁴⁷

Despite the open hedonism, it was by no means limited to scatological expressions of rebellion. André Le Toit, for instance, was already a published author when Voëlvry commenced and openly confesses that his artistic background lies in literature, not music.⁷⁴⁸

Johannes Kerkorrel made his stage debut in a 1986 cabaret, *Met ander woorde*.⁷⁴⁹ Both were involved in *Piekniek by Dingaen*. The significance of this is that, regardless of the punk ethic that accompanied many aspects of the Voëlvry movement, it was artistically very rich. Many of the songs penned by the Voëlvry artists have become Afrikaans classics, such as Kombuis' "Lisa se Klavier" (Lisa's Piano) and Kerkorrel's "Hillbrow". Kerkorrel was also posthumously awarded a lifetime achievement award for his contribution to South Africa's music heritage at the 2013 SAMA awards.⁷⁵⁰ Prior to his suicide in 2002, he had won three SAMA awards. While artists like Laurika Rauch, Anton Goosen and David Kramer had achieved commercial success with their fresh offerings in Afrikaans, Bernoldus Niemand in particular represented a subversive undercurrent that would influence Kerkorrel and Kombuis. Unfortunately, Niemand's musical legacy was cut short with his death in 1995 from injuries sustained in a car accident during the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. His work, however, is very highly appraised by music critics, even though he never had any commercial success. Although their music differed significantly, as a whole, Niemand, Kerkorrel and Kombuis constituted a formidable and diverse assault on the status quo. Kerkorrel recognised the importance of this fact:

⁷⁴⁶ Grundlingh, "Rocking the boat?", p. 10.

⁷⁴⁷ Laubscher, "Afrikaner identity and the music of Johannes Kerkorrel", pp. 308–330.

⁷⁴⁸ <http://www.oulitnet.co.za/mond/kkramer.asp>, accessed 05 June 2013.

⁷⁴⁹ I. Roggeband, *50 Stemme: Die grootste name in Afrikaanse musiek* (Cape Town: Delta, 2009), p. 135.

⁷⁵⁰ C. Leonard, "Johannes Kerkorrel: The wise fool who left the fray", *Mail & Guardian*, 10 May 2013.

I was intensely aware at the beginning of the movement that it would have to be a collaboration of a range of diverse artists to survive against the power of the state and censorship.⁷⁵¹

The Voëlvry artists, along with other alternative Afrikaans bands like Joos Tonteldoos en die Dwarstrekkers, Die Kêrels and Randy Rambo en die Rough Riders, represented an extreme new perspective in Afrikaans music. Randy Rambo en die Rough Riders' 1990 album *Die Saai Lewe* (The boring life) was banned in its entirety and not one song from the album could be broadcasted or distributed. It was deemed so subversive that it was illegal to have the album in one's possession, the only Afrikaans album ever to achieve this status.⁷⁵² Randy Rambo was the stage name of *Die Beeld's* music critic Theunis Engelbrecht, who strongly supported the Voëlvry artists.

Any discussion on Voëlvry should mention Shifty Records, the small independent record company that was the first to release albums by Bernoldus Niemand, André Le Toit and Johannes Kerkorrel. Lloyd Ross, the founder of Shifty Records, had first joined the Radio Rats, an influential punk band, in the late-seventies and was exposed to the underground punk scene in and around Johannesburg and Springs,⁷⁵³ not unlike James Phillips (Bernoldus Niemand). His chance meeting with another punk musician, Ivan Kadey of the multi-racial punk band National Wake, led to the establishment of Shifty Records. Later he would team up with Warrick Sony of the outspoken political band the Kalahari Surfers.⁷⁵⁴ Shifty was the only record company in South Africa willing to record protest music at this time (early to mid-1980s), and attracted politically conscious artists.⁷⁵⁵ It released an eclectic collection of albums that ranged from Lesotho band Sankomota, Jennifer Ferguson, The Genuines, Vusi Mahlasela and Urban Creep, to the "People's Poet" Mzwakhe Mbuli, the Fosatu Worker Choirs and compilations in support of the

⁷⁵¹ Johannes Kerkorrel, in Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 231.

⁷⁵² <http://www.roekeloos.co.za/ritme/die-saai-lewe.html>, accessed 06 March 2015.

⁷⁵³ Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 81.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82, 87.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

End Conscription Campaign, like *Forces Favourites*.⁷⁵⁶ In 1986 Shifty released an album called *Voëlvry* (SHIB29), featuring various alternative Afrikaans artists,⁷⁵⁷ including Niemand, Kerkorrel and Le Toit. Although *Voëlvry* was a white affair, Shifty's catalogue was multi-racial and inevitably also very political. The fact that the *Voëlvry* artists were part of this stable is noteworthy.



Figure 16: Shifty Records' *Forces Favourites*, in support of the ECC, 1985.



Figure 17: Shifty Records' *Voëlvry* compilation of various alternative Afrikaans artists, 1986.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁷ Koos, Randy Rambo en die Rough Riders, Pieter van der Lugt, The Genuines, Die Kêrels, Khaki Monitor and The Genuines, a coloured ghoema punk group from Cape Town.

Grundlingh has made the important observation that the Voëlvry artists mostly came from respectable middle class backgrounds and that it had some resemblance to the social movements of the 1960s in the US.⁷⁵⁸ This contrasted sharply with other movements, like punk in Britain in 1976/77. Clearly distinguishable as “a rank-and-file expression of class interest,”⁷⁵⁹ working class punk hit the establishment hard. Although the initial movement did not last very long, since it immediately lost its legitimacy when it became part of the mainstream,⁷⁶⁰ it proved very influential in establishing many offshoots like new wave, post-punk and ska. It is doubtful whether the South African punk scene of the late 1970s and 80s displayed such a clear class-consciousness. The dynamics of South African punk also differed from Britain in various ways:

In Britain, at any rate, there was an obvious migration from the Underground to Trotskyism, from age to class politics. Sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll were dismissed as middle-class, male indulgences, while the few commentators who paused to wonder what had gone wrong pointed to the incorporation of rock into the leisure business on the one hand, to the fragmentation of the rock audience on the other. In short, rock's claims to be different from pop, to evade the logic of mass culture, turned out to be baseless. Rock was tied inevitably into the process of commodity production: the rock community was simply an easily manipulated consumer group.⁷⁶¹

This kind of criticism against rock music and middle class indulgences is not as evident in South African punk, possibly because rock music here did not represent the establishment. Of course the politics of apartheid South Africa also differed vastly from politics in Britain.⁷⁶² Although there is a loose connection between these punk bands and Voëlvry, mainly through James Phillips' musical past as part of bands like Corporal Punishment, Voëlvry's music had more similarities with rock music. Two decades prior to punk, rock music had a global impact, with varying different responses and motivations. Journalists were the first to respond and to initiate discourse on this impact, often commenting on rock music's ability to serve as

⁷⁵⁸ Grundlingh, “Rocking the boat?”, p. 4.

⁷⁵⁹ S. Frith, “Rock and the Politics of Memory”, *Social Text* 9:10, (1984), p. 61.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶¹ Frith, “Rock and the Politics of Memory”, p. 61.

⁷⁶² For an in-depth analyses of the South African punk scene of this era, see the documentary directed by K. Jones and D. Maas, *Punk in Africa* (Pelogrosso: Meerkat Media, 2012).

a vehicle for voices of dissent, particularly among the youth. In South Africa, rock music attracted much the same kind of response in the press,⁷⁶³ and over the next few decades journalists would become intimately involved in the development of music movements, either as participants, or as commentators.

The role of Journalists

Even though Musiek-en-Liriek was clearly more moderate than Voëlvry, both were described by contemporary journalists as more than just music movements and symbolic of wider phases of social change in South Africa. For David Kramer, this could sometimes be problematic:

I am quite sceptical about labels like “alternatiewe beweging” [alternative movement]. They are usually invented by journalists for their own convenience and don’t serve to inform our understanding of the creative thrust of the individuals involved. Usually the people who are collectively described as a “beweging” [movement] had no idea they were part of it until it gets described in the media as such.⁷⁶⁴

Kramer makes two very important observations here: firstly, the role of journalists in creating “movements”, often without the cognisance of the artists associated with it and secondly, that this construction is done with limited consideration of the artists as creative individuals. Many of the artists involved in Voëlvry and Musiek-en-Liriek worked as journalists at various stages in their careers. Apart from Stephan Bouver, who was a poet and critic for *Rapport* and host of the television programme *Fyn net van die woord*, Anton Goosen was a music critic for *Beeld* and *Huisgenoot*,⁷⁶⁵ Koos du Plessis was a journalist at various newspapers,⁷⁶⁶ and Johannes Kerkorrel worked at *Die Burger*.⁷⁶⁷

⁷⁶³ C. Hamm, “Rock 'n' Roll in a Very Strange Society”, *Popular Music* 5:1 (1985), pp. 159-174.

⁷⁶⁴ D. Kramer, <http://www.oulitnet.co.za/mond/kkramer.asp>, accessed 5 June 2013.

⁷⁶⁵ Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 20.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

Voëlvry's highly subversive slant was quickly noticed by the Afrikaner left, who responded with articles in publications like *Vrye Weekblad*, which became a sponsor of the tour.⁷⁶⁸ While the more liberal press gave the tour regular coverage, virtually nothing was reported in *Die Burger* until mid-May, when the Voëlvry artists were banned from performing on the Stellenbosch University campus by the then Rector Mike de Vries. This led to a rare sit-in by more than 1 500 students, with some staff joining the protest.⁷⁶⁹ Whereas *Die Matie* (Stellenbosch University student newspaper) reported the event as a protest in support of free speech, *Die Burger* focussed on a smaller march by students in support of the Rector.⁷⁷⁰ However, a review of the concert, held at an alternative venue off-campus, was very favourable.⁷⁷¹ Almost exactly a month before the protest and subsequent concert, *Die Matie* ran a poll on music preferences among Stellenbosch students. Interestingly, 40% did not listen to any Afrikaans music (which reminds of earlier polls in the 1970s among the Afrikaner youth), while 22% listened to it sporadically. Among the remaining 38% that did listen to Afrikaans music, the most popular artists were pop singers like Anneli van Rooyen, Rina Hugo, Carika Keuzenkamp and Gé Korsten, while a small minority listened to David Kramer, Koos du Plessis and Jannie du Toit, who was part of the Musiek-en-Liriek movement.⁷⁷² Bles Bridges, possibly the most popular Afrikaans singer of the 1980s, was very unpopular among students, with 72% despising him. Only 16% listened to "alternative Afrikaans" music, with a further 40% who had never heard of it.⁷⁷³ This is significant, since a month later, 1 500 students would protest against the banning of the Voëlvry concert. Although one campus poll does not necessarily stand up to methodological scrutiny, it did bear some resemblance with polls done on other campuses.⁷⁷⁴

⁷⁶⁸ Du Preez, foreword in Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, pp. 6-8.

⁷⁶⁹ P. Joubert, "Protes vir vrye keuse", *Die Matie*, 11 May 1989.

⁷⁷⁰ "Talle Maties steun konsert-verbod", *Die Burger*, 11 May 1989, p. 3.

⁷⁷¹ E. Joubert, "J. Kerkorrel en sy Blues Band maak vriende", *Die Burger*, 15 May 1989.

⁷⁷² V. Brand and L. Eloff, "Afrikaanse musiek onbekend by student", *Die Matie*, 13 April 1989, p. 6.

⁷⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁴ Grundlingh, "Rocking the boat?", p. 17.

Ultimately, the more liberal Afrikaans publications had a much smaller readership than the mainstream Afrikaans press. As with the Musiek-en-Liriek movement, newspaper journalists were the first to describe Voëlvry as an Afrikaans music movement. This tendency by print media to be the first to recognise, identify and even create new music “movements” is a common and vital element in commercial music industries. Music artists globally have long benefitted by being associated with the cutting edge of new music styles. Often, hype is created for an upcoming release and adds to a product’s commercial possibilities. The efforts by sympathetic journalists at mainstream dailies, like Theunis Engelbrecht at *Die Beeld*, did much to publicise the Voëlvry movement, but did not – as was the case with Musiek-en-Liriek – give them access to the main channels of distribution. This could have been one of the reasons Voëlvry remained a marginal group until after the tour. Koos Kombuis and Johannes Kerkorrel became relatively successful, but James Phillips’ albums were commercial failures.⁷⁷⁵ At the other end of the musical spectrum, the Afrikaans pop mainstream could not have been more different.

“Music Wars”

It was really with the unravelling of apartheid that the media began to question the efforts of the different Afrikaner nationalist organisations to use light Afrikaans music as a political tool. In this sense, the Voëlvry movement succeeded in exposing the banalities of mainstream Afrikaans music. Their music provides a sharp contrast to the music sponsored by the FAK, ATKV and SABC. This contrast was lyrical, musical and political. As Hopkins puts it:

Moreover, the *lekkerliedjie* was politically motivated, so that all who performed this form of music were integral parts of that project and it was disingenuous to claim an apolitical stance. There is no doubt that the *lekkerliedjie* remained the most popular form of Afrikaans music and that the majority of Afrikaners continued to support the National Party in the 1980s. But the

⁷⁷⁵ Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 214.

blind loyalty, the fervour, was gone, opening the way for dissident voices to once again raise the question of what it meant to be an Afrikaner.⁷⁷⁶

This polarisation made it very clear: mainstream Afrikaans pop music was deliberately superficial and compliant with the ideologies of the apartheid state, while the “alternative” Afrikaners provided Afrikaans music that for the first time contained socio-political comment and criticism of Afrikanerdom. Many Afrikaner youths discovered in these rebels a new legitimacy in Afrikaans music, something which had been lost decades ago, specifically because of the influence of the Afrikaner cultural bosses.

Several articles in *Insig* and *Die Vrye Weekblad* juxtaposed the light Afrikaans music (LAM) artists with the “alternatiewe” (alternative) Afrikaans music artists.⁷⁷⁷ Alternative Afrikaans artists experienced intimidation by intelligence officers and the police, while light Afrikaans artists enjoyed the full support of the SABC on expensive TV programs like *Teletreffers*, and in conservative newspapers like *Die Transvaler*.⁷⁷⁸ When Anton Goosen sharply criticised the FAK’s involvement in Afrikaans music during a television interview on *Goeiemôre Suid-Afrika* (Good Morning South Africa), the SABC and SATV banned him for six months.⁷⁷⁹ Light Afrikaans music represented the establishment in all its banality. The FAK and SABC sponsored music competitions, with the winning entries providing ample ammunition for the argument that mainstream Afrikaans music had become utterly superficial. Nonsensical lyrics proliferated:⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁷⁷⁷ See A. Arnold’s column “Boere-ritmes” in *Insig*, “Muurmusiek, potjiekos, Karoo-soul, techno-pop, en rou underground op een plaat”, January 1989, pp. 33-34; “Veertien uur se rock by Houtstok”, May 1990, p. 37; “Kwêla laat die mure val!” September 1990, p. 39; “Pomporrels, plaasromans en popmusiek”, December/January 1990/1991, p. 43; “Om van te lag... of te huil: Afrikaanse plate plesierig bekend gestel”, May 1991, p. 34; “Boem-boem, raai-raai, en sedes waai: niks skort met Afrikaanse sangers se seksdrif al sing hul ook van blomme”, June 1991, p. 33; “Worsmasjien van kits-emosies maal voort” Feb, 1992, p. 39. Also see H. van Staden, “Afrikaanse Musiek: Voëlvry of op hok? Die bytjies, die blommetjies en big brother”, *Vrye Weekblad*, 6 – 12 March 1992, pp. 13-15; and A. Vinassa, “Die boere het nie hul huiswerk gedoen nie”, *Vrye Weekblad*, 6 – 12 March 1992, pp. 17-18.

⁷⁷⁸ Van Staden, “Afrikaanse Musiek: Voëlvry of op hok?”, p. 14.

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁰ Arnold, *INSIG*, June 1991, p. 33.

Come grab the feeling that wiggles and moves in a new jacket. Come grab the feeling that sounds and buzzes. Come grab it now, little friend, and you're in you're in. Come grab the joy that makes conversation flow, that makes for super hours. Come grab the joy that shines and teases and plays in crazy ways and you're in, you're in. For the little mouth, for the awake wild bull, for the grab it generation, grab it quick and scream. Come grab the roar that makes your toes curl and sounds over kilometres. Come grab the roar that fills evenings, loosen your tie and laces and you're in, you're in.

In another example, Brendan Jury summed up a typical narrative of what he called “trite and banal” Afrikaans pop songs:⁷⁸¹

She looks deep into my eyes. She gives me another look. Then it looks as if she looks as if I look different to her. My arm is around her shoulders. I say: I want to talk to you. Tonight we must say goodbye. Tomorrow I'm a soldier. She says: Right, you have your orders, go do your army thing. Go roll around in the dust and sweat.⁷⁸²

The FAK attempted to regain legitimacy among the Afrikaner youth by reworking popular Afrikaans folk songs in a more modern idiom:

In 1985, Oom [Uncle] Dirkie de Villiers again reworked several popular songs for the *Tweede FAK-lekkersingliedjies* [Second FAK nice singing songs]. The titles of the songs speak for themselves. “Sproetjies”, “ta' Mossie se sakkie-sakkie boeredans”, “Waterblommetjies”, “Jantjie kom huis toe”, “Die trein na Magersfontein”, “Kinders van die wind”, “Kaalvoet in die reën” – again music for the broadest layer of the population.⁷⁸³

As in 1976, Dirkie de Villiers was the FAK's go-to arranger. Interestingly, most of the songs mentioned here were composed by either Anton Goosen or Koos du Plessis, both connected to the Musiek-en-Liriek movement of only five and a half years earlier. This is telling, for despite the animosity already mentioned between Goosen and the FAK, they did view his work as a legitimate part of Afrikaner music heritage. These efforts by the FAK were ultimately unsuccessful, and alternative Afrikaans musicians would play a larger role in giving Afrikaans music a legitimate voice among the youth. Goosen and other Musiek-en-Liriek artists were heavily criticised by the Voëlvry artists, and Dirkie de Villiers' reworked versions of their songs contributed to this divide. Max du Preez mentions that Goosen was

⁷⁸¹ Jury, “Boys to Men”, p. 100.

⁷⁸² Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 50, from the song “Omkeer”, by By Louisa du Toit Smit, own translation.

⁷⁸³ A. le Roux, *Handhaaf*, April/May, 1988, p. 5..

criticised because he believed the system could be changed from within, while Voëlvry wanted to destroy it all.⁷⁸⁴ While this statement clearly differentiates the two camps of alternative Afrikaans musicians, which loosely combined to represent an alternative to the superficial pop mainstream, it also reminds of the intellectual critique posited by André Le Toit (Koos Kombuis) in *Die sondes van die vaders*. Here, the legitimacy of in-group criticism of the Afrikaner establishment was questioned on the basis that the whole system was morally corrupt and needed fundamental change.⁷⁸⁵ However, by the time of Voëlvry and the first Houtstok concert the following year, Goosen had become much more politically outspoken than he had been at the end of the 1970s. It is also worth a mention that Goosen represented an earlier generation of Afrikaner that grew up in a different society and was spared the army experience that so influenced the work of the Voëlvry artists.

The animosity between the FAK, its affiliated cultural and religious organisations, and the alternative Afrikaans music artists was serious enough that it prompted June Goodwin and Ben Schiff to refer to it as “music wars”.⁷⁸⁶ The borders between both camps were well demarcated: The FAK, SABC, Decibel record company, and artists such as Bles Bridges, Danie Botha and Innes and Franna Benade on the one hand; and artists like Johannes Kerckorrel, Anton Goosen and Koos Kombuis, and publications like *Die Vrye Weekblad* on the other. The first group, named LAM by music critic Theunis Engelbrecht⁷⁸⁷ (also known as Randy Rambo) represented much more than just a different music genre. They were portrayed as regime-friendly, utterly superficial and totally out of sync with the reality of South African politics. Furthermore, they were accused of actively and deliberately writing, producing, promoting and broadcasting Afrikaans music of such low standards that it had badly damaged Afrikaner culture. Not making a political statement became a political statement in itself

⁷⁸⁴ Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 57.

⁷⁸⁵ A. du Toit, *Die sondes van die vaders* (Cape Town: Rubicon Press, 1983).

⁷⁸⁶ J. Goodwin and B. Schiff, *Heart of Whiteness: Afrikaners face black rule in the New South Africa* (New York, Scribner, 1995), pp. 174-183.

⁷⁸⁷ T. Engelbrecht: “Babapap vir bleeksiele”, *Beeld*, 10 August 1988, in Arnold, “Pomporrels, plaasromans en popmusiek”, *Insig*, December/January 1990, p. 43.

during the 1980s, when South Africa was experiencing a state of emergency. The following 1988 interview with Bles Bridges, who started his career in the 1970s, is especially telling:

I don't need to contaminate my nation's brain with political information in my songs. I want to sing about the pretty things. Sing about the positive things. Because a positive nation is a nation that is productive, and is a nation that can mean something to someone.⁷⁸⁸

LAM artists dominated the mainstream of Afrikaans music and were well connected with influential conservatives in the media, the church and government, and used their influence to intimidate their opponents. They would send transcripts of offensive lyrics to conservative newspapers to incite public outcry against alternative Afrikaans artists. Anton Goosen noted that the offices of the FAK, the Broederbond and Brigadiers were all in the same building.⁷⁸⁹ David Kramer criticised mainstream Afrikaans music packaging on television a few years earlier in 1985 when he expressed disgust at “... the cabaret-style artist in the Liza Minnelli aspiration mould ... concentrat(ing) on trying to produce semi-spectacular shows based on the American model walking down 50 steps, sequins, glitter”.⁷⁹⁰ Liberal journalists were unflinching in their criticism of LAM. In an article in *Vrye Weekblad*, journalist Hanneli van Staden provides the following insights into how Afrikaans music could be “cured” of its anaemia:

[T]he SABC can play a leading role, but for some questionable reasons they favour only certain artists and companies – markedly Decibel. ...[T]here is no hope for organisations like the FAK and the ATKV. They are irrelevant in the transition phase South Africa is in. Furthermore, they have done Afrikaans culture enough damage by dumping it into a laager and treating it as if it was a terminal patient. The monopoly of MFP and Decibel must end.⁷⁹¹

The *lekkerliedjies* of the Afrikaans pop mainstream criticised above were (and still are) often based on European *Schlager*, which has a long historic connection with Afrikaans pop music.

⁷⁸⁸ L. Ross, *Voëlvry: the Movie*, Shifty Studios, DVD 2006.

⁷⁸⁹ Interview with author, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013.

⁷⁹⁰ “Kramer – the man no one (except) SATV can ignore”, *The Friend*, in M. Slabbert and D. de Villiers, *David Kramer: 'n Biografie* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2011), p. 197.

⁷⁹¹ Van Staden, “Afrikaanse Musiek: Voëlvry of op hok?”, *Vrye Weekblad*, 6-12 March 1992, p. 15.

Schlager

By the 1960s it had become common practice in the Afrikaans music mainstream to take European *Schlager*, or “hit”, melodies and to provide them with Afrikaans lyrics. Even long before *Schlager*, Afrikaans singers recorded Afrikaans lyrics for other original compositions in other languages. Gallo sent artists to London in 1930 to record a large batch of Afrikaans songs that eventually included Afrikaans versions of English hits as well, probably due to a lack of original material. Even earlier, in 1910, Annie Visser recorded Afrikaans *Gezangen* over English hymnals, which had copyright consequences under the new laws of 1912.⁷⁹² This practice is still common today.⁷⁹³

Schlager has been a prominent pop genre in northern Europe for decades and has taken on many different forms in different countries, including Finland, Hungary, Turkey, Sweden, Austria, the Netherlands, Germany and the former Yugoslavia. Of these, Dutch, German and Austrian *Schlager* songs seem to have been the most popular among Afrikaans artists.⁷⁹⁴ *Schlager* had limited popularity in Britain and the US, most probably due to the prevalence of other popular music genres. These European melodies with Afrikaans lyrics would collectively be included in the body of Afrikaans *lekkerliedjies*. From the late 1970s, but especially the 1980s onwards, *lekkerliedjies* would draw strong criticism from more serious Afrikaans songwriters and journalists. Academics criticised the *lekkerliedjie* for its superficiality, but more importantly, its compliance with the apartheid regime.⁷⁹⁵ The criticism against the *lekkerliedjie* is similar to the criticism, specifically in Germany, against *Schlager*. *Schlager* – in various developing forms – has been a popular genre in Germany since the 1950s, but has attracted criticism from German musicians and songwriters of more sophisticated music. Klaus Nathaus’ study provides valuable insight into how this genre was

⁷⁹² See chapter one.

⁷⁹³ Kosie van Niekerk (Select record company boss), in Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 157.

⁷⁹⁴ D.C. Pretorius, *Musieksterre Van Gister En Vandag: lewensketse en foto's van meer as 100 musieksterre* (Pretoria : Van der Walt, 1998), pp. 271-275.

⁷⁹⁵ Jury, “Boys to men”, pp. 99-100; Byerly, “Mirror, Mediator, and Prophet”, p.14.

favoured through a system of “payola” by the gatekeepers of the music industry to the detriment of other, more dynamic music styles.⁷⁹⁶ He defines *Schlager* as:

... a form of music that aimed at a mass audience unable or unwilling to discriminate by means of artistic criteria. Hit songs were devised to charm, amuse or move the broadest possible spectrum of people with catchy melodies and uncontroversial lyrics. Most hit songs dealt with romantic love; other *Schlager* referred to sunny and more or less exotic places from Italy to Hawaii or latched on to novelties in a quirky way.⁷⁹⁷

This definition of *Schlager* is extraordinarily similar to most commercial light Afrikaans releases from the 1950s onwards. In Europe, skilled musicians tend to look down on *Schlager* music and prefer more challenging genres like jazz. A notable critique of *Schlager* came from the jazz publicist Alfred Baresel in 1964, when he suggested that it was actively promoted by Joseph Goebels through the *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength through Joy) organisation during the Second World War. According to Baresel, sentimental songs were used to keep the population calm during wartime.⁷⁹⁸ In this way *Schlager* constituted something “harmful”, instead of something “worthless”.⁷⁹⁹

This bears a striking resemblance to the state of the Afrikaans music industry during the later years of apartheid. The idea of *Schlager* music as a tool of population control during times of national duress might be an extreme accusation. However, when one considers Carike Keuzenkamp’s translated *Schlager* hit, “Dis ‘n land” (It’s a country), along with the timing of its release (during the third year of the South African State of Emergency in 1987), as well as the music video accompanying the release, such an accusation seems appropriate and legitimate. The imagery used in the video is poignant: scenes of the apartheid regime’s military power during an extremely volatile political time, which conveys to the Afrikaans listeners and viewers a less than subtle message that their way of life is in good and powerful

⁷⁹⁶ K. Nathaus, “From dance bands to radio and records: Pop music promotion in West Germany and the decline of the *Schlager* genre, 1945 – 1964”, *Popular Music History* 6:3 (2011), pp. 287-306.

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 292

⁷⁹⁸ Cited in Nathaus, “From dance bands to radio and records”, p. 302.

⁷⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

hands; South Africans of other races in apparently happy scenarios, like a black couple laughing and dancing, Cape minstrels making music during a carnival, and farm labourers in the Boland seemingly content with their poverty.⁸⁰⁰ All this, as well as the lyrics, broadcasted a utopian image of white South Africa which stood in stark contrast with the political realities of the time. “Dis ‘n Land” was put on high rotation on television and the radio by the SABC, along with other songs by artists such as Bles Bridges, who sold out his performance at Sun City on 14 and 15 May 1987.⁸⁰¹

The criticism by the new voices in Afrikaans music of the late 1970s and 1980s towards Afrikaans *Schlager* artists such as Gé Korsten and Bles Bridges – and which still continues today – have similarities with the criticisms in Germany by artists opposed to the privileged position this genre enjoys in the music industry. It also supports concerns that deliberately superficial Afrikaans music has had a negative impact on Afrikaans culture.

The use of Afrikaans *Schlager* hits for political purposes by the state broadcaster had its limits, however. According to Boet Pretorius, the SABC was opposed to *Schlager* since the broadcaster wanted “authentic” Afrikaans music.⁸⁰² German surnames among the composer credits did not please them. The choice to use European melodies was a pragmatic one. With twelve artists – among them some of the biggest names in Afrikaans music, like Gé Korsten, Carike Keuzenkamp, Anneli van Rooyen and Leon Schuster – on Decibel’s label, there were not enough Afrikaans songwriters who could contribute original material. Twelve albums consisted of at least 144 songs, selected from a much higher number, and artists needed to release albums almost annually.⁸⁰³ This suggests that, although there was an obvious demand for these songs, the industry was small and could not produce enough original material.

⁸⁰⁰ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8r2uLdSlyg0>, accessed 10 August 2012.

⁸⁰¹ Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 27.

⁸⁰² Telephonic interview with author, 22 July 2013.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*

According to Pretorius, this practice was already in place in the 1960s when he started his music career.

The significance of Pretorius' statement is that it undermines the idea that the SABC favoured imported and reworked *Schlager* music over more local genres. More importantly, tension between the SABC and the mainstream Afrikaans artists contradicts accusations put forward by some that the latter were willingly compliant with the ideologies of the regime.⁸⁰⁴ Pretorius also states that at a stage in the 1980s, the SABC wanted to promote the more serious genre of Afrikaans cabaret since it more closely embodied their aspirations for developing "high-brow" Afrikaans culture. Pretorius' list of the 100 biggest hit songs in Afrikaans music history provides some useful further information on the origins of popular Afrikaans music compositions.⁸⁰⁵ The list is based partially on album sales, but also includes performances and radio and television airtime where applicable. He does not, however, provide specific sources and excludes traditional Afrikaans folk songs, *boeremusiek*, and FAK-songs.⁸⁰⁶ The book was published in 1998, so excludes the wave of Afrikaans pop hits after 2000. From the 100 songs on the list, 36 are foreign music compositions given Afrikaans lyrics. In a number of instances, only the Afrikaans lyricist's name is given, but cross-references confirm that the music was imported.⁸⁰⁷ Of the 36 songs in question, three were released between 1930 and 1959, nine were released in the 1960s, seven in the 1970s, fourteen in the 1980s, and two after 1990.

All of Gé Korsten's eight hits on this list had foreign origins. The following examples acknowledge their origins: "Algoabaai" (based on Olivia Newton-John's "Banks of the Ohio"), "Liefeling" (Darling) (based on Peter Maffay's "Save Me"), "Reën" (Rain) (based on

⁸⁰⁴ Jury, "Boys to men", pp. 99-100; Byerly, "Mirror, Mediator, and Prophet", p. 14.

⁸⁰⁵ Pretorius, *Musieksterre Van Gister En Vandag*, pp. 271-275.

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁷ An example is Carike Keuzenkamp's 1987 hit, "Dis 'n Land", with lyrics by Johan Stemmett. The music is taken from the German singer Nicole's 1986 hit *Lafß mich nicht allein*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWONEFve-bY>, accessed 10 August 2012.

“Mister Love”), “Sing, seeman, sing” (Sing, sailor, sing) (an adaptation of a German sailor song) and “Wees lief vir my” (Love me) (based on a song by Austrian composer, Udo Jürgens).⁸⁰⁸ Apart from these well-known hits, the practice of taking European hits and writing Afrikaans lyrics to them was very common. Individuals like Heine Toerien (who worked at the SABC),⁸⁰⁹ and André Viljoen,⁸¹⁰ were often commissioned by Brigadiers record company to write the lyrics for Afrikaans singers.

When read in conjunction with the newest version of the FAK Songbook,⁸¹¹ which also contains a list of the most popular Afrikaans songs, including songwriting credits, a clearer picture emerges on the background of many Afrikaans songs. There is a tendency to prefer songs of continental Europe – where *Schlager* is popular – over British and American music as source materials. The *Schlager*-styled Afrikaans mainstream pop would elicit stronger criticism from a growing number of alternative Afrikaans artists towards the end of the 1980s, of which the Voëlvry movement formed an integral part.

Houtstok vs FAK

The animosity between the alternative Afrikaans press and their associated artists and the Afrikaans pop mainstream culminated on 31 May 1990:

The occasion was dubbed Houtstok – Woodstock in Afrikaans – taking its name and inspiration from the American rock festival that symbolized youthful liberation in 1969. Houtstok offered the Afrikaners present a joyful repudiation of their inherited image as a conservative people intolerant of racial differences and resistant to progress.⁸¹²

⁸⁰⁸ Pretorius, *Musieksterre Van Gister En Vandag*, pp. 271-275.

⁸⁰⁹ <http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/heine-toerien-71-afrikaans-broadcaster-and-author-entertainment-programs>, accessed 09 August 2013.

⁸¹⁰ <http://www.vetseun.co.za/anarkans/bladsy/generockwell.html>, accessed 09 August 2013.

⁸¹¹ Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge, *FAK-sangbundel: 'n versameling van Afrikaanse musiek in ses verskillende rubrieke*, Vol. II (Pretoria : Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge, 2012).

⁸¹² New York Times, 4 June 1990, quoted in S. Hofmeyr: *Mense van my Asem* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2008), p. 121.

The festival was held on the Le Château estate outside Pretoria and was intended as an alternative to the FAK's Republic Day music festival held on the same day, not too far away at the Voortrekker Monument.⁸¹³ At the monument, the most sacred of Afrikaner sites, a different crowd of Afrikaners gathered to celebrate 39 years of the South African republic. The FAK's festival was not without controversy. The organisers required the artists to mime to recordings of their music to avoid sound problems when the concert was televised.⁸¹⁴ This was apparently no secret, as one audience member from Pretoria remarked:

“I want to look the singers in the eye. And it doesn't matter that they don't really, really sing. The faces are there at least,” while her husband stated: “This is our *Volk's* people. I am here for Gé Korsten.”⁸¹⁵

The identification of Gé Korsten as part of the “*volk's* people” resonates with the *volkseie/volksvreemde* construct. The difference in audiences at the two events was as marked as the different artists who performed. Johannes Kerkerrel did not perform at Houtstok since he was touring Belgium and the Netherlands at the time, but also displayed a level of reluctance to participate, and for which he was heavily criticised by the festival organisers.⁸¹⁶ Apart from personality clashes, this also indicates that the alternative Afrikaans music movement was not hegemonic. There is little doubt that Voëlvry served as the inspiration for this concert, but the resulting live double album of the concert only features one song from a Voëlvry artist (Koois Kombuis' “Ou Tannie Blues”), while the rest represent a much wider array of alternative Afrikaans and English artists.⁸¹⁷

⁸¹³ A. Arnold, “Veertien uur se rock by Houtstok”, *Insig*, May 1990, p. 37.

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁵ M. Ley, “Mimiekmusiek by die monument”, *Die Burger*, 2 June 1990.

⁸¹⁶ B. Hough, “Vir die ‘Orgel’ sê mens nie ‘Sit dit af’ nie!”, *Rapport*, 17 June 1990, p. 5.

⁸¹⁷ See Figure 19.,

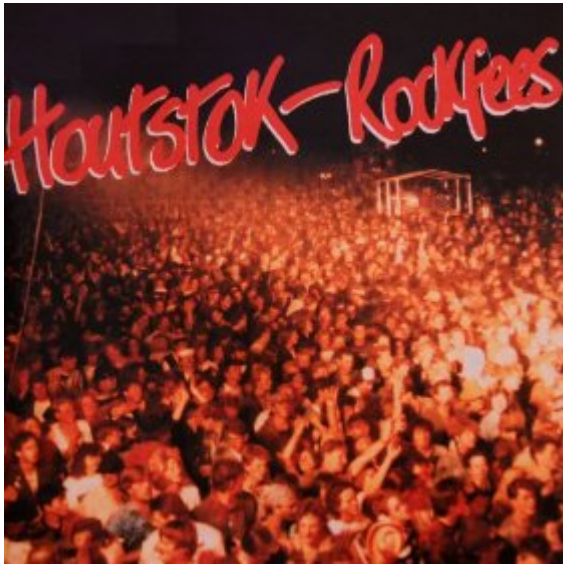


Figure 18: Houtstok live album.



Figure 19: Houtstok live album tracklisting.

Somewhat surprisingly, the most popular act at Houtstok was Die Briels – with Tant (Aunt) Sannie Briel performing with her two children for the first time in decades.⁸¹⁸ Sannie Briel’s presence at the concert seems anomalous, since Houtstok was a strictly “alternative” Afrikaans music festival that featured artists representative of the liberal new wave of Afrikaans music artists, with whom Die Briels had no direct association. Yet when tant

⁸¹⁸ T. Engelbrecht, “Kranse dreun, maar Ouma Briel kom weer”, *Die Burger*, 2 June 1990.

Sannie, her son Frans and daughter Anita walked onto the stage, a crowd of 20 000 kept chanting “Ouma Sannie, Ouma Sannie” (Grandma Sannie, Grandma Sannie). Die Briels were no purveyors of rebellious rock music. They did not even appreciate Koos Kombuis’ rude language.⁸¹⁹ Yet Johannes Kerkerrel, when asked about his absence at the festival, did not portray any regret other than the fact that he missed Die Briels:

I am sorry that I didn’t see the Briels. I am a great fan of the Briels and would have done anything to see their performance.⁸²⁰

Sannie Briel was not even listed among the artists listed to play Houtstok (Kerkerrel was) in an article in the liberal Afrikaans magazine *Insig*.⁸²¹ Perhaps Die Briels were added to the line-up as a caricature of the 1950s and 1960s although, at the height of their success, Die Briels offered a rare, working class alternative to the European-styled operatic Afrikaans pop of singers like Gé Korsten.

Houtstok was a considerable risk at a time when militant right wing Afrikaner organisations were at their most dangerous. A disaster was averted when police defused a bomb placed under the stage by right wing Afrikaners.⁸²² As Anton Goosen remembers, the security police were also never far away at such shows:

It was still seriously going on with Houtstok. Now Houtstok was after the Voëlvry thing. I mean Voëlvry had already by then picked up trouble, and if they had by now added a lot of hype to it or not, there was trouble. There was definitely trouble. And up to and including Houtstok, because Houtstok was a *direct* confrontation between the new Afrikaner that feels like that, and the old one at the Voortrekker Monument who is celebrating on the same day for Republic day [31 May 1990]. The FAK, backtracks, lollipops, uhm eating candyfloss, family fun and etc. Shiny shoes, which you mustn’t forget. And we beat them. There were 22 000 people at Houtstok and there were 16 000 people at theirs.⁸²³

⁸¹⁹ Frans Briel, interviewed by Engelbrecht, “Kranse dreun, maar Ouma Briel kom weer”, *Die Burger*, 2 June 1990.

⁸²⁰ Hough, “Vir die ‘Orgel’ sê mens nie ‘Sit dit af’ nie!”, *Rapport*, 17 June 1990, p. 5, trans.

⁸²¹ Arnold, “Veertien uur se rock by Houtstok”, *Insig*, May 1990, p. 37.

⁸²² Anton Goosen, interview with author, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013, translated from original, confirmed by Peter Pearlson, sound engineer at the concert, 11 April 2014.

⁸²³ Goosen, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013, translated.

Goosen could not have given a more succinct summary of the tensions between the new wave of Afrikaans music and the old guard. On stage at the concert, he sang his song “Wit Kaffers van Afrika” (White Kaffirs of Africa).⁸²⁴ The title of the song alone undermines so effectively the racial and class principles on which Afrikaner society was based, that the message is wholly unambiguous: a group of young Afrikaners have broken away – they now self-identify as “African”/ “other”.

Steve Hofmeyr, who would become one of the most popular Afrikaans singers of all time, played at both the Houtstok concert and the FAK concert. The female audience members at the FAK concert fought over a scarf he threw into the crowd, something he refrained from doing at Houtstok, where he apparently did not have the same effect on the opposite gender.⁸²⁵ Hofmeyr did not perform at the second Houtstok concert, held in 1992, but he did perform at the FAK’s concert. Bizarrely, he performed a skit dressed as the Cossack “Volga”, lip-syncing to the Hebrew folk-song, “Havah Nagilah”. After experiencing “sound-problems” he stripped and reveals himself to be Steve Hofmeyr.⁸²⁶ Goodwin and Schiff:

Traditional Cossacks, infamous for killing Jews in nineteenth-century pogroms, wouldn’t sing “Havah Nagilah”. And black-coated orthodox Jews wouldn’t strip their clothes in public. The skit might show ignorance rather than malice, but by omission or commission, it indicated the latent anti-Jewishness of Afrikaner society.⁸²⁷

Although there is a history of anti-semitism among Afrikaners, especially in the first half of the twentieth century, it is doubtful that this instance was intended as an anti-semitic gesture. It did, however, display painfully bad taste – something that is still common in Afrikaans pop music. Arnold accuses Hofmeyr of placating both sides, referring to a “marriage” between Hofmeyr and Bles Bridges on the LAM television program *Debuut*, as well as the fact that Hofmeyr was dubbed as “alternative” just three days before the FAK’s concert of 1991. The

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*, the song also appears on the live recording of the concert.

⁸²⁵ “Sannie kry toe applous en ...”, *Rapport*, 3 June 1990, p. 6.

⁸²⁶ Goodwin and Schiff, *Heart of Whiteness*, p. 176.

⁸²⁷ *Ibid.*

latter strategy was as a deliberate ploy to gain legitimacy for the concert among a younger generation of Afrikaners, but it only succeeded in placing Hofmeyr in the camp of the light Afrikaans singers.⁸²⁸ As he later explained:

... but later I was grateful that the Afrikaans light music world would come off mostly unscathed from the institutionalised, politically correct threats and petty attitudes.⁸²⁹

Indeed, mainstream Afrikaans pop continued to sell well and continues to do so today,⁸³⁰ while more alternative Afrikaans groups struggle to sell a fraction as many albums. Of course, as will be discussed in the next chapter, the conservative attitudes of the Afrikaans mainstream carry with it different significations and challenges in post-apartheid South Africa.

Houtstok 2 was held in 1992 and again attracted a large crowd. Even though the post-apartheid years loom large in studies on Afrikaner identity, from a music perspective, the tensions between censors, the FAK (and the artists they supported) and the artists who challenged them indicate deep divides in Afrikaner society towards the end of apartheid. Voëlvry and Houtstok represented the last phase of political Afrikaans music that, although exclusively white, was aligned with the ideals of a new South Africa. Post-apartheid political Afrikaans music almost invariably creates tension when it criticises the government. As a privileged minority group with a difficult past, more liberal Afrikaans artists like Fokofpolisiekar avoid political comment lest they be seen as racist, and distance themselves from those artists who openly engage with race and politics, often with political implications. This latter group – headed by Steve Hofmeyr (see chapter seven) – is often accused of hate-speech and bring into question the acceptable limits of artistic freedom in a culturally pluralistic society. Voëlvry's South Africa was changing fast, and their criticism against Afrikaner society welcomed (or at least shared) by the greater South African public. Their

⁸²⁸ Arnold, "Kom gryp die gebrul wat jou tone laat krul", *Insig*, July 1991, p. 34.

⁸²⁹ Hofmeyr, *Mense van my asem*, pp. 119-120, translated from original.

⁸³⁰ See chapter seven.

political antagonism was a colourful voice amidst the unravelling of apartheid, but Afrikaner political resistance twenty years after apartheid has a very different dynamic and meaning.

The transition into a post-apartheid South Africa represented an insecure time in the Afrikaans music industry. Record companies were unsure how to respond to the fundamental shifts in society. The state support provided to the Afrikaans arts for decades, was now directed elsewhere. One redeeming factor was the introduction of CD's. When vinyl production stopped in 1992, record companies survived (very comfortably) by re-releasing old catalogues onto CD.⁸³¹ Suddenly, old Afrikaans songs were selling again, which drowned out some of the new voices that emerged towards the end of the 1980s. Johannes Kerkerrel and Koos Kombuis enjoyed some success, as did Goosen and Rauch. New songwriters like Valiant Swart emerged, as did alternative music festivals, of which Oppikoppi is the largest. Afrikaans arts festivals like KKNK and AARDKLOP were established specifically as a haven for Afrikaans arts in the new South Africa. By 2000, the Afrikaans culture industry was booming, with the pop music mainstream one of the main beneficiaries.

Conclusion

The acts of remembering and memorialising the cultural significance of an Afrikaans rock & roll tour that happened in 1989 in today's South African society is a complex psychological process. Voëlvry's significance has been amplified through literature and the passing of time, overshadowing the contributions of other alternative Afrikaans artists of the time. It is possible that Voëlvry is memorialised to compensate for the dearth of struggle capital in Afrikaner culture. The movement's main target was the conservative middle class Afrikaner society in which they were raised. In many ways they were true radicals, but although they could be very specific in their cultural attack – identifying individuals like P.W. Botha, and

⁸³¹ Boet Pretorius, telephonic interview with author, 22 July 2013.

Afrikaner symbols like the *ossewa* in their satire – they were indifferent towards linking up with black anti-apartheid movements. Middle class white suburbia and all its banalities were symbolically broken down, but therein lies the limitations of the movement. Voëlvry did not represent, or link up with, a rising working class or cohesive political grouping. Although it displayed political undertones, it was not a political movement per se and claims that it brought down apartheid are exaggerations. A more accurate summation, without trying to sound determinist, would be to regard it as a product of its times. The social cohesion and hegemony of Afrikaner society had frayed enough for Voëlvry and other alternative Afrikaans artists to find a level of resonance among mostly young Afrikaners. However, a large majority of Afrikaners felt that society was facing a much bigger threat, namely an unknown future under a ruling black political majority. Under such circumstances, white middle class suburbia had to be preserved, not undermined. The Afrikaans pop mainstream was also largely unaffected by alternative Afrikaans music. After Voëlvry, Kerkorrel and Koos Kombuis achieved wider success, but James Phillips did not. It would, however, be inaccurate to say that Kombuis and Kerkorrel were co-opted into the mainstream that they had so vehemently opposed.

Historically, popular Afrikaans music has been characterised more by a lack of movements than its abundance. Between what little movements (employing a wide definition) there were, Voëlvry and Houtstok stood out and most effectively took on the appearance of the well-known and deeply influential music movements that originated from within the US and Britain in the second half of the twentieth century; movements like rock & roll and, to a lesser degree, punk. In a sense, they assimilated elements from decades of developments in these genres in a very short time. It is, however, important to note here that despite the similarities in appearance, there were fundamental differences as well. Well-defined when compared to looser groupings of Afrikaans music prior to it, rebellious, subversive, loud and antagonistic, Voëlvry and Houtstok reached as large an audience as was receptive to such a movement in

South Africa at the time. However, this audience was limited, and the musicians and their ideas failed to make wider inroads into a conservative Afrikaner society.⁸³² This does not diminish the artistic legacy of these musicians.

When the artistic output of Afrikaner artists of the late 1970s to late 1980s is viewed in its entirety, including literature, theatre, cabaret and music, and is considered against the socio-political backdrop in which it was produced, it represents one of the most fecund eras in the history of Afrikaans culture. Seen in this context, Voëlvry was the quintessential example of Afrikaans protest music of the apartheid era. There were other Afrikaans groups – some who appeared on the original Voëlvry compilation in 1986 – that were also subversive, but did not become intimately associated with the tour. Houtstok, on the other hand, provided a stage – and massive audience – to many of the other alternative Afrikaans acts and can be seen as a culmination of the whole alternative Afrikaans movement, even though only one Voëlvry artist was on the line-up. Ultimately, Voëlvry was the extension, and most publicised variant, of an alternative Afrikaans music underground that started at least six years prior with the release in 1983 of Bernoldus Niemand's first single "Hou my vas Korporaal". Although many of the libertarians who were part of Voëlvry might have now "retreated into smug middle class South African life",⁸³³ while sharing a strong nostalgia for that time, they can hardly be blamed for it. For them (and many others), Voëlvry and Houtstok was rock & roll, a rebellion, a party, a political statement and a time of personal liberation from a system that is no more.

⁸³² Grundlingh, "Rocking the boat?", p. 13.

⁸³³ Tolsi and Gedye, www.theconmag.co.za/201/09/12/white-noise-and-lost-irony/.

Chapter Seven

Performing whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa: Aggressive identity politics in Afrikaans pop

Introduction

This final chapter develops from the simple premise that the flood of literature on “De la Rey” since 2007 has largely failed to address the significance of the popularity enjoyed by other Afrikaans pop artists of the twenty-first century; artists whose songs do not necessarily employ such obvious cultural tropes. I investigate representations of post-apartheid Afrikaner identities in their music that are more subtle, yet convey and support value systems that are sometimes at odds with a multi-racial society. The racial exclusivity of pop concerts and Afrikaans arts festivals, conservative views on sexuality as well as religion, and protest are all common elements that define a significant part of post-apartheid Afrikaans pop music. I use four specific examples – Miriam Makeba’s performance at the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK) in 1997, Die Antwoord’s performance at AARDKLOP in 2009, Freshlyground’s performance at Innibos in 2013, and Fokofpolisiekar’s controversial “Fok God”-incident in 2006 – to illustrate the boundaries of acceptance at Afrikaans Arts festivals.

This chapter revisits the existing literature, including studies done on representations of masculinity in Afrikaans magazines⁸³⁴ and combines personal observations of music performances with interviews in an effort to determine the centrality of Afrikaans pop music in the cultural lives of Afrikaners. The cultural spaces created by music seem to have become increasingly political, infused with the frustration experienced by a newly politically emasculated white Afrikaner constituency stripped of historical party political platforms. The

⁸³⁴ See D. Pretorius, “The Visual Representations of Masculinities in Huisgenoot Tempo Magazine”, *Communicatio* 39:2 (2013), pp. 210–232.

main protagonist in the Afrikaans pop/Afrikaner politics relationship is Steve Hofmeyr, whom I interviewed in 2013. Since then, his political activism has escalated to the extent that – judging by comments on social media – if you don't support Hofmeyr, you are not a true Afrikaner. This hints at a deeper psychology – the use of black-on-white crimes (especially brutal farm murders) in rallies such as Red October (which Hofmeyr openly supports) – that positions white Afrikaners as victims. This complex position (and the memory of apartheid) is also explored here. Ultimately, this chapter aims to provide a wider context than just one song in considering the historic complexities and tensions represented in the self-identification and constructions of Afrikaners in post-apartheid Afrikaans pop music.

Memory and Afrikaans pop in the twenty-first century

Memories are selective and therefore always open to change and can be affected by social change, changes that reinforce certain memories or encourage collective amnesia.⁸³⁵

In post-apartheid South Africa, multiple constructs of subjectivity and identity abound in a more open society, mirroring rapidly evolving global forces of societal change. These forces include processes of cultural de-differentiation, often causing tension when local, traditional value systems conflict with growing global cultures disseminated through channels of mass media. In this context, some Afrikaners experience a variety of threats to more traditional identity stereotypes. Against such a background, and amidst simultaneous seismographic domestic changes on the political front, where reliance on nostalgia remains an integral strategy to conserve aspects of Afrikaner identity, Afrikaners have felt the onset of the postmodern world more acutely than most. It entails a loss succinctly articulated by Jose Colmeiro in a different (but appropriate) context:

⁸³⁵ J.D. Brewer, "Memory, Truth and Victimhood in Post-trauma Societies", in G. Delanty and K. Kumar (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), p. 215.

Similarly, the recurring postmodern assessment that our contemporary global culture suffers amnesia, and its accompanying rhetoric of mourning and obsession with the loss of identity, as seen in the pervasive signs of fragmentation, dismemberment, simulacra, fissures and the cultivation of nostalgia, had renovated the interest for the recovery of memory and cultural identity. In a lament over the disappearance of traditional forms of memory and cultural identity in modern societies, Pierre Nora has noted that “we speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left.”⁸³⁶

For a number of Afrikaners, apartheid represents a painful and complicated memory to process.⁸³⁷ Most Afrikaners have denounced it following a process of demythologisation⁸³⁸ and only a small radical contingent hark back to a romanticised version thereof. However, with the loss of political power, Afrikaners, especially white Afrikaans males (so-called WAMs), face challenges in the form of affirmative action and campaigns for gender equality in the workplace,⁸³⁹ while the perception exists for some that the future of their language and culture – their identity – is under threat in post-apartheid South Africa. Popular Afrikaans music has thrived in this context. “Mainstream” or “commercial” Afrikaans pop music is one of the biggest selling genres in the South African music market today, accounting for between 30% and 40% of all locally produced music sales, including music releases in other languages. Afrikaans artists like Steve Hofmeyr (for *Toeka*, 2004),⁸⁴⁰ Lianie May (*Boeremeisie*, 2009),⁸⁴¹ Bok van Blerk (*Afrikaner Hart*, 2010),⁸⁴² Theuns Jordaan (*Roeper*, 2013)⁸⁴³ and Riana Nel (*Die Regte Tyd*, 2015)⁸⁴⁴ have all won the South African Music Award (SAMA) for best-selling South African album of the year. Steve Hofmeyr has sold

⁸³⁶ J. Colmeiro, “A Nation of Ghosts?: Haunting, Historical Memory and Forgetting in Post-Franco Spain”, *Electronic journal of theory of literature and comparative literature* 4 (2011), p. 21.

⁸³⁷ See A. Delpont, “Canto ergo sum: I sing, therefore I am”, *Muziki* 3:1 (2006), pp. 5–15.

⁸³⁸ K. du Pisani, “Puritanism transformed: Afrikaner Masculinities in the Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Period”, in R. Morrell (ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Durban: Zed Books, 2001), p. 171.

⁸³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁰ <http://www.channel24.co.za/Music/News/SAMA-audience-boos-Steve-Hofmeyr-20110523>, accessed 20 July 2013.

⁸⁴¹ <http://beta.mnet.co.za/ChannelO/ChannelArticle.aspx?Aid=15541>, accessed 20 July 2013.

⁸⁴² <http://www.channel24.co.za/Music/FeaturesInterviews/2010-SAMA-Winners-20100414-2>, accessed 20 July 2013.

⁸⁴³ M. Malan, “Samas-sukses”, *Rapport*, 12 May 2013, p. 3.

⁸⁴⁴ <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/entertainment/2015/04/20/xxi-south-african-music-awards-samas---photos>, accessed 28 May 2015.

more than two million records,⁸⁴⁵ and so has Juanita du Plessis,⁸⁴⁶ making her the top-selling female Afrikaans recording artist in history.

Furthermore, besides Theuns Jordaan's success in 2013 with his album *Roeper*, the five top-selling albums in South Africa for the 2012/ 2013 period were all Afrikaans. Riana Nel's *Die moeite werd* (87 000 copies), Jay and Lianie's *Bonnie en Clyde* (80 000 copies), Bobby van Jaarsveld's *Wat geld nie kan koop nie* (80 000 copies) and Juanita du Plessis' *Jy voltooi my* (70 000 copies), outsold all other genres in a time when the traditional record industry is increasingly threatened by digital music downloads.⁸⁴⁷ These names, along with a small group of other Afrikaans artists, like Kurt Darren and Nicholis Louw, have dominated the industry for a number of years.

Theuns Jordaan ascribed this success to the loyalty of the Afrikaans music-buying public and their preference for physical copies over music downloads. Arnold Coleske attributes these successes to the quality of the music: Afrikaans listeners demand good quality Afrikaans music, and these Afrikaans artists deliver.⁸⁴⁸ Another possible explanation is that the changing demographics in the Afrikaans music buying public has led to a sharp increase in sales. As mentioned before, from the 1950s until the late 1980s Afrikaans youth did not listen to Afrikaans music. With the end of apartheid and the onset of the 1990s, Afrikaans students and teenagers started listening to, and buying, Afrikaans albums.⁸⁴⁹ It has also become easier and less expensive to record albums, which means that there has been a substantial increase in the number of records released onto the market. Without the restrictions of the SABC and with print media targeting a younger market, sales figures have grown substantially, while record companies capitalised on new technologies by re-releasing older best-selling Afrikaans

⁸⁴⁵ Electronic communication with author, 05 August 2013, see also <http://stevehofmeyr.co.za/website/biography-parent?showall=1>, accessed 21 July 2013.

⁸⁴⁶ <http://www.juanitaduplessis.com/>, accessed 21 July 2013.

⁸⁴⁷ Malan, "Samas-sukses", *Rapport*, 12 May 2013, p. 3.

⁸⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁹ Boet Pretorius, telephonic interview with author, 22 July 2013, see also chapter three's discussion of FAK polls.

albums onto CD-format from the late 1980s onwards.⁸⁵⁰ Bles Bridges released the first Afrikaans CD in 1987, and the printing of vinyl albums was discontinued in September 1992.⁸⁵¹ Notably, the release of vinyl albums resumed in a recent global trend and many Afrikaans artists have followed suit. It is, however, hard to determine how successful this trend is in the local market and how long it will last.

Another possible explanation for the popularity of Afrikaans pop is that it forms part of what Melissa Steyn refers to as the “ignorance contract”, whereby white South Africans, including Afrikaners, create a comfortable past connection with apartheid that makes it easier for them and their children to exist in the present. In this way, their experiences of the reality of the apartheid era, and their support for it, are “forgotten” in favour of a “more comfortable present.”⁸⁵² Superficial lyrics, “happy” and easy, escapist and entertaining, as opposed to introspective and interrogative, Afrikaans pop music forms part of the “feel good” emotions involved in constructing ignorance. The use of nostalgic themes in Afrikaans pop songs (like Bok van Blerk’s “De la Rey”, and Steve Hofmeyr’s “Pampoen”) also memorialises this past. As Colmeiro succinctly puts it:

These new spaces of remembrance are lieux de mémoire, defined by Davis and Starn as “places” where memories converge, condense, conflict, and define relationships between past, present, and future. Monuments, museums, commemorations, symbols, books, documentaries, all can be considered collective “sites of memory”, and the meanings taking shape in those sites have potential impact in the formation and consolidation of modern collective identities.⁸⁵³

In light of these facts, it is interesting that other Afrikaans albums from the last twelve years had *not* attracted the same academic interest as “De la Rey”, since this ever-present mainstream says much more about how Afrikaners construct identities than one song about a long-dead Boer general. For instance, there is no academic discourse on Theuns Jordaan’s

⁸⁵⁰ Pretorius, telephonic interview with author, 22 July 2013.

⁸⁵¹ I. Roggeband, “Tekens van die tye, ’n Fassinerende oorsig oor die Afrikaanse Musiekbedryf in die afgelope eeu,” *Huisgenoot Tempo* 1 (2012), p. 24.

⁸⁵² M. Steyn, “The ignorance contract: recollections of apartheid childhoods and the construction of epistemologies of ignorance”, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 19:1 (January 2012), p. 8.

⁸⁵³ Colmeiro, “Nation of Ghosts?”, pp. 21-22.

albums *Vreemde Stad* and *Tjailatyd*, both selling more than 200 000 copies. Or of Juanita du Plessis' hit "Ska Rumba", Kurt Darren's "Meisie Meisie" (Girl Girl) and "Kaptein" (Captain), and Steve Hofmeyr's *Toeka*, (with the hit, "Pampoen" that sold more than 200 000 copies).⁸⁵⁴ Robbie Wessels also had a hit in the same year "De la Rey" was released, called "Die Leeuloop", from the album *Haley se Komeet*, which sold more than 100 000 copies.⁸⁵⁵ Yet, apart from Bok van Blerk, these artists tend to be ignored by academia in favour of more subversive music movements and artists, most notably the Voëlvry movement, Fokofpolisiekar,⁸⁵⁶ Karen Zoid⁸⁵⁷ and lesser-known protest singers of the post-apartheid era. Mainstream Afrikaans pop artists typically differ from such artists by focussing on lyrical themes like sport,⁸⁵⁸ innocent, and exclusively heterosexual relationships,⁸⁵⁹ or the odd neologism that has no clear meaning.⁸⁶⁰ All of the albums containing the songs mentioned above sold more than 100 000 copies each, with Leon Schuster's "Hier Kommie Bokke" selling an estimated 270 000 copies in 1995 when South Africa hosted the Rugby World Cup. By contrast, artists like Fokofpolisiekar and Koos Kombuis rarely have gold-selling albums (more than 20 000 units).

Geographically, the Afrikaans pop mainstream is concentrated around, though not confined to, Pretoria and occasionally links up with other brands such as the Blue Bulls Rugby Union, who commissioned Steve Hofmeyr to write a team song in 1998.⁸⁶¹ "Die Bloubul eet nie van die vloer af nie" (The Blue Bull does not eat off the floor), which is often played over the stadium speakers at Loftus Versveld (the home of Blue Bull rugby in Pretoria) on match days,

⁸⁵⁴ I. Roggeband, *50 Stemme: Die grootste name in Afrikaanse musiek* (Cape Town: Delta, 2009), p. 241.

⁸⁵⁵ T. Ridgeway, "Is Local nog lekker?", *Pomp*, 2011, p. 145.

⁸⁵⁶ A.E. Klopper, "Die opkoms van Afrikaanse rock en die Litirêre status van liriek, met spesifieke verwysing na Fokofpolisiekar", (MA Dissertation, Stellenbosch University, March 2009).

⁸⁵⁷ Zoid's lyrics have been studied as part of language courses at South African Universities.

⁸⁵⁸ Bok van Blerk's "Habana", Leon Schuster's "Hier kommie Bokke".

⁸⁵⁹ Kurt Darren's "Meisie, meisie".

⁸⁶⁰ Juanita du Plessis' "Ska Rumba" – this term might actually have a more complex history, since it was apparently used as a way of communication between prison gangs, although it is unclear whether Du Plessis had knowledge of this when she wrote the song.

⁸⁶¹ S. Hofmeyr, *Mense van my Asem* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2008), p. 185.

became one of Hofmeyr's biggest hits. A previous favourite song – played every time the popular flyhalf, Derrick Hougard, was successful with a conversion or penalty kick, was Gé Korsten's hit "Liefeling". Singers also often pose for publicity shots in the jerseys of specific teams⁸⁶² and appear on the cover of *Huisgenoot*, the largest circulated magazine in South Africa and sponsor of one of the premier Afrikaans music event of the year, *Skouspel*. Apart from Hofmeyr's connection to Blue Bulls rugby, commercial Afrikaans albums with sports themes have a long history. Al Debbo, a popular humoristic singer (whose hit, "Hasie", written in 1952 by Nico Cartens and Anton de Waal, is one of the biggest selling Afrikaans singles of all time)⁸⁶³ also released a sport-themed song in 1983 entitled "Die Krieketdingeling" (The Cricket dingaling). The lyrics were written by Anton Goosen under the pseudonym Dick Vorendijk and based on the melody of Chuck Berry's "My Ding-a-ling".⁸⁶⁴

Criticism

The criticism of mainstream pop as artistically anaemic is not limited to Afrikaans music, although locally, it has had interesting – and sometimes violent – consequences. Bles Bridges assaulted Anton Goosen in 1990, after Goosen alluded on national television to Bridges' much-publicised affair,⁸⁶⁵ while and Steve Hofmeyr assaulted journalist Jan-Jan Joubert after he made some personal remarks in a (negative) review of Hofmeyr's show at the KKNK in 2002.⁸⁶⁶ After the incident, Hofmeyr had the following to say: "I appreciate criticism. But as

⁸⁶² Riana Nel in a Blue Bull jersey in *Rapport*, 12 May 2013, p. 3.

⁸⁶³ R. Trehwela, *Song Safari* (Johannesburg: Limelight Press, 1980), p. 64.

⁸⁶⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Marq-Vass-Southern-African-Music-Collectibles/251922131233?fref=ts>, accessed 16 July 2013.

⁸⁶⁵ Interview with author, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013.

⁸⁶⁶ <http://www.news24.com/Entertainment/SouthAfrica/Hofmeyr-III-do-it-again-20020401>, accessed 15 July 2013.

soon as my fans, my family and my crew are humiliated and a newspaper makes my fans seem common, I will definitely hit someone.”⁸⁶⁷

In an article in *Huisgenoot Tempo*, Roggeband quoted the following statement by an anonymous SAMA (South African Music Awards) judge:

When you listen to what the rest of the South African artists offer, you realise how far behind we are. Some of the Afrikaans albums sound as if they were made six, seven years ago. There is too much reliance on borrowing songs from abroad.⁸⁶⁸

As was explained in chapter five, there is a long-time practice of taking hit songs from continental Europe – most often Germany and Holland – and releasing them with Afrikaans lyrics. A more recent example is Nicholis Louw’s 2008 hit “Vergeet en Vergewe” (Forget and Forgive).⁸⁶⁹ The music of another of his hits – “Rock daai lyfie” (Rock that body, 2005) – was a ringtone of one of the secretaries at his record company. The album sold in excess of 100 000 copies.⁸⁷⁰ Kosie van Niekerk of Select Music record company and co-writer of many Afrikaans pop hits, openly admits that they are not afraid to take songs from overseas, since music is universal.⁸⁷¹ In a curious reversal, Kurt Darren has sold a number of his songs to Flemish and German artists.⁸⁷² One of the strongest criticisms against the mainstream Afrikaans music market comes from Deon Maas, a former record company executive and documentary film-maker:

For the last decade, the Afrikaans music market has been a waste bin for talentless people who have the audacity to call themselves musicians.⁸⁷³

In a newspaper article in 2009, Anton Goosen voiced his dismay over what he termed “sewerage” quality Afrikaans pop that has steadily invaded the commercial Afrikaans music

⁸⁶⁷ *Ibid.*.

⁸⁶⁸ *Huisgenoot Tempo* 1 (2012), p. 21, translated from original.

⁸⁶⁹ Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 203.

⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁸⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁸⁷³ Roggeband, *Huisgenoot Tempo* 1 (2012), p. 18, translated from original.

market.⁸⁷⁴ He made three assertions: firstly, that before the Musiek-en-Liriek music movement that started in 1979, Afrikaans music was dominated by translated European “oempa” music that was “gobbled up” by an unsophisticated audience; secondly, that artists in the 1980s were severely limited by the regime through the censorship board and that the regime tried to hijack the new music movements which resulted in superficialisation of Afrikaans music by the late 1980s; and thirdly, that after 1994, this superficialisation has continued through sentimental nostalgia and commercialism to the point where Afrikaans popular music has now taken up permanent residence in the gutter.

Although Goosen’s sentiment is more the result of opinion and experience than considered research, there is evidence to support his views. As an observer of and participant in Afrikaans music, Goosen is better placed than most to opine about its state of health. He has also become the spokesperson for Afrikaans music artists that distance themselves from the over-commercialised pop that has flooded the market in the last decade. Steve Hofmeyr, on the other hand, has come to represent “the opposition”. This is partly due to a much publicised debate between the two musicians over the use of backtracks (playing a CD over the PA system and singing along to it instead of using a live band) by commercial Afrikaans singers.⁸⁷⁵ The two artists resolved their differences in 2007,⁸⁷⁶ but there remains a somewhat uneasy relationship between the two camps. Criticism on social media platforms about the superficial nature of Afrikaans pop is often read as unpatriotic Afrikaner-bashing, which suggests that at least some Afrikaners regard it as a legitimate part of their cultural heritage. Admittedly, it is difficult to justify any position that legitimises one music genre and disregards another. The same applies to the consumers of that genre.

⁸⁷⁴ “Afrikaanse musiek stamp-stamp tot in die rioolsloot”, *Rapport*, 13 Junie 2009.

⁸⁷⁵ Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 23.

⁸⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Representations of Afrikaner identity stereotypes in Afrikaans pop

The transformation of Afrikaner identities in post-apartheid South Africa is clearly visible in Afrikaans music. Stuart Hall argues that:

Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous “play” of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in mere “recovery” of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.⁸⁷⁷

Deidre Pretorius, in her study of stylised representations of masculinity in *Huisgenoot Tempo* magazine, identifies seven types: *boer, metroman, sportsman, retroman, student, worker and rebel*.⁸⁷⁸ This classification establishes identity stereotypes of Afrikaner masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa and when read in conjunction with Drewett’s work on “packaging desire”,⁸⁷⁹ the way in which commercial Afrikaans singers represent themselves – and the way in which they position their bodies as texts – provides a foothold for further exploration of what these identities mean. As Drewett writes:

The frequency and manner of representing women in relation to men indicate that HG-Tempo offers representations of masculinity and femininity which allow men to retain their “patriarchal dividend”. One might venture, ... that mainstream popular music became an area in which Afrikaner men could compensate for their loss of political power and where they could once again take on the role of heroes who have to “defend the honour of the nation”.⁸⁸⁰

Apart from gender stereotypes, sexuality stereotypes form a central part of identity presentation in Afrikaans pop music. In an article in *HG-Tempo*⁸⁸¹ on gay Afrikaans singers, the conservative nature of the Afrikaans music buying public is exposed. One popular

⁸⁷⁷ S. Hall, “Cultural identity and Diaspora”, in J. Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), p. 225.

⁸⁷⁸ D. Pretorius, “The Visual Representations of Masculinities in Huisgenoot Tempo Magazine”, *Communicatio* 39:2 (2013), pp. 210–232.

⁸⁷⁹ “Packaging Desires: Album covers and the presentation of apartheid”, in G. Olwage (ed.), *Composing Apartheid: Music for and Against Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), pp. 115-135.

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

⁸⁸¹ H. Booyens, “Gay sangers: in of uit die kas?”, *Huisgenoot Tempo* 3 (2012), pp. 37-39.

Afrikaans singer, known for the (hetero) sexual contents of his music videos, did not even want to risk giving anonymous comment on his homosexuality, because the risk was too great that his female fans would find out.⁸⁸² This is undoubtedly a valid concern, but his fears probably extended to a wider conservative audience that does not respond well when their perceptions of acceptable notions of sexual conduct are challenged. Previous articles in *Huisgenoot Tempo* on singers who openly discussed their homosexuality were met with strong anti-gay messages and condemnations from readers. There is also a conservative religious element to consider:

The Afrikaans community is dogmatic in its scriptural interpretation. And yes, conservative. Fear and ignorance play a very big role in existing prejudices.⁸⁸³

Hannelie Booyens also states that homophobia is more common among older Afrikaners, and that the generation that are fans of Fokofpolisiekar and Karen Zoid, judging by fan-comments on their social media pages, are more tolerant concerning issues of race, gender and sexual preference.⁸⁸⁴ Some gay artists are accepted by Afrikaans audiences under specific conditions, normally by projecting certain stereotypes like “extravagant costumes and flamboyant performances”.⁸⁸⁵ However, globally, even though the music industry is modelled on traditional heterosexual values, anti-gay statements by pop singers themselves are rare. Potentially scandalous acts of adultery and illegitimate children are more easily forgiven by conservative listeners, as can be seen in the case of Steve Hofmeyr, who remains popular after providing the popular media with many scoops in this regard throughout his career.

Another tendency is for pop singers to release gospel albums. Nicholis Louw’s *Gebed van ‘n Sondaar* (Prayer of a sinner) and Gerhard Steyn’s *Nuwe Krag* (New Strength) are recent examples of secular singers (known for their sexual innuendos) releasing gospel albums. Singer Chris Chameleon released *Herleef* (Relive), an album with rock versions of gospel

⁸⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁸⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 39, anonymous gay singer, translated from original.

⁸⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸⁵ A. Bouwer in H. Booyens, “Gay sangers: in of uit die kas?”, *Huisgenoot Tempo*, 3, 2012, p. 38.

verses, in 2013. These representations of identity stereotypes reveal a clear reluctance by Afrikaners to depart from what they consider to be traditional. This reluctance is present not just in gender roles, but also in representations of race and in political views. Artists who do not position themselves in line with such prescribed roles, or do not assume one of the accepted identity stereotypes, rarely gain access to the main channels of music distribution and as a result, do not sell nearly as many units. In this way, the value systems put in place to regulate Afrikaans music production during the apartheid era – the concepts of *volkseie* vs. *volksvreemd* – have persisted and thrived into the twenty-first century. This does not mean that popular Afrikaans music did not diversify after apartheid. The opportunities for new groups to produce music in new genres have increased, especially with the establishment of Kyknet's music channel MK in 2005⁸⁸⁶ (which has now been taken off the air), and rock festivals such as Oppikoppi. Bands and artists like Bittereinder, Van Coke Kartel, Jack Parow and Die Heuwels Fantasties have thrived in the last decade. A number of coloured Afrikaans artists have also found a wide and diverse audience. Here, the most prominent is pop singer Emo Adams who is a regular feature on mainstream Afrikaans pop line-ups. Other (more fringe) artists include Hemelbesem and Jitsvinger.

Post-apartheid Afrikaner politics in Afrikaans music

A number of Afrikaans artists have addressed political issues in post-apartheid South Africa. Interestingly, most of them have positioned the Afrikaner in the role of victim. Senekal and Van den Berg have identified four main themes in post-Apartheid protest music: crime, service delivery, Afrikaner identity and protest, and an appeal to stand together.⁸⁸⁷ Under crime, they have further sub-categorised themes into the reality of crime and the

⁸⁸⁶ Roggeband, "Tekens van die tye", *Huisgenoot Tempo* 1 (2012), p. 25.

⁸⁸⁷ "'n Voorlopige verkenning van postapartheid Afrikaanse protesmusiek", *LitNet Akademies* 7:2 (August 2010), pp. 110 – 118.

psychological effects of crime. Under Afrikaner identity, they sub-categorise the theme to include issues surrounding the problematic place of the Afrikaner in South Africa, the new generation positioned between the shadow of a difficult past and hope for the future, the changing landscape (including Afrikaans place names), the maltreatment of the past and emigration as an alternative.⁸⁸⁸

These themes have surfaced in a number of Afrikaans songs since 2000, but apart from Bok van Blerk, none of the top-selling Afrikaans artists appear on their list of Afrikaans protest singers. This is an important observation. Some of the big-selling Afrikaans artists are actively political, like Steve Hofmeyr, but he tends to avoid political comment in his music.⁸⁸⁹ Sunette Bridges, daughter of Bles Bridges, uses her website and other social media as platforms for right wing Afrikaner politics, mostly by publicising statistics on violent crimes against whites.⁸⁹⁰ Her political involvement has drawn sharply contrasting responses from various Afrikaans speakers that has a wider impact than her music,⁸⁹¹ and her Facebook page has led to accusations of hate speech and a case before the Human Rights Commission.⁸⁹²

Two specific South African court cases in 2014 underscored the opposing political positions of two extreme camps of Afrikaans music artists. Afrikaans activist Dan Roodt requested an interim court order (which was later overturned) to bar a comedian ventriloquist Konrad Koch (and his puppet Chester Missing) from harassing Steve Hofmeyr on social media platforms.⁸⁹³ At the other end of the spectrum, the (partly) coloured Hip Hop group, Dookoom, were charged before the South African Human Rights Council on accusations of hate speech after

⁸⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸⁹ With the exception of his song "Ons sal dit oorleef", see addendum B.

⁸⁹⁰ <http://sunettebridges.co.za/>, accessed 16 July 2013.

⁸⁹¹ <http://www.channel24.co.za/News/Local/Sunette-denies-racism-claims-20101029>, accessed 12 August 2013; http://www.news24.com/Tags/People/sunette_bridges, accessed 12 August 2013.

⁸⁹² <http://www.sahrc.org.za/home/index.php?ipkArticleID=330>, accessed 20 May 2015.

⁸⁹³ <http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/2014/11/27/steve-hofmeyr-0-chester-missing-1>, accessed 26 March 2015.

releasing a controversial video, “Laarnie jou poes” (Hey Boss, you cunt, fuck you).⁸⁹⁴ That decision is still pending at the time of this document going to print. The contexts of these court cases reveal deep racial animosity and contrasting claims of oppression by the racial “other”. Hofmeyr recently tweeted that according to him, “blacks were the architects of apartheid”, which resulted in social media war. His positioning of white Afrikaners as victims also contrasts sharply with Dookoom’s view. The video depicts coloured farm workers about to set fire to a white owned farm.⁸⁹⁵ The group claims that the video intends to invite debate on the historic racial and economic oppression of coloured farm workers by white landowners, a political issue that flamed up in the Western Cape Province in 2013.⁸⁹⁶ Attempts to have the video removed from Youtube have failed. These two cases underscore the complexity of aggressive racial politics in post-apartheid popular Afrikaans music and challenge the social and legal parameters of artistic expression, the censoring of such expressions, and the legitimacy of protest. They also signify rising tension in a culturally pluralistic society.

Afrikaner identity politics has also played a role in how Afrikaans music artists have responded to the abolition of racial segregationist laws with the end of the apartheid era. The historical cross-racial aspects of Afrikaans popular music have been touched upon in previous chapters (for example Hendrik Susan’s involvement with the Jazz Maniacs, the influence of coloured musicians on Nico Carstens, and *kwela* music’s appeal among white Afrikaans musicians during a time when race laws established clear boundaries between population groups). Probably the most prominent white Afrikaans musician to explore the common musical heritage of white and coloured Afrikaans speakers, thereby undermining constructions of white racial dominance in popular Afrikaans music, is David Kramer. Importantly, Kramer had teamed up with his long-time musical partner, the late

⁸⁹⁴ <http://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2014/10/15/afriforum-submits-hate-speech-complaint-against-rap-group-dookoom>, accessed 14 January 2015.

⁸⁹⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmgpDostEqk>, accessed 26 March 2015.

⁸⁹⁶ <http://www.citypress.co.za/entertainment/dookoom-angry>, accessed 26 March 2015.

Taliep Petersen, as early as 1986 with *District Six – The Musical*.⁸⁹⁷ Four songs from the soundtrack were banned by the SABC,⁸⁹⁸ and the musical had limited access to state-controlled theatres, which prohibited productions by “non-white” writers and casts.⁸⁹⁹ More recently, Kramer was responsible for successful albums and theatre productions, among them *Karoo kitaar blues* in 2002, in which he searched the *platteland* (rural areas) for vanishing guitar traditions of disempowered coloured communities, and *Ghoema* in 2006. Both projects showcased the music heritage of coloured Afrikaans speakers.

Apart from Kramer, most examples of popular Afrikaans music that gain access to major channels of distribution remain white, and although there seems to be a willingness on the side of Afrikaans arts festivals to change its image of exclusive white Afrikaans cultural enclaves, race remains an integral issue. The academic, Adam Haupt, argues that:

Some of the key questions we need to pose in this context are: Who determines the terms upon which historically marginalised subjects cross the old racial, cultural and class boundaries of the former apartheid state? Who are the gatekeepers of arts festivals like KKNK, Oppikoppi, Up the Creek, the Grahamstown Festival or Die Suidoosterfees, for example? Are they largely the same kinds of players who organised and funded such festivals before our political transition? What does it mean when black Afrikaans speakers or artists are invited to Afrikaans festivals? Is the invitation a sign of meaningful political change, or is it a purchase of legitimacy for the continued operation of Afrikaner Nationalist hegemony whilst the material conditions of marginal subjects remain largely unchanged?⁹⁰⁰

This question by Adam Haupt is a very important one, and I will attempt to give some perspective on the issue by looking at three controversial live performances at three different Afrikaans arts festivals. Some have racial undertones, but others are examples of how Afrikaans audiences respond when their cultural and social values are challenged.

⁸⁹⁷ M. Slabbert and D. de Villiers, *David Kramer: 'n Biografie* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2011), p. 11.

⁸⁹⁸ SABC Memo no. 209, 28 November 1986, C. Jansen van Rensburg, “Institutional Manifestations of Music Censorship and Surveillance in Apartheid South Africa with Specific Reference to the SABC from 1974 to 1996” (MMus Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2013), p. 75.

⁸⁹⁹ Slabbert and De Villiers, *David Kramer*, p. 229.

⁹⁰⁰ A. Haupt, “Is Afrikaans music the biggest “rassedeurbraakmedium’?”, http://www.argief.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=print_article&news_id=6792&cause_id=1270, accessed 17 July 2013.

Controversy and live performances

Denis-Constant Martin provides the following comment on the construction of cultural practice and exclusivity based on difference, which provides a suitable background for the following discussion on music performance and the “other”:

Cultural practices provide occasions for collective actions undertaken around shared symbolic codes. There are times – most often inscribed in particular spaces and recalled in memory narratives – when communal awareness is aroused and when groups distinguish themselves from other groups through the specificities of what they do together. Music, festivals, cuisine and indeed languages are used as emblems of identity and signs of difference. Although most cultural practices have mixed origins and result from intense exchanges and appropriations, identity discourses insist on specificity, purity and uniqueness. Cultural practices and products are modelled and staged so that they can embody and project a particular conception of identity.⁹⁰¹

In what must surely be a low-point in cross-cultural reconciliation, singer Miriam Makeba was pelted with beer cans by white Afrikaner audience members at the 1997 *Kaktus op die Vlakte* (Cactus on the Plains) rock concert of the KKNK (Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees). According to the *Mail & Guardian* reporter, it was clear that the majority of the crowd did not appreciate Makeba’s style of music – despite the fact that she was one of South Africa’s most famous international stars of the twentieth century – while some referred to it as “kaffir” music.⁹⁰² When Afrikaans singer Amanda Strydom later shouted *Amandla!* (as she had controversially done in 1986), she also had beer cans thrown at her.⁹⁰³

However, according to another eyewitness who attended the concert, several statements in the newspaper article are questionable. According to him, the beer can throwing incident started because the audience was not familiar with Makeba’s music, that her performance lasted much longer than it was supposed to, and that they were impatient to hear Johnny Clegg and Juluka. He also feels that the incident, though regrettable, was blown out of proportion by the

⁹⁰¹ D. Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa* (Somerset West: African Minds, 2013), pp. 7-8.

⁹⁰² D. Eyal, “Beer cans and boer wars”, *Mail & Guardian*, 04 April 1997.

⁹⁰³ *Ibid.*

media, but concedes that if no alcohol was involved, it would not have happened. Johnny Clegg was extremely well received by the crowd.⁹⁰⁴ This raises two points: firstly, Clegg is well-known for his cross-cultural English/ Zulu music and multi-racial band, so the question of racism needs to be re-assessed, and secondly, the fact that Clegg's music was much more familiar to the crowd than Makeba's. This is not surprising, since Clegg had numerous radio hits on the radio stations this audience listened to, while Makeba's music had only patchy exposure on the same stations. Of course, the fact that Makeba was not as familiar to the crowd as Johnny Clegg, was in itself a result of the racial politics embedded in South Africa's popular music history.

At the *Innibos* festival in Nelspruit in June 2013, 21 500 people left the concert area after the performance by Afrikaans singer Juanita du Plessis, and just before the multi-racial group Freshlyground took the stage. Only a crowd of 2 000 mainly young festivalgoers, remained. One female Freshlyground fan, aged 17 and Afrikaans, raised the following point:

I hope people stood up because they're old and don't know the music, rather than because there are black members in the band and they sing in English.⁹⁰⁵

Although it is impossible to assess exactly why so many of the mainly white Afrikaans concert goers decided to leave before Freshlyground's performance, it is unlikely that it was because they did not know their songs. Apart from a number of hits, three years prior to this concert, the group – along with international pop star, Shakira – released the official anthem (“Waka waka”) of the 2010 Fifa Soccer World Cup, hosted in South Africa. Naturally, the song, and the group, received maximum exposure because of this and the music video received more than 825 million views on You Tube.⁹⁰⁶ One should also consider that language could have been a contributing factor; however, another incident the following year might suggest a more political motivation. In 2014, at the same festival, Steve Hofmeyr led

⁹⁰⁴ Gerhard Gibbs, electronic communication, 18 July 2013.

⁹⁰⁵ L. Eckhard, “Meeste loop toe ‘beste by fees’ sing”, *Beeld*, 29 June 2013.

⁹⁰⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRpeEdMmmQ0>, accessed 25 March 2015.

the 45 000 strong crowd⁹⁰⁷ in an impromptu rendition of “Die Stem” – the pre-1994 national anthem. The reaction was a highly emotional one and most people in the crowd sang along.⁹⁰⁸ This put the festival organisers in a difficult position since they do not want the festival – which is very popular among white Afrikaners – to become a politicised platform. As a result, the Innibos directors have not invited Hofmeyr back to the 2015 festival,⁹⁰⁹ a decision echoed by the 2015 KKNK festival.⁹¹⁰ The fall-out on social media in favour of Hofmeyr suggests that by taking this decision, festival organisers have not avoided their festivals becoming political platforms, at least for the 2015 season. Hofmeyr also included “Die Stem” on his most recent album, which many radio stations refuse to play as a result.⁹¹¹

In 2009, another incident of beer can throwing took place at OppiAarde in Potchefstroom, a rock concert that was part of the annual AARDKLOP arts festival. The rap-group Max Normal TV, in their last show under this name and first show as Die Antwoord – which would become a global internet sensation and a world-touring Afrikaans “zef”⁹¹² supergroup – antagonised the conservative crowd by a visual display on the big screens of suggestive homoerotic material. Beer cans were thrown, and some concertgoers wanted to storm the stage, but were prevented by security.⁹¹³ A video of this performance shows young, white male Afrikaners making offensive hand-gestures and shouting obscenities while the visuals on the screens are out of shot.⁹¹⁴ Although these negative reactions were not racially motivated – all the members of Die Antwoord are white – the content of their music was too extreme for many conservative, mostly male, people in the crowd. It is also important to note

⁹⁰⁷ <http://www.channel24.co.za/Music/News/Hofmeyr-urges-fans-to-continue-singing-Die-Stem-20140708>, accessed 25 March 2015.

⁹⁰⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2wDNYVe7uo>, accessed 30 March 2015.

⁹⁰⁹ <http://lowvelder.co.za/247693/hewige-reaksie-na-innibos-steve-nie-weer-nooi/>, accessed 30 March 2015.

⁹¹⁰ <http://www.netwerk24.com/nuus/2015-01-24-kknk-sou-steve-hofmeyr-nie-toelaat>, accessed 30 March 2015.

⁹¹¹ <http://www.timeslive.co.za/entertainment/2014/08/27/steve-hofmeyr-to-include-die-stem-on-new-album>, accessed 26 March 2015.

⁹¹² ‘Zef’ roughly translates into “working-class” or “common”.

⁹¹³ The author also performed at the concert, confirmed through personal communication with Tim Rankin, 17 July 2013.

⁹¹⁴ <http://www.yourepeat.com/watch/?v=NAu6eR2KnNM>, accessed 17 July 2013, see also <http://www.youares.com/v/fzYdYbHCOuU/die-antwoord-enter-the-ninja-live-rome/>, accessed 17 July 2013.

that this was not a concert aimed at the mainstream Afrikaans music market. It was organised by Oppikoppi, which specialises in organising events that fall outside the pop genre. The line-up for that evening included Fokofpolisiekar and Freshlyground.⁹¹⁵ No Afrikaans pop singers were present.

The influential Afrikaans punk rock group, Fokofpolisiekar, gained a very strong following among disaffected Afrikaner urban youth since their inception in 2003.⁹¹⁶ Although they drew various divided responses from the wider Afrikaner community – as do many rock music artists in conservative societies globally – a 2006 incident where the bassist, Wynand Myburgh, wrote the words “Fok God” (fuck God) on a fan’s wallet, created a public outcry.⁹¹⁷ As a result, church groups put pressure on the festival organisers of that year’s KKNK to cancel their invitation to the group to perform at the festival.⁹¹⁸ The festival board decided not to cancel the invitation since they were wary of censoring artists and constitutionally the group had the right to free speech. They did, however, not ignore the complaints, and held talks with church representatives to establish a future platform for constitutional guidance in such matters.⁹¹⁹ The Dutch-born journalist Fred de Vries, in his review of Annie Klopper’s biography of Fokofpolisiekar, compared the incident to the Sex Pistols:

But “Fok God” has real danger. In the first place this was said in a town, in a country, where the majority of the population is still very Christian in its beliefs. And although the NG Kerk has suffered severe setbacks in its membership since 1994, the rise of the charismatic churches, especially among Afrikaners, is staggering. And their followers don’t take blasphemy very well either. So “Fok God” was comparable to the Sex Pistols sneering at that ultimate symbol of Englishness on their second single God Save the Queen (“she ain’t no human being”) from 1977, which got them banned from the radio, banned from theatres and beaten up by gangs of patriotic

⁹¹⁵ <http://entertainmentafrika.mobi/music/view/news/23934>, accessed 17 July 2013.

⁹¹⁶ See A.E. Klopper, “Die opkoms van Afrikaanse rock en die Litirêre status van liriek, met spesifieke verwysing na Fokofpolisiekar”, (MA Dissertation, Stellenbosch University, March 2009).

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 122, see also J. Nel, “Bobby se ma sit agter bid-brief”, *Die Burger*, 27 February 2006, p. 3.

⁹¹⁸ L. le Roux, “Polisiekarre nie welkom, kla Oudtshoorn”, *Die Burger*, 10 March 2006, p. 3.

⁹¹⁹ J. Kruger, “Kerkleiers verwelkom ‘Waardes vir KKNK’”, *Die Burger*, 24 March 2006, p. 3.

thugs. Something similar befell the five members of Fokofpolisiekar, who were banned from venues, received bomb threats and eventually were forced to make a half-hearted apology.⁹²⁰

As mentioned earlier, conservative religious views play an important role in the way the Afrikaans community assess artists and their music. Many Christians felt that the group had over-stepped the line and reacted publically and vocally. The story happened to have been made public by the mother of popular mainstream singers Bobby and Karlien van Jaarsveld.⁹²¹ She also started a chain letter for Christians to pray for the group. As mentioned before, much has been written about Fokofpolisiekar – most notably by Klopper⁹²² – and their music and lyrics will undoubtedly feature in future academic discourse on popular Afrikaans music in a similar, though not necessarily identical, manner to that on Voëlvry.

How does one make sense of the way music performances elicit such strong responses from audience members? First one has to recognise that the responses to various events were most probably differently motivated. In the case of Miriam Makeba and Amanda Strydom, there were possible racist and/or political overtones to audience reactions, whereas in the case of Die Antwoord, reaction was partly fuelled by anti-gay sentiments. Freshlyground's performance at Innibos is more complex. This concert line-up consisted of mostly mainstream Afrikaans artists. The target audience was a group of white Afrikaans speakers who constitute a large market segment of the top-selling Afrikaans pop stars and who do not normally listen to Freshlyground's music.

Regardless, these four incidents indicate a reluctance on the part of white Afrikaans audiences to tolerate music and artists which they interpret as threatening, or "other", or both. It seems that in this context of reception, politics, race, religion and sexuality are non-negotiable

⁹²⁰ F. de Vries, "Biografie van 'n bende: Fokof, we'll piss where we want", review in Litnet, 14 June 2011, <http://www.argief.litnet.co.za/>, accessed 17 July 2013.

⁹²¹ J. Nel, "Bobby se ma sit agter bid-brief", *Die Burger*, 27 February 2006, p. 3.

⁹²² MA Dissertation, 2009; see also "'In wrede woede het ek die hand wat beheer gebyt': Die opkoms van Afrikaanse (punk) rockmusiek", in A.M. Grundlingh and S. Huigen (eds), *Van Volksmoeder tot Fokofpolisiekar: Kritiese Opstelle oor Afrikaanse Herinneringsplekke* (Stellenbosch: Sun Media, 2008), pp. 207-217 and *Biografie van 'n Bende: Die Storie van Fokofpolisiekar* (Cape Town: Protea, 2011).

topics. In such cases, popular music does not seem to function as a fluid medium that crosses old boundaries. This recalcitrance is, of course, not absolute. One should take into account that all four instances happened at Afrikaans Arts festivals, which can serve as spaces for the “eventification” of Afrikaans and Afrikaans culture where cultural tropes and practices are intensified, as Hauptfleisch explains:

Once more the original impetus is the need to celebrate, (re-) establish, empower and maintain the cultural heritage of Afrikaans Speaking South Africans in the face of its diminished official status, from co-national language with English, to one of nine “national languages”. There is also the triple threat of potential Americanisation, Anglicisation and Africanisation. Here the primary quality relates to the agrarian past of the pioneer and survivor, it is less colonial than a struggle to define and place the ambiguous concept of Afrikanerdom (“Afrikanerhood”) in the context of post-colonial Africa.⁹²³

Under such circumstances, Afrikaners are less likely to share their cultural events with the “other”. In this way, old established concepts of race, religion and sexuality form the boundaries of acceptance in the post-apartheid context.

There are, of course, always exceptions. In 2013, the KKNK invited the legendary African jazz singer and songwriter, Dorothy Masuka, to perform two shows in conjunction with a lifetime achievement award she received from the festival’s main sponsor, ABSA Bank. Notably, Masuka co-wrote the song “Pata Pata”, which was a massive hit for Miriam Makeba (who, as mentioned before, had an ambivalent reception at the festival). This time the show was in a theatre venue, Masuka performed alongside Laurika Rauch, Afrikaans rock singer Karen Zoid, and Zolani Mahola of Freshlyground (three months prior to their show at Innibos). The shows received standing ovations, with Masuka even inviting old Afrikaner men from the audience to dance the *pata pata* with her.⁹²⁴ Three months later it was also the

⁹²³ T. Hauptfleisch, “In Search of the Rainbow: The Little Karoo National Arts Festival and the Search of Cultural Identity in South Africa”, *South African Theatre Journal*, 15 (2001), p. 84; see also E. Van Heerden, “Liminality, Transformation and Communitas: Afrikaans Identities as Viewed Through the Lens of South African Arts Festivals 1995 – 2006” (DPhil Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2009).

⁹²⁴ Note: The author was part of the cast of this show, other media reports can be viewed at:

<http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/e8b1b3004f8495c9aefee0b5d39e4bb/Dorothy-Masuka-honoured-at-KANA->

opening flagship show of the Vryfees – an Afrikaans arts festival held in Bloemfontein – where it also received a standing ovation.

There are also examples of Afrikaans artists having to perform in front of other population groups at political rallies. In 2001, the author performed at a Heritage day concert at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. Also performing that day was the Afrikaans group Beeskraal, who played a mix of *boeremusiek* and rock by blending concertina with electric guitars. They dressed in traditional khaki clothing and *veldhoede* (a type of hat associated with *boers*) – an image which was loaded with potentially negative connotations for the 10 000 plus overwhelmingly black, ANC supporters. Yet they were very well received – even more so than the more familiar black acts that followed them on stage.⁹²⁵ This does not imply that black audiences are more tolerant of the “other” than white Afrikaans audiences. At most, it indicates the situational complexities surrounding music performance on different stages in South Africa.

Post-apartheid Afrikaner politics and music

My people are dying like flies. Just more violently. - Steve Hofmeyr⁹²⁶

On 10 October 2013,⁹²⁷ a group called Red October organised marches and gatherings around South Africa and in expat enclaves around the world in protest of “black on white” violent crime, like the farm attacks on white Afrikaners that elicit highly emotional responses from white Afrikaners and open accusations of genocide. Steve Hofmeyr publicly associates himself with the movement. His concerts also function as spaces where “Afrikaans people can speak their minds.” Although highly controversial, this represents a wider emerging theme:

20130605, <http://www.newsday.co.zw/2013/04/02/kknk-honours-dorothy-masuka/>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsQf94hzExI>, all accessed 18 July 2013.

⁹²⁵ Here, I must cite my own observation, as well as correspondence with Charles Schmidt, the singer and guitarist of *Beeskraal* on 17 July 2013.

⁹²⁶ <http://stevehofmeyr.co.za/website/steve-se/steve-se-blog-layout>, accessed 21 July 2013.

⁹²⁷ It was repeated in October 2014 and is intended to become a yearly event.

the re-positioning of “Afrikaner as victim” – and reminds one of the first four decades of the twentieth century, out of which grew the ethnic nationalism that developed into formal apartheid. This phenomenon links with Melissa Steyn’s comments on “subaltern whiteness”:⁹²⁸ By positioning Afrikaners as victims, a complex transformation is undergone in which the past is no longer a difficult memory linked to apartheid, and more a source of legitimisation. This past, and the identity stereotypes shaped by it, are often used as themes in post-apartheid Afrikaans pop songs, the most obvious being “De la Rey”, although van Blerk’s 2013 hit “Steek die Vure Aan” is another good example. An example of this political repositioning, occurs on Steve Hofmeyr’s blog:⁹²⁹

I concede that stats are frivolous things. If I recklessly retweeted or posted material from dubious sources, I would gladly apologise. I need to be part of the solution without discounting the vile threat to my small tribe. I do not need creative pie-charts for this. State-induced poverty on any minority is genocide and my little tribe is dying at the hands of other people and my government is marginalising my culture by undermining mother tongue education and keeping us out of the workforce with skin based policies.⁹³⁰

Hofmeyr rarely writes overtly political songs, although he does use his shows to express political views. A central point of grievance has been the use of struggle songs during ANC political marches. In 2011, the Afrikaner interest group, Afriforum, took the then-president of the ANC youth league, Julius Malema, to the Equality court because of his and his supporters’ repeated singing of the anti-apartheid struggle song, “Dubhula I’bunu” (Shoot the Boer). Afriforum’s argument was that the singing of this song constituted hate-speech. Judge Collin Lamont agreed: “The words undermine their dignity, are discriminatory and harmful [to Afrikaners]”⁹³¹ citing the Promotion of Unfair Discrimination and Equality Act. During the trial, Hofmeyr wrote an Afrikaans song “Ons sal dit oorleef” (We shall survive this),⁹³² in

⁹²⁸ M. Steyn, “Rehabilitating a Whiteness Disgraced: Afrikaner White Talk in Post-Apartheid South Africa”, *Communication Quarterly* 52:2 (2004), p. 148 .

⁹²⁹ See addendum B.

⁹³⁰ <http://stevehofmeyr.co.za/website/steve-se/steve-se-blog-layout>, accessed 21 July 2013.

⁹³¹ *Mail and Guardian*, 13 September 2011.

⁹³² See addendum B for lyrics.

which he threatened to use the “K”-word⁹³³ if the court ruled in favour of Malema, which it did not. Similar controversy surrounded the old struggle song “Umshini wam” (Bring me my machine gun), often sung by President Jacob Zuma and his supporters at political rallies and outside courtrooms.

In January 2012, supporters of the murdered AWB leader Eugene Terreblanche gathered outside the court during the trial of two men accused of committing the crime. They wore AWB uniforms and had speakers blaring songs like “De la Rey”.

The situation threatened to turn nasty when the song “Bobbejaan Klim die Berg” [baboon climbs the mountain] started playing. Tshing residents took offence and retaliated by singing President Jacob Zuma’s favourite song, “Umshini Wam”. A clash between the two groups threatened, and police stepped in.”⁹³⁴

While these songs represent some of the most visible and explicit examples of how heritage and identity politics are contested in the new South Africa, more mundane Afrikaans pop songs have also become subtle reflections of the various ways in which Afrikaners are expressing and constructing themselves as individuals and as a collective. Politics become part of the pop experience, entertainment is mixed with a need to verbalise socio-political concerns, and brings into focus various fault lines among Afrikaners. When asked on how he always seems to know what works for the Afrikaans music market, Steve Hofmeyr answered as follows:

Then I have also never underestimated the importance of the younger generation’s love of eye-candy. From early on my shows have been audio-visual spectacles. Fashions change, but I’m not too good in that department. As artist, even commercial artist, I’m hesitant of too much style over content. My whole concert can continue even if there’s a power cut. Just give the guitar.... I am still a relatively weak predictor of hits, but yes, I definitely know what won’t work. I navigate carefully through weird genres, weird tattoos, weird pictures. I keep everything simple, also for myself. I make tonight’s experience strong enough that most clients will book me for the next year. They also already know that every year, for 25 years, I change the concert and bring

⁹³³ Referring to the highly offensive word “kaffir”.

⁹³⁴ O.Mooki, “Battle of the songs”, 31 January 2012, available at <http://www.iol.co.za/the-star/>, accessed 29 May 2012.

something new – always with a new quota nostalgia: like aunt *Stienie*, the *Toekas* and my films and TV series.⁹³⁵

Hofmeyr's avoidance of "weird" genres, tattoos and pictures corresponds with Pretorius' work on representations of masculinity in Afrikaans media. His views on how this influences his approach in representing himself and if this is different in the post-apartheid era than before, are expressed as follows:

Things do change. You get older. Notice other things. I'm somewhat of a latecomer to politics, but by 2006 it had become clear that my own tribe has become victims of my keen YES vote in the early 90s (when I had almost no political brain). Ironically I still misuse very little of my 100 minute concert for my political campaigns. But that hour remains a cultural and populist one: little bit English, lots of Afrikaans, lots of nostalgia, dance tunes and ballads. The reason for the millennium's Afrikaans music explosion has a lot to do with politics. With the cultural marginalisation of Afrikaners and Afrikaner symbols, it was always impossible to regulate this one domain, or to over-regulate it with "BEE, AA, PP, EE, quotas and representivity". In this way our concerts had become unreachable spaces where you can still enjoy a degree of cultural homogeneity. With the absence of numerical party politics, I am living proof (and I carry first-hand knowledge) of how strong and how many we still are, how we agree on simple rights and expectations – therefore my hubris.

This is especially telling. Many Afrikaners are frustrated by the same issues, and agree with Hofmeyr's public statements that concern them. More recently, Hofmeyr has campaigned for the protection of Afrikaner monuments after a number were vandalised.⁹³⁶ When asked whether his audiences have divergent political views and if he sees pop music as a valid medium to convey political messages, he responded:

Diverging, no. But exuberant need to articulate what you are not allowed to anywhere else, absolutely. The song "Ons sal dit oorleef" is just 4 minutes out of my 100 minute concert. But during my routine lights-on-ask-what-you-want-sessions every night, I can see that many use my concerts as get-togethers for more than pop music and notes and chords. My audiences are very broad, families, safe, culturally nostalgic and predominantly conservative. Because I don't have a (political) party, or electorate or mandate, I'm really free to say what I want and I do. I am lucky that my people understand me and that the inefficiency of my government strengthens my case every night. I've reached 1000+ people four times a week now for 25 years. That is a lot of

⁹³⁵ Steve Hofmeyr, electronic interview, 4 August 2013; translated from the Afrikaans by the author.

⁹³⁶ "Steve Hofmeyr, Sunette Bridges defend Paul Kruger statue", available at <http://ewn.co.za/2015/04/08/Crowd-gathers-in-defence-of-the-church-square-statue>, accessed 20 May 2015.

canvassing for one South African. Social media included in that and you can see why the liberal media will do anything to undermine us. Your presumption is correct. I get more done by being subtle. That's why my concert is not an exclusively political one. It's raw entertainment between people who don't need to say much. And 25 cd's is a lot of music to get through!

Hofmeyr is one of the most popular Afrikaans pop artists in history, with more than two million albums sold. His audience is much larger than that of most Afrikaans singers, and the fact that his concerts have become politicised is an important and significant development. In early 2015, Hofmeyr announced that he would enter official politics if he could get a million supporters. A subsequent Facebook group was formed to reach this target. At last count it had more than 130 000 members.⁹³⁷ A number of people, including other Afrikaans artists,⁹³⁸ are added to this group without their knowledge and subsequent requests to be removed are met with vitriol.

Conclusion

A common topic that arises in popular literature on the Afrikaans pop music industry remains the criticism and accusations of superficiality against many of the top-selling artists; sometimes by other artists who fall outside the mainstream, and sometimes by journalists or independent record company executives. Such criticism dates back to the time of the Musiek-en-Liriek movement, which desired to produce Afrikaans music of higher artistic content. Although such normative judgements on the quality of Afrikaans pop music releases are difficult to justify in an academic thesis, this chapter has asked the question to what extent the history of commercial Afrikaans music production – especially taking into account the socio-political contexts in which it developed – has shaped the industry of today. This question does not only apply to artists and other industry insiders, but also to audiences. It emerges from the chapter that old strategies of identity constructions are perpetuated in the Afrikaans music

⁹³⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1409646456011242/?fref=ts>, accessed 26 March 2015.

⁹³⁸ Valiant Swart especially, experienced threats and accusations that border on the bizarre.

industry, that “desire” is determined by traditions sometimes at odds with a multi-racial South African society, and that there is a real danger that mainstream Afrikaans music functions as an exclusive cultural *laager*. I argue here that this is important in a much wider field than music reception, for despite a global decline in album sales in the last number of years,⁹³⁹ since 2000, Afrikaans music has sold better than ever before. The number of artists who have sold more than a million albums since then alone, number almost as many as those who have done so in all the previous decades combined. Apart from normal growth percentages, this shows a very real increase in the Afrikaans music market in the post-apartheid era. Considering the fact that Afrikaans music artists in this new social context must do without the state support it once enjoyed – especially as one of only two national languages (along with English), but also as the language of the regime – shows that there is a strong desire to buy Afrikaans music.

Now that the censorship board no longer scratches out offending tracks and the secret police have stopped tapping artist’s phone lines, the opportunities exist to produce a variety of different genres of Afrikaans music, from metal to hip hop and rap. Many young artists do. Groups like Die Antwoord and Fokofpolisiekar, and artists like Karen Zoid and Jack Parow are just some of many new names that not only create and explore exciting new directions in Afrikaans music, but also attract scholarly attention. There are also important coloured Afrikaans hip hop musicians (such as Hemelbesem and Jitsvinger) who constitute a very dynamic section of Afrikaans music. The way in which these musicians are expressing themselves suggests an erosion of the old archetypes and the establishment of new possibilities in which traditional value systems, specifically regarding race, gender and sexuality, are undermined. However, even though these artists make an impact, they do not necessarily make significant inroads into the Afrikaans music mainstream. The best-selling artists constitute a relatively clearly defined, hegemonic group who purposefully project

⁹³⁹ C. Rojec, *Pop Music, Pop Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), p. 16.

specific identity stereotypes according to the taste of the larger portion of the Afrikaans public.

Following the work of Melissa Steyn, I have shown here how the re-positioning of “Afrikaner as victim” has similarities with the rise of Afrikaner nationalism in the 1930s. Although there are today no realistic claims for Afrikaner nationalism, it is true that mainstream Afrikaans pop music has become a political platform to a certain degree. Although most pop singers refrain from overt political statements, some, like Steve Hofmeyr, are highly outspoken. Hofmeyr’s statements and campaigning has made him a hero for many conservative Afrikaners, but has put Afrikaans arts festivals and corporate sponsors of Afrikaans pop concerts under pressure to remove him from their programmes. Ironically, these festivals and concerts have traditionally served as fiercely guarded Afrikaner cultural spaces not easily shared with other South African population groups. In this way, Afrikaans pop music has become a memorialised space that plays an integral, yet dividing, role in defining post-apartheid Afrikaner identities.

Conclusion

I was drawn to this topic initially because I wanted to understand the popularity of Afrikaans pop music in a post-apartheid South Africa; a popularity that sometimes approaches total cultural immersion for some Afrikaners. After almost twenty years of visiting (as a band musician) Oudsthoorn, Potchefstroom, Bloemfontein and numerous other towns that host Afrikaans festivals, but choose to discard the “arts” label in favour of some distinct local fare, like “Wildsfees”, “Vleisfees”, “Turksvyfees”, “Wynfees”, or “Kaasfees”, I have witnessed hundreds of Afrikaans pop shows. Throughout, the lyrics have remained superficial, the beat almost always 4/4 (“De la Rey”, for instance, is in 3/4) and the chords mostly in major keys.

This thesis is not about South African jazz, *marabi*, *kwela* (although it does touch on *kwela*'s influence on Afrikaans music), *mbube*, *mbaqanga*, *maskandi*, *isicathamiya*, hip hop or *kwaito*. These are all dynamic music genres developed by local black and/ or coloured musicians and have long been favoured topics for ethnomusicologists interested in South African popular music.⁹⁴⁰ This thesis explicitly focuses on recorded Afrikaans popular music throughout the last 115 years, regardless of genre. With the possible exception of *kwela*, most of the genres mentioned above have had limited influence on recorded Afrikaans music. There are, of course, historical political reasons for this insularity, and in looking back on the narrative that I have constructed in this thesis, I realise to what extent this narrative has been shaped by this very insularity.

⁹⁴⁰ For example, see V. Erlmann, *Nightsong: performance, power, and practice in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) on *isicathamiya* and *African stars: studies in black South African performance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) on early ragtime, *ingoma*, and *isicathamiya*; C. Devroop and C. Walton eds, *Unsung: South African jazz musicians under Apartheid* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2007) on jazz; D. Coplan, *In township tonight! South Africa's black city music and theatre* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985) on black performing arts and L. Meintjies, *Sounds of Africa!: making music Zulu in a South African studio* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) on the studio production of a *mbaqanga* album.

I did not set out to write a history of white domination of the Afrikaans recording industry, but rather an analytical narrative of recorded popular Afrikaans music over time. However, the intimate link between the developing ideas of what constituted “Afrikaner” and recorded popular Afrikaans music was apparent from the very beginning. Whereas historically, the development of Afrikaans as language and in music was racially heterogeneous, access to modes of record production was limited almost exclusively to whites. This in itself adds another dimension to how racial domination has affected Afrikaans culture. By focussing on recorded popular Afrikaans music and how it is/ was disseminated as mass culture, this thesis was generally steered away from the music of the subaltern (which is well-documented elsewhere), except in cases where it touched on the white working class. Although this dominance continues to reflect white exclusivity in post-apartheid Afrikaans pop music, an increasing number of coloured Afrikaans music artists are enjoying commercial success in the Afrikaans pop market.

By establishing such a historic narrative, this thesis has addressed a number of hitherto undocumented themes. Primary research has led to important discoveries regarding the age of the first Afrikaans and Africana recordings. The respective January 1900 Africana recordings by J.C. van den Berg, E. Spieksma, E. Brükner and H. Cornelli now count as the oldest, not Schott and Denijs’, whilst J.J. Smith can be credited as the first to record Afrikaans melodies, not the Springbok rugby team. Apart from these discoveries, the real contribution of this research lies in exposing the wider connections, during the first two decades of the twentieth century, between early Afrikaans records and an emerging Afrikaner nation following the Anglo-Boer War.

This thesis also provides a deeper insight into the strategies of Afrikaner nationalists, starting in the early 1930s, to construct a *volkskultuur* that ascribed to the political requirements of their project. Popular Afrikaans music was a particular sphere of tension in this process,

reflecting heterogeneous elements in Afrikaner society seldom investigated before. This would remain a salient theme in the story of popular Afrikaans music until the early 1990s, and this thesis provides a chronicle thereof. This includes a documentation of counter-hegemony during the 1960s and 1970s – an era in popular Afrikaans music that has never been academically investigated. In particular, the work presented acknowledges the importance of the *Musiek-en-Liriek* movement, as well as the links between the emerging dissonant voices in Afrikaans music from the late 1970s onwards and new developments in Afrikaans literature and cabaret. These links are important and provide a better understanding of the growing dissatisfaction among a wider circle of Afrikaners during the politically charged 1980s.

Despite having a long history in South Africa, the practice of taking European *Schlager* music and re-releasing them as Afrikaans songs has never been academically scrutinised. In fact, there is very little literature on *Schlager* in general. Notably, the criticism that *Schlager* has drawn in Europe is similar to the criticism that Afrikaans *Schlager* receives locally. During the 1980s and early 1990s, local *Schlager* artists were accused of being compliant with the requirements of the apartheid state. The best example is Carike Keuzenkamp's 1987 hit "Dis 'n land", which, as mentioned before, was a reworked version of the German pop singer Nicole's 1986 hit, "Laß mich nicht allein". Although drawing comparisons between the propagandistic use of *Schlager* in Germany during the Second World War and the Afrikaans *Schlager* popularised by Keuzenkamp and Gé Korsten among others are not unproblematic, the comparison does reveal some curious similarities. Seen against, and compared with, this background, there might be merit in the accusations by liberal Afrikaans journalists towards the end of apartheid that the release and broadcast of deliberately apolitical and superficial Afrikaans music at such an intense political time, was in itself a political act.

Apart from contributing to a more comprehensive historical narrative on popular Afrikaans music, this thesis also engaged with existing research – mostly work done on the Voëlvry movement and the song “De la Rey”, and to a lesser extent, *boeremusiek*. The fact that *boeremusiek*, or *vastrap*, records sold in the hundreds of thousands during the 1930s, makes that genre the pop mainstream of that era. In her ethnomusicological work on *boeremusiek*, Froneman has exposed themes that are of great interest here, of which class is perhaps the most significant. Her highly detailed study provided a solid foundation that is supplemented here by archival material that highlights the tension between the cultural entrepreneurs of the Afrikaner middle class and the *boeremusiek*-buying working class. Another theme that this thesis engaged with was the legitimisation of traditional *boeremusiek* by organisations like the FAK’s Music Commission, as authentic Afrikaner folk music in reaction to the development of jazz influenced style *boeremusiek*. This underscored the ideological stance of the cultural wing of Afrikaner nationalism: great suspicion of the influence of imported popular music and the preservation of *volkseie* music.

Voëlvry celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2014, which gives this thesis the benefit of some hindsight, especially regarding its legacy and memorialisation in a changing society. Perhaps the most striking irony today is that, although Voëlvry was the height of political Afrikaans protest music, the subsequent generation of rebellious Afrikaans rockers deliberately avoid politics. In fact, it is the old foe of the alternative Afrikaans artists of the late 1980s and early 1990s – the light Afrikaans music mainstream – that more actively (with varying degrees of subtlety) engages with the political sphere in post-apartheid South Africa.

A key element of this narrative is that it does not only focus on counter-hegemonic tendencies in popular Afrikaans music, but also considers the hegemonic and compliant pop mainstream. This is a field of investigation almost totally neglected in the literature on the assumption that this music is insignificant, even meaningless. I suggest in this thesis that the Afrikaans pop

mainstream is imbued with politics, though of a different order than overt protest music. Therefore my focus is not only music that deliberately declares itself as political (such as “De la Rey”, where complex forces of memory, culture and politics converge in one song), but also other, less obvious, Afrikaans hits since 2000.

Ultimately, this thesis provides a perspective on the interface between popular music culture and political events, but also hopes to contribute to the understanding of “being Afrikaans” in a way that resists monolithic interpretations of white culture, or Afrikaans culture. More than a century of musical activity bears witness to a roller coaster ride of a community and its musical preoccupations: internal rifts and collective strategies, the courage of resistance and the philistine instrumentalisation of music for propaganda, of the sensual joys of life and the pretensions of racial exclusivity.

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Addendum A:**Mpanzaville – Anton Goosen⁹⁴¹**

Skielik gaan ons aan die bewe
 Draai ons af van Hoofweg Sewe
 Trap die versneller plat
 Die wiele rol die byle huil
 Die poppe tol die boendoe's geil
 Toe ons afdraai na die stad

Skakel af en ons klim uit
 Weerkaatsing in die motorruit
 Die son wat weswaarts sak
 Die stilte van 'n ruimte-man
 Of skrywer nou so pas verban
 Begroet ons ore strak

Refrein:

Daar's onheil in die kraal
 En die winde waai koud
 En die leeus slaap bang
 In die donker honger woud

Mpanzaville Mpanzaville
 Almal is so stil hier's 'n woeste krokodil
 Mpanzaville Mpanzaville
 Daar's 'n honger krokodil
 In Mpanzaville

Vir ure sit ons om die vuur
 Die konka brand ons oë tuur
 En ons hoor hoe tjank die wind
 Opgestaan en verder aan
 Spore taan en hoe verstaan jy
 Stilte in die valley

Maar skielik klap en dreun en hap
 Ons oë word pap die knieë slap
 Toe die ongedierte dwaal
 Ons hoor hom aankom in die wind
 Ons moet nou gou 'n antwoord vind
 Vir die monster in die kraal

Refrein:

Daar's onheil in die kraal
 En die winde waai koud

*Suddenly we start to shiver
 Turn off Highway Seven
 Floor the accelerator
 The wheels roll like no tomorrow
 The dolls spin the bundu's rank
 When we turn off to the city*

*Switch off and climb out
 Reflection in the car window
 The sun that sets westwards
 The silence of a spaceman
 Or author just banned
 Greet our ears*

Chorus:

*There's evil in the kraal
 And the winds sweep cold
 And the lion sleeps scared
 In the dark hungry forest*

*Mpanzaville Mpanzaville
 Everybody's so quiet there's a wild crocodile
 Mpanzaville Mpanzaville
 There's a hungry crocodile
 In Mpanzaville*

*For hours we sit round the fire
 The drum burns, our eyes stare
 And we hear the wind howl
 Stood up and further on
 Footprints fade and how do you explain
 Silence in the valley*

*But suddenly clap and growl and snap
 Our eyes soften, our knees weak
 When the monster lurks
 We hear him approaching in the wind
 We must quickly find an answer
 For the monster in the kraal*

Chorus:

*There's evil in the kraal
 And the winds sweep cold*

⁹⁴¹ Gallo Music Publishers

En die leeus slaap bang
In die donker honger woud

*And the lion sleeps scared
In the dark hungry forest*

Mpanzaville Mpanzaville
Al die mense gil vir die woeste krokodil
Mpanzaville Mpanzaville
Daar's 'n honger krokodil
In Mpanzaville

*Mpanzaville Mpanzaville
Everybody yells at the wild crocodile
Mpanzaville Mpanzaville
There's a hungry crocodile
In Mpanzaville*

Sy bek gaan oop sy tande blink
Sy asem stink hy waggel flink
Klokke lui in die doodsvallei
Ons druk 'n stok diep in sy bek
Sy oë word groot sy stert verrek
Maar die panga slag sy nek

*His mouth opens his teeth shine
His breath stinks he waddles smartly
Bells ring in the valley of death
We thrust a stick deep into his mouth
His eyes widen his tail stretches
But the panga butchers his neck*

Hartlam loop en gryp 'n klip
Slaat sy kop dat hy wil stik
Sy oë tol om en om
Ons slag hom af en vat sy vel
Die honde blaf die mense draf
Die kraal is van vreugde stom

*Sweetheart go and fetch a rock
Hit his head so that he chokes
His eyes roll round and round
We butcher him and take his skin
The dogs bark the people run
The kraal is silent with joy*

Refrein:

By die vure in die kraal
Blink die krokodilvel
In die woud trom die tromme
Die storie word vertel

*By the fires in the kraal
Shine the crocodile's skin
In the forest sound the drums
The story is told*

Mpanzaville Mpanzaville
Al die mense dans om die dooie krokodil
Mpanzaville Mpanzaville
Daar's vrede in die kraal in Mpanzaville

*Mpanzaville Mpanzaville
All the people dance round the dead crocodile
Mpanzaville Mpanzaville
There's peace in the kraal in Mpanzaville*

Mpanzaville...

Mpanzaville...

Atlantis – Anton Goosen⁹⁴²

O, my naam maak rêrig nie saak nie
En my ouderdom net so min
Maar die plek en die mense wat ek lief het
Word uitgedop en omgekeer

*O, my name doesn't really matter
and my age just as little
but the place and the people I love
are being shelled and turned
about*

O, wat het julle met my Kaap gedoen
En wie gaan verantwoordelik staan

*O, what did you do to my Cape
and who's going to stand*

⁹⁴² Gallo Music Publishers

Met my hand vol vere oopgemaak

En die dons wat daaruit waai...

Laat die met ore hoor

En die met oë sien

In die ghetto's die nuwe ghetto's

Daar dans onse kinders

Laat die met oë dan lees

En die met tonge dan praat

In die ghetto's die nuwe, nuwe ghetto's

Daar bloei onse kinders

Laat die met woorde dan skryf

En die met note dan sing

In die ghetto's die nuwe, nuwe ghetto's

Daar sterf onse kinders

O, ek's oud genoeg om nog jonk te wees

En ek sleep my geboortemerk saam

Met my hand vol vere oopgemaak

En die dons wat daaruit waai...

responsible

with my hand full of feathers

opened

and the down that blows out of

it...

Let them with ears listen

and those with eyes see

in the ghettos the new ghettos

there dances our children

Let those with eyes then read

and those with tongues then talk

in the ghettos the new, new ghettos

there bleed our children

Let those with words then write

and those with notes then sing

in the ghettos the new, new ghettos

there die our children

O, I'm old enough to still be young

and I drag my birthmark along

with my hand full of feathers

opened

and the down that blows out of it...

Addendum B:**“Ons Sal Dit Oorleef” – Steve Hofmeyr**⁹⁴³

Daar's 'n land en 'n volk, in een taal gedoop	<i>There's a country and a nation in one language baptised</i>
Met gebede en buskruit en bloed verkoop	<i>Sold with prayers and gunpowder and blood</i>
Wat weer en weer van sy knieë af moet streef	<i>And again and again must strive off his knees</i>
Ons sal dit oorleef	<i>We shall survive this</i>
Uit die kake van oormag, deur die vuur op ons werf	<i>From the jaws of overwhelming force, through the fire in our yard</i>
Staan die Engelse by ons vroue, en die kinders wat sterf	<i>Stand the English stand by our women and the children that die</i>
Elke grafsteen een standbeeld, vir die wat bly leef	<i>Every gravestone a statue for those that live</i>
Ons sal dit oorleef	<i>We shall survive this</i>
My hart klop toktokkie, waar hy breek vir my volk	<i>My heart beats toktokkie, where it breaks for my nation</i>
Voor die kakiekanon, of die kryger se dolk	<i>Before the khaki cannon, or the warrior's dagger</i>
Dit maak nie meer saak nie, waar ons ons beleef	<i>It does not matter anymore, where we find ourselves</i>
Ons sal dit oorleef	<i>We shall survive this</i>
Ek lig my oë, tot die berge op	<i>I lift my eyes to the mountains</i>
Waar sal my hulp tog vandaan kan kom?	<i>Where could my help come from?</i>
Ag my God, jou woorde lê deur my geweef	<i>Oh, my God, your words lie woven through me</i>
Ons sal dit oorleef	<i>We shall survive this</i>
Ek staan vandag, op jou plaas ou vriend	<i>I stand today, on your farm old friend</i>
Daar hang stof oor die stilte, sovêr ek kan sien	<i>Where the dust hangs over the silence as far as I can see</i>

⁹⁴³ EMI Music Publishing

Maar die geeste van gister, sal môre herleef	<i>But the ghosts from yesterday will re-live tomorrow</i>
Ons sal dit oorleef	<i>We shall survive this</i>
Ons sal dit oorleef	<i>We shall survive this</i>
Dankie God vir die vermoë	<i>Thank you God for the ability</i>
Ons sal dit oorleef	<i>We shall survive this</i>
Dankie, O Here, vir wat U my geleer het	<i>Thank you, Oh Lord, for what thy have taught me</i>
Ons sal dit oorleef	<i>We shall survive this</i>
En wat U vir my so gratis gesê het	<i>And what Thy told me for free</i>
Ons sal dit oorleef	<i>We shall survive this</i>
Vandag gee ek dit als terug aan U	<i>Today I give it all back to Thee</i>
Ons sal dit oorleef	<i>We shall survive this</i>
Tot Eer en Verheerliking van U Naam	<i>Glory and praise to Thy Name</i>
Ons sal dit oorleef	<i>We shall survive this</i>
Uit die uitbouing van die onder kerk	<i>From the expansion of the church</i>
Ons sal dit oorleef	<i>We shall survive this</i>
Ons sal dit oorleef	<i>We shall survive this</i>
Ons sal dit oorleef	<i>We shall survive this</i>
Tot aan die einde	<i>Until the end</i>

“Steek die vure aan” – Bok van Blerk⁹⁴⁴

Daar is niks om te sê nie, want gister's gevat,	<i>There's nothing to say, since yesterday's been taken</i>
ek lewe vir more, met die vuur in my hart,	<i>I live for tomorrow with the fire in my heart</i>
en ek voel dit brand, die vakkelt hier in my hand.	<i>and I feel it burn, the torch in my hand.</i>
Kyk my diep in die oë dis nou tyd om te glo,	<i>Look deep into my eyes, its now time to believe</i>
Steek die vure aan.	<i>Light the fires.</i>

⁹⁴⁴ Bok van Blerk Produksies/ Johan Vorster Songs

Praat die taal wat jy liefhet en bring almal saam,	<i>Speak the language you love and bring everyone along</i>
Steek die vure aan.	<i>Light the fires.</i>
Wees 'n baken van hoop wees die lig in die donker,	<i>Be a beacon of hope, be the light in the darkness</i>
'n nasie wat aanhou bly staan,	<i>a nation that keeps standing</i>
Steek die vure aan,	<i>Light the fires</i>
Steek die vure aan...	<i>Light the fires...</i>
Ek sal kan vergewe, sonder verwyt,	<i>I shall can forgive, without resentment</i>
om in vrede te lewe, moet ons na mekaar kyk,	<i>to live in peace we must look after each other</i>
want ek voel dit brand, die vakkell hier in my hand!	<i>Because I feel it burn, the torch in my hand!</i>
Kyk my diep in die oë dis nou tyd om te glo,	<i>Look deep into my eyes, its now time to believe</i>
Steek die vure aan, praat die taal wat jy liefhet en bring almal saam,	<i>Light the fires Speak the language you love and bring everyone along</i>
Steek die vure aan, Wees 'n baken van hoop, wees die lig in die donker,	<i>Light the fires Be a beacon of hope, be the light in the darkness</i>
'n nasie wat aanhou bly staan,	<i>a nation that keeps standing</i>
Steek die vure aan,	<i>Light the fires</i>
Steek die vure aan...	<i>Light the fires</i>
Waar die lig nie meer skyn nie, en die vlamme flou brand... Al wat dit sal vat is steek uit jou hand, en praat met jou hart	<i>Where the light shines no more, and the flames burn low... all it will take is to hold out your hand and speak with your heart</i>