“Ghoema vannie Kaap”

The life and work of Taliep Petersen (1950–2006)

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Declaration

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7 August 2013

Abstract

This dissertation is a life-works biography of South African musician Taliep Petersen. It is not only concerned with a discussion of his various projects, but also with situating them within his lived experience and the broader socio-political environment of South Africa during the period from 1950 to 2006. Furthermore, by discussing his artistic output against the background of coloured identity discourse, this dissertation is concerned with exploring his various self-identifications through the years, whether it be Anglo-American popular music, the "traditional" folk music of the Cape Malay community, District Six, Islam, a heritage of slavery or the Afrikaans language.

This is the first academic project on Taliep Petersen and there are no scholarly publications that deal substantially with his biography or with his work. As such, this dissertation makes considerable use of newspaper sources and archival material, though it is most reliant on oral testimony in the form of over thirty qualitative interviews, supplemented by personal communication and unstructured questionnaires specifically drawn up for individual informants. Regarded partly as an oral history project, this dissertation employs theoretical premises from this approach in regarding memories as living histories recalled in the present to make sense of the past. Individual interviews are treated as created texts, stories told to make sense of the life of Taliep Petersen. This dissertation draws from numerous disciplinary discourses within the arts and humanities. It focuses particularly on creolization, regarding this process as cultural creativity leading to the creation and constant fluidity of musical forms as well as individual and group identities.

Part I of this dissertation consist of two lengthy chronologies that document the first thirty years of Taliep's life, focusing variously on his childhood in District Six and his years as a young coloured musician in a world increasingly dominated by white concerns. Part II consists of four chapters that take a closer look at specific projects in the latter part of Taliep's life, placing a greater emphasis on interpretation than on biographical chronicling. Chapter 3 deals with the activities of Taliep's cover band, Sapphyre, in the early 1980s, with specific focus on their LP, *Rosa.* The Taliep Petersen/David Kramer collaboration in the mid-1980s forms the subject of Chapter 4, which focusses specifically on their first project, *District Six: The musical*. Chapter 5 straddles three projects of the 1990s, another musical (*Poison*), an album (*Tribute*) and a concert (*Two worlds – One heart*). The final chapter is concerned with a discussion of Taliep's television work of the early years of the twenty-first century, as well as with the last musical he co-wrote with Kramer before his death, *Ghoema.* To explore the interaction of different mediums of representation within the linear account of a life lived, interludes consisting of fieldwork notes, maps, lists, perspectival sketches and family trees are interspersed between chapters.

Opsomming

Hierdie verhandeling is ‘n lewe-en-werk biografie van die Suid-Afrikaanse musikant Taliep Petersen. Dit is nie net gemoeid met ‘n bespreking van sy verskillende projekte nie, maar ook met die situering daarvan in sy geleefde ervaring en die breër sosio-politieke klimaat van Suid-Afrika in die tweede helfte van die twintigste eeu. Deur ‘n bespreking van sy artistieke produksie teen die agtergrond van kleurlingidentiteit-diskoers, poog hierdie verhandeling om Taliep se verskeie identiteite te ondersoek, hetsy Anglo-Amerikaanse populêre musiek, die “tradisionele” volksmusiek van die Kaapse Maleier-gemeenskap, Distrik Ses, Islam, die erfenis van slawerny, of die Afrikaanse taal.

Hierdie projek is die eerste van sy soort oor Taliep Petersen, oor wie se werk en persoon daar ‘n gebrek is aan akademiese publikasies. Daar word dus in hierdie verhandeling geput uit koerant- en argiefbronne, maar meestal uit mondelinge getuienis in die vorm van meer as dertig kwalitatiewe onderhoude, aangevul deur persoonlike mededelings en ongestruktureerde vraelyste gerig op spesifieke individuele informante. Hierdie verhandeling word gedeeltelik beskou as ‘n mondelinge geskiedenisprojek. Teoretiese uitgangspunte van hierdie benadering is daarom toegepas, veral met betrekking tot ‘n opvatting van herinneringe as lewendige geskiedenisse wat herroep word in ‘n poging om sin te gee aan die verlede. Individuele onderhoude word behandel as nuutgeskepte tekste en stories as sin-gewende vertellings oor die lewe van Taliep Petersen. Die verhandeling steun op verskeie dissiplinere diskoerse binne die kunste en geesteswetenskappe. Dit fokus spesifiek op kreolisering en beskou dié proses as kulturele kreatiwiteit wat lei tot die skepping en voortdurende vloeibaarheid van musikale vorme, sowel as van individuele- en groepsidentiteite.

Deel 1 van hierdie verhandeling bestaan uit twee uitgebreide kronologië wat die eerste dertig jaar van Taliep se lewe dokumenteer. In Hoofstuk 1 is die klem op sy kinderjare in Distrik Ses en in Hoofstuk 2, op sy tyd as jong kleurlingmusikant in 'n wêreld wat toenemend oorheers is deur blanke belange. Deel 2 bestaan uit vier hoofstukke wat gemoeid is met spesifieke projekte in die later deel van sy lewe, en vervolgens is daar 'n groter klem op interpretasie as op biografiese kronologisering. Hoofstuk 3 handel oor die bedrywighede van Taliep se musiekgroep, Sapphyre, in die vroeë 1980s, met speisifieke verwysing na die groep se langspeelplaat, *Rosa.* Die Taliep Petersen/David Kramer kreatiewe tweemanskap kom aan die bod in die middel-1980s, met spesifieke verwysing na hulle eerste projek, *District Six: The musical.* In Hoofstuk 5 oorvleuel drie projekte uit die 1990s, naamlik nog 'n musiekspel (*Poison)*, 'n album (*Tribute)* en 'n konsert (*Two worlds – One heart*). Die laaste hoofstuk is gemoeid met 'n bespreking van Taliep se televisiewerk in die vroeë jare van die een-en-twintigste eeu, sowel as die laaste musiekspel wat hy saam met Kramer kort voor sy dood geskryf het, *Ghoema.* Om die interaksie van verskillende mediums van voorstelling binne die liniêre weergawe van iemand se lewe te ondersoek, is tussenspele in die vorm van veldwerknotas, kaarte, lyste, perspektiwiese sketse en stambome tussen hoofstukke ingevleg.

Acknowledgements

This project has been supported by the generosity of so many individuals. First, my sincere thanks to Taliep's relatives and children who have freely given their time for interviews, have assisted me in meeting other interviewees, and have given me access to the Taliep Petersen Archive. My particular thanks to Igsaan Petersen for his help in this regard. I would also like to thank each and every interviewee who contributed to this project, particularly those who, besides giving of their time in interviews, helped to introduce me to other interviewees or gave me access to their private archives. These include Abdullah Maged, David and Renaye Kramer, Des and Dawn Lindberg, Howard Links, Paul Hanmer and Herman Binge. I would like to thank Karen Meiring and KykNET for supplying copies of Taliep's television work free of charge. I am also grateful to the District Six Museum for assisting my research, and to Shafiek April and the Cape Malay Choir Board for giving me access to their copy of Taliep's 1980's LP, *Rosa.* I would also like to thank some colleagues and friends: Christine Lucia, Michael Drewett and Chris van Rhyn for being willing to listen to Taliep's music and share their thoughts with me. I am very grateful to Julia Eccles for doing the page layout of this dissertation with tremendous generosity and dedication.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my parents and siblings, who as fellow academics and writers, were able to offer me knowledgeable encouragement. Particular thanks go to Elkarien Fourie for translating my abstract and to Elsje Fourie, a recent PhD graduate, for offering advice on matters of style and referencing. Thank you also to Athol for his support during what has been a complex time – not only was he a source of valuable information and someone whose ideas invariably fed into my own, he was also unstinting in his emotional support. This dissertation has benefited greatly from the excitement that my supervisor, Stephanus Muller, brings to any project. His attitude towards his students is such that the enthusiasm behind sometimes unconventional ideas is never in danger of being squashed. I am particularly grateful to him for pointing me in the direction of texts that served to enrich my thinking and my writing, as well as for creating an academic environment in which self-censorship has no purchase and creative ways of thinking and writing can flourish. I am also grateful to my fellow students for an emotional and academic fellowship that will be hard to rival in the future.

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Introduction

During the first interview I ever conducted with Taliep Petersen's father, Mogamat Ladien Petersen, he asserted that his eldest son had been born on 15 October 1950 at the family home in Van de Leur Street, District Six. A midwife called Mrs Saunders had arrived on a bicycle to assist with the birth.[1] Tagmieda Johnson, Taliep's eldest sister, also mentions a midwife, but claims that her brother was born in the family home in Upper Darling Street, an extension of Hanover Street.[2] This is a version of events confirmed by Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, his youngest sister.[3] However, the recent biography of David Kramer (Taliep's long-term collaborative partner) mentions Taliep's place of birth as the now-defunct Peninsula Maternity Ward in District Six.[4] On interviewing Mogamat Ladien a second time and presenting him with the information contained in the biography, he confirmed that his son was born in hospital, and not at home as he had previously thought.[5]

The Peninsula Maternity Ward was opened in Woodstock in 1918, and relocated three years later to Buckingham Lodge in District Six, on the corner of Caledon and Mount Streets.[6] Although racially segregated, this hospital was open to all races until 1972 when it was designated exclusively for the use of individuals categorized "coloured"[7] by apartheid legislation. After District Six was declared a whites-only area in 1966, the hospital underwent renovations, in marked contrast to the demolitions taking place in the rest of the District. In 1991, the Peninsula Maternity Ward closed its doors after it had been absorbed by the Mowbray Maternity Hospital, and the building is currently used as a wardrobe facility by Artscape Theatre (formerly Nico Malan).[8] From the early 1960s, the Peninsula Maternity Ward was administered by the Groote Schuur Hospital. However, Groote Schuur is only in possession of the Peninsula Maternity Ward birth records from 1967 to 1991 and Taliep's birth at this institution could therefore not be verified.[9] The misplacement or even loss of the birth records of a large body of District Six inhabitants underscores the agenda of the

1 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.
2 Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012. To avoid confusion with the procession of Petersens populating this text, family members will be referred to by their given names and not by their surname.
3 Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.
4 D de Villiers & M Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2011, p. 216.
5 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
6 M Paulse, "A History of the Peninsula Maternity Hospital, 1916-1991", Unpublished research paper, District Six Museum, Cape Town, 2000.
7 This politically loaded term will be explained and contextualized in Chapter 1.
8 "Government proposes demolition of historic District Six maternity hospital", *Cape Times*, 7 December 2011.
9 Electronic communication with Noel Weeder, 20 November 2012.

apartheid government, even though it may be the result of neglect and not wilful destruction. According to Lizabé Lambrechts, "It is through this non-recognition or misrecognition of the majority of South Africans whose stories were silenced and not deemed valuable to preserve, that the destruction and violence of the Apartheid Archive was practiced [...]"[10]

Figure 1: Peninsula Maternity Ward in District Six, mid-1960s.
SOURCE: District Six Museum

Although the location of Taliep's birth is still unknown, it is interesting to consider why Taliep's father would first state that his eldest son was born at home, then change his mind when confronted with a written text that states the contrary. Perhaps the event had faded from his mind, and was recalled through suggestion. As some of Taliep's many siblings were indeed born at home, it is hardly remarkable that an 83-year old could make a mistake. More poetically perhaps, Taliep's birth is remembered as having happened in a safe space with which Mogamat Ladien and his children are eager to associate themselves, namely their home in District Six. State-run and administered, the Peninsula Maternity Ward would have carried the imprint of the ruling government's

[10] L Lambrechts, *Ethnography and the archive: Power and politics in five music archives in South Africa*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Stellenbosch, 2012, p. 218.

agenda, and his birth there would therefore have involved an acknowledgement of a certain reliance on state structures. On the other hand, it is possible that Mogamat Ladien's revision of this story has something to do with a bias towards written sources due to the supposed truth value associated with them. Perhaps, confronted with a written text contradicting his memory, he assumed the former to carry more authority, not knowing that the written text in question was itself based largely on interviews and newspaper sources.

Although this biographical project focuses on Taliep's artistic output, and takes the form of a works-biography, I had a desire right from the beginning of my research to establish the precise location of his birth. A preoccupation with the collection and presentation of verified facts dominates much of conventional biographical writing. However, as demonstrated by the example above, facts are rarely self-evident. This dissertation is the first biography of Taliep Petersen. Barring a number of academic articles written about specific projects, as well as Kramer's biography by David de Villiers and Mathilda Slabbert,[11] there are few scholarly publications on Taliep's artistic output. Moreover, beyond what is contained in Kramer's biography, little biographical information about Taliep is available in the public domain. Popular accounts in newspaper articles are either based on oral testimony or reproduce the information contained in earlier accounts. In this manner, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 2, many events that almost occurred in Taliep's life (but didn't) are consistently connected to him, having long since become a part of his popular life story.

Newspaper articles, particularly those that report on specific events, have formed an important part of this research. In addition, thanks to generous access to what I refer to here as the Taliep Petersen Archive (the material remains of his career stored in a room at his brother's house) I have been able to draw on previously largely unavailable archival sources. Access to the archive was conditional on my entering into an agreement with the family that I would provide them with recordings and/or transcriptions of all my interviews (provided the interviewees in question gave their consent). I also undertook to sort through all the material and provide the family with a pre-sorted list of its contents, which included artefacts, instruments, books, newspapers, autobiographical sketches, handwritten song lyrics with chord symbols, printed programmes, recordings, notes, letters and photographs.[12] Considering the dearth of academic sources at my disposal, I have made considerable use of these materials. However, I have

[11] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*.
[12] Refer to "One man's possessions equal an archive" for information about the contents of the Taliep Petersen Archive.

made the most extensive use of thirty qualitative interviews I conducted over the past two years, supplemented by electronic and personal communication, as well as numerous unstructured questionnaires drawn up specifically for individuals who, for various reasons, could not be interviewed in person.[13] Interviewees have included Taliep's family members, friends, colleagues and acquaintances, as well as individuals who, although not directly connected to Taliep, could contribute valuable information about the broader context in which he worked. Considering my reliance on information obtained from interviewees, this dissertation has much in common with an oral history project.

Especially in its earliest years, contemporary oral history was criticized on the basis that the memory was regarded as fallible and, as such, an unreliable source for historical research. By the late 1970s, however, oral historians began to argue that the fallibility of memory and the subjective nature of personal narrative were a strength of oral history research, not a weakness.[14] In this sense then, memory is regarded "as the object, not merely the method, of oral history".[15] Interviews are used not only to add to a collection of facts with a supposed "truth value", but also to explore that very subjectivity and what it shows about individual meaning-making in society.[16] Factual inconsistencies, omissions and embellishments in narrative glean added import, as Alessandro Portellini writes: "What is really important is that memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings."[17] While this is especially true when relying on oral sources, Portellini points out that many written sources, such as newspaper articles, can hardly lay claim to a greater truth value as they are likewise dependent on human memory and frequently have their basis in human observation and the transmission of oral testimony.[18]

Using the memories of individuals as raw source material results in another characteristic of oral history projects, namely that they allow many voices to speak simultaneously. As social historian Paul Thompson states, "Reality is complex and many-sided; and it is a primary merit of oral history that to a much greater extent than most sources it allows the original multiplicity of standpoints

[13] Refer to the bibliography for a list of informants.
[14] R Perks & A Thomson, "Critical developments: Introduction", in R Perks & A Thomson (eds), *The oral history reader*, Routledge, New York, 2006, pp. 1–3.
[15] M Frisch, *A shared authority: Essays on the craft and meaning of oral and public history*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1990, p. 188.
[16] See A Passerini, *Fascism in popular memory: The cultural experience of the Turin working class*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987; see also A Portellini, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories: Form and meaning in oral history*, State University of New York Press, New York, 1991.
[17] A Portellini, "What makes oral history different", in R Perks & A Thomson (eds), *The oral history reader*, Routledge, New York, 2006, p. 37.
[18] Portellini, "What makes oral history different", p. 37.

to be recreated."[19] However, drawing upon "a multiplicity of standpoints" that rely upon memory, given its potential fallibility and constructedness, creates a scholarly position of extreme discomfort. My approach to this discomfort has been to examine the nature of memories, whilst paying attention to the construction of meaning and the narrative impulse behind retelling – the subjectivity of individuals that causes them to contextualize lived experience, to order and selectively recall it so that it becomes a vehicle for understanding the world around them and their place in it. Another approach has been to embrace the elusiveness of facts and to realize that creating a narrative necessarily involves a retelling of countless retellings that have informed this work. Given these concerns, I have felt it best to refrain from pursuing a comprehensive chronological narrative propelled by undisputed "facts", and have instead chosen to explore the relationship between a life and its contexts, and to embrace uncertainties as the only inevitable constant standing in for the complexity of lived experience.

Such an approach supports the notion of an orally transmitted life story as a created text, a notion that forms the basis of Charlotte Linde's work on life story construction. Linde notes that individuals generally attempt to create coherence in the life stories they tell about themselves.[20] As a life story is exchanged by individuals, it is defined as a social unit and furthermore, as a specifically oral unit with a discontinuous nature told in fragments over the course of a lifetime. It is also an open unit with no predefined structure: a life story can change over time as new events are incorporated, old ones redefined and new connections drawn between them.[21] Treating life stories as texts produced not only by tellers, but also by addressees, Linde defines coherence as deriving from the internal relations within a text, as well as the relations between different texts.[22] Concerned primarily with the creation of these texts, as opposed to the correlation of these stories with supposed facts, Linde states: "Rather than making claims about the existence and nature of raw facts, this study assumes that all we can ever work with is texts of one sort or another."[23]

Linde cites an example, borrowed from Gerald Prince, to illustrate this idea. In this example, an individual may claim to have been born in Livorno, Italy. This may seem to be a fact that can be verified independently of the text in which it is told, either by asking relatives or friends, or even better, by consulting an official

[19] P Thompson, "The voice of the past: Oral history", in R Perks & A Thomson (eds), *The oral history reader*, Routledge, New York, 2006, p. 28.
[20] C Linde, *Life stories: The creation of coherence*, Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford, 1993, pp. 3–4.
[21] Linde, *Life stories: The creation of coherence*, p. 31.
[22] Linde, *Life stories: The creation of coherence*, p. 12.
[23] Linde, *Life stories: The creation of coherence*, p. 14.

record. However, as Linde points out, "each of these attempts at verification involves consulting a text that is itself subject to the process of interpretation; no such source can be treated as though it were the fact it purports to record."[24] This applies equally to official records, such as birth records, although they are among those documents frequently assumed to be more trustworthy than others. According to Linde, a large portion of Livorno's records are known to have been destroyed during World War II, resulting in the fact that foreigners seeking Italian citizenship can now lay claim to a pre-war birth in Livorno. This example calls the assumed authority of official documents into question and is highly relevant to this dissertation, as exemplified by Taliep's birth (or not) in the now-defunct Peninsula Maternity Ward in District Six.

Although Linde's study concerns linguistics and essentially investigates these stories as units of discourse, I believe that some of the essential principles she develops can be applied to this study. Linde is careful to differentiate between her conceptualization of a life story and autobiographies, biographies and the understanding of life stories in both psychology and anthropology.[25] However, I regard the material generated in my interviews as created texts not dissimilar to Linde's life stories. Linde does not make a sharp distinction between life stories created in spontaneous social interaction and those created in interviews, although the interviewer is then necessarily regarded as a participant in the exchange.[26] As the content of life stories is dependent on the relationship between teller and addressee, perhaps it is productive to regard my interviews as life stories told specifically for my benefit, and perhaps with an imagined audience of readers in mind. An important distinction is that my interviews consist of life stories told about the life of someone other than the teller himself. The effect of this distinction is naturally that, instead of creating a story to reflect themselves, my interviewees have been creating life stories to reflect Taliep. In the words of Linde, " ... someone other than the person who lived the life is attempting to make sense of it."[27]

Regarding my interviews in this light means that a large portion of my material consists of different creations of Taliep, dependent on not only the interviewees' relationship to him, but also on their relationship to me and to an imagined audience. An important challenge of this study has been, in my re-telling, to avoid the temptation of ironing out inconsistencies, of forcing stories to align

[24] Linde, *Life stories: The creation of coherence*, p. 15.
[25] Linde, *Life stories: The creation of coherence*, pp. 37–50.
[26] Linde, *Life stories: The creation of coherence*, p. 59.
[27] Linde, *Life stories: The creation of coherence*, p. 42.

with one another, of resisting the need to create coherence. The purpose behind this has been to emphasize the individual figure of Taliep as collectively created by the people in his life. However, besides being a participant in this creation, my own involvement as interpreter and storyteller cannot be ignored. The narrative that I have created is therefore necessarily my own creation, albeit one that attempted to steer away from the notion of coherence between accounts. And yet, as the study moved forward, I found that these diverse threads were invariably drawn together into a coherent narrative, that I was selectively ordering accounts and drawing life stories together into the woven tapestry of a lived life. I have come to realize that, as the writer of this text, I am susceptible to the very need for coherence that I have ascribed to my interviewees. I, too, am trying to make sense of the life of this man.

A number of considerations have influenced the selection of material presented in this dissertation. This not only concerns the inclusion or exclusion of particular archival or interview material but, faced with the wealth of projects Taliep engaged with during his lifetime, also the choice of subject matter. One of the considerations in making this selection was the state of research on Taliep's life and artistic output. His collaboration with David Kramer (starting in the mid-1980s) is the most comprehensively documented aspect of his creative life. For this reason, I have decided to document the years before the collaboration, which are primarily dealt with in Part I of this dissertation, in a more chronologically comprehensive manner than subsequent years. The latter are discussed in Part II, which consists of four chapters on specific projects that answer to critical questions arising from the material. In addition to this, I have not written comprehensively about all six of the Kramer/Petersen musicals, choosing instead to balance a selection of them with a number of Taliep's other projects.

The selection of the projects discussed in Part II was informed by a particular tension resulting from this text being both biography and academic dissertation, thus simultaneously being required to represent a lived life and bring theoretical questions to bear on that life. Specific projects were chosen because they took up larger periods of Taliep's life, and also because they represented a more significant artistic achievement than other projects (for example a full-length musical containing original material as opposed to a shorter musical consisting of existing Kramer/Petersen songs). Projects were also selected because they generated what I regarded as the most interesting questions. Writing nearly twenty years after the end of apartheid in a South Africa where the contemporary effects of apartheid legislation such as the Group Areas Act of

1950 are still visible and recent events such as the Marikana shooting serve as reminders of the difficulties that beset the country, I privilege the socio-political circumstances of Taliep's life, which coincided with a period during which South Africa experienced significant political and social changes. Not only did Taliep's year of birth coincide with the creation of numerous infamous apartheid laws, he also witnessed the forced removals from District Six, the politically turbulent years leading to the inauguration of South Africa's first democratically-elected president in 1994, as well as continued racial tension in post-apartheid South Africa. Moreover, a consideration of socio-political contexts resulted in the emergence of important points of contact between Taliep's life and historical developments in South African coloured identity articulation, something that influenced both the selection of material and my treatment thereof.

Decisions on selection were also motivated by the desire to illustrate the multifaceted and intriguing character of my biographical subject, something that found expression in the retention of seemingly insignificant details in individual interviews. This consideration was intimately connected with my interest in exploring the boundary between historiography and storytelling, and by extension fiction writing. In discussing this question with South African playwright Athol Fugard, he suggested that the writing of history does not focus on individual experience in the sense that subjectivities are frequently subsumed in collective action:

> The difference between history-writing and storytelling? Well, in my opinion, in the case of history-writing, the focus is on the impact of a moment in the context of broad historical events, whereas when you write a story, the same moment is dealt with also in terms of its consequences in the life of a subject. It concerns the dramatization of experience, almost always achieved through dealing with individual lives.[28]

In the creation of Taliep's story, therefore, events and details have been provided not only to examine the reciprocal relationship between historical situatedness and the life of an individual, but also to inform the reader about a life and the consequences of lived moments in that life. In this dissertation, however, the desire to push the boundary between historiography and fiction-writing applies to more than just the focus on an individual story and the inclusion of colourful specificities from interviews and lists. It finds expression also in an acknowledgement of the energy located in the surface text, which is simultaneously a denial that "scholarly" or "scientific" writing that avoids (or pretends to avoid) literary conventions can claim objectivity. In his book, *In defence of history,* Richard J. Evans traces the development of historiography,

[28] Personal communication with Athol Fugard, 27 January 2013.

noting that postmodernist thought has challenged the discipline to rethink some fundamental assumptions about the way history is written.[29] Evans notes that Roland Barthes had asserted already in the 1960s that history does not lie outside the text waiting to be discovered, but is in fact produced within it; also that the scholarly apparatus of quoting and footnoting is simply a tool designed to create the illusion that the researcher is objectively reporting on the past. Jacques Derrida developed many of his ideas from those of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who identified language as a system, a collection of signifiers whose meaning is defined not in relation to the signified, but to each other. Derrida argued subsequently that these relations were in constant flux, and that language was an "infinite play of significations" with no fixed referential meaning outside of themselves – everything was produced through language and nothing existed outside the text.[30]

Informed by these writers and following the example of Linde's study as discussed earlier, I regard my sources, whether interviews or written accounts, as created texts that cannot be taken as direct representations of any outside "fact" they are meant to signify. This perspective, as numerous scholars have noted, threatens to collapse history into fiction. In the words of medieval historian Gabrielle Spiegel: "... if texts – documents, literary works, whatever – do not transparently reflect reality, but only other texts, then historical study can scarcely be distinguished from literary study, and the 'past' dissolves into literature."[31] Discussing the implications of postmodern thought on the discipline of history, Evans likewise draws a parallel with creative writing, noting that in postmodernist history, the historian's conventional concern with facts is replaced with self-reflexivity and a focus on the problems of literary construction with a view of convincing the reader of its "truthfulness". He concludes as follows: "The implication is that the historian does not in fact capture the past in faithful fashion but rather, like the novelist, only gives the appearance of doing so."[32] In this dissertation, the engagement with these concerns is a performative approach to the theory of writing, one that works in the pages of this document to demonstrate how history is invariably shaped by the fictionalizing impulse of the writer, but that it is no less "true" than a history that pretends otherwise.

[29] RJ Evans, *In defense of history,* Granta, London, 1997, pp. 94–95.
[30] Evans, *In defense of history,* p. 95.
[31] G Spiegel, "History and post-modernism", *Past and Present,* vol. 135, 1992, p. 197, cited in Evans, *In defense of history*, p. 96.
[32] Evans, *In defense of history,* p. 98.

As mentioned earlier, the narrative of Taliep's life as constructed in this dissertation allowed certain critical questions to emerge. Important in this regard was the notion of collective creation; not only in its applicability to the creation of life stories, but also to the creation of musical productions and to cultural creativity as embodied in processes of creolization. Taliep was a collaborator. He worked closely with individuals and groups in the realization of his ideas, whether playing in a cover band, writing a song or writing a musical. The notion of collective creation is paralleled in the cultural process of creolization, defined by Zimitri Erasmus as "cultural creativity under conditions of marginality".[33] In this dissertation, creolization is explored not only as a force leading to the creation of new musical styles, but as a paradigm through which to rethink formations of coloured identity in post-apartheid South Africa. But creolization is regarded here as operating on a micro level as well, shaping Taliep's musical sensibility and the conditions under which he could make and remake his individual identity. For creolization, understood through the writing of Édouard Glissant,[34] emphasizes process over content, enabling the fluidity of coloured identity formations and multiple identifications with places, communities and ideas. This is understood through Glissant's "Poetics of Relation, in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other."[35] This could also be understood as a manifestation of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's rhizome[36] enabling a description of Taliep's identity formations as resembling a non-hierarchical root structure expressed as possibilities on a map, rather than a fixed tracing leading to a specific point.

Although this dissertation attempts to answer certain questions about South African coloured identity formations, I have avoided a generalizing impulse that would locate Taliep's experience as metonymic of the coloured population of South Africa. This biography is concerned with the study of an individual and I took care not to commit violence to his story by continually attempting to link it conclusively with the experiences of those in similar situations or to broader South African discourses. This does not mean that wider resonances of Taliep's life cannot be found. Gerald Gaylard notes that despite postmodernity's interest in the idiosyncratic individual, its rejection of meta-narrative and the decline of metonymy in post-nationalistic writing, "the urgency of South Africa's

[33] Z Erasmus, "Introduction: Re-imagining coloured identities in post-apartheid South Africa", in Z Erasmus (ed.), *Coloured by history shaped by place: New perspectives on coloured identities in Cape Town, Kwela Books in association with South African History Online, Cape Town,* 2001, p. 16.
[34] É Glissant, *Poetics of relation,* trans. B Wing, The University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1997.
[35] Glissant, *Poetics of relation,* p. 11.
[36] See G Deleuze & F Guattari, *A thousand plateaus,* trans. B Massumi, Continuum, London, 1987, pp. 3–28.

sociopolitical dispensation forces that incommensurable individuality into dialogue with the social".[37] Therefore, although this project does not attempt to cast Petersen into a metonymic role, the focus on an individual in "dialogue with the social" has the undeniable potential to contribute towards a study of group identity. Through focussing on an individual, however, I have attempted to negate the concept of the collective as an indiscriminate social mass and problematize group identity through an emphasis on individuality and multiplicity.

Throughout this dissertation I have also avoided explanations explicitly linking Taliep's story to broader international discourses, a performative act intended to demonstrate that the telling of an intensely specific and regional story does not require justification by means of demonstrating international relevance. Paradoxically, a focus on the regional is often the best way to talk about the universal. This consideration is evident in the work of Glissant, who notes in reference to marginalized and displaced communities that "the discourse of such communities (those shadowy threads of meaning where their silence is voiced) must be studied if we wish to gain a profound insight into the drama of creolization taking place on a global scale."[38] In discussing Taliep's experiences through the lens of creolization theory and using in particular the work of Glissant (who, as Denis-Constant Martin notes, in a sense freed this discourse from its application only to the West Indies and Americas), I have attempted to follow on the work of Martin and others in offering a detailed example of how this theory can animate South African subject matter. The use of this theory identifies the South African slave population and their descendants as an example of, in Glissant's words, a community distinct from diasporic or exiled communities by virtue of not having brought with it "the methods of existence and survival, both material and spiritual, which it practiced before being uprooted."[39] Such a community does not maintain its original character after being transferred, but is "transformed elsewhere into another people", thus becoming part of the process of creolization.[40] Creolization is understood here as a process affecting the entire world, a manifestation of Glissant's Poetics of Relation that, as explained by Martin, "answers the obligation to think in terms of worldness *(mondalité)* and not of globalisation *(mondialisation)*: a universe that for the first time in history can be envisioned as inextricably multiple and one."[41]

[37] G Gaylard, "The death of the subject? Subjectivity in post-apartheid literature", *Scrutiny2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa,* vol. 11, no. 2, 2006, p. 73.
[38] É Glissant, *Caribbean discourse: Selected essays,* trans. JM Dash, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1989, p. 2.
[39] Glissant, *Caribbean discourse: Selected essays,* p. 15.
[40] Glissant, *Caribbean discourse: Selected essays,* pp. 14–15.
[41] DC Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa,* African Minds, Somerset West, 2013, p. 63.

A specific focus on Taliep's story not only links to the broader discourse of creolization as it operates on a worldwide scale, but simultaneously reflects individual global mobility characterized by multiple identifications with diverse cultural traditions, something that is becoming an increasing feature of contemporary society. This says something about the problems of defining cultural authenticity in a country such as South Africa, not only because of its history of cultural encounter, but also its continued engagement with diverse global trends. Taliep's particular historical situatedness resulted in a central characteristic of his musical career being the choice between the "local" and a reliance on musical styles taken from the contemporary global music scene. This duality is perhaps most clearly illustrated by a seven-inch single that Taliep released as "Taliep Peterson" in 1982 with EMI Brigadiers. The songs contained on this record are "Songs and sounds of Africa", composed by Taliep, and "Carrie", written by Yusuf Allie, guitarist for Nana Mouskouri, who would also compose Taliep's 1970s single, "You are the days of my life".

The lyrics of the A-side track encourage the listener to be proud of the "songs and sounds of Africa", to listen to the beat and "get on to the sound of Africa".[42] Over the course of three verses, the speaker complains that all he hears on radio is disco from America, new wave from the U.K. and reggae from Jamaica. Every time the singer mentions one of these genres, the song's rhythmic pattern and harmonic structure are adapted for a few bars to reflect the musical style in question. This clever adaptation of the original song during each musical quotation relies to a certain extent on parody or a pastiche of different styles, and illustrates Taliep's ability to perform one music through the lens of another. Ultimately, Taliep's engagement with what he regards as "Africa", seems to rely on the short syncopated melodic figure that is repeated in the piano accompaniment during each chorus, as well as the text that relies on the trope of the "beat of Africa".[43] The B-side track, "Carrie", is a slow love song with a text that expresses loneliness after the loss of a lover. Musically, this sophisticated track is reminiscent of rhythm and blues, and despite the call for more engagement with "the songs and sounds of Africa" on the reverse side, relies fully on "imported" musical influences.

These two tracks, "Songs and sounds of Africa" and "Carrie", represent a duality between what could be labeled as the "imported", American pop music, and the "local", that which references exclusively (South) African musical influences.

[42] T Petersen, *Songs and sounds of Africa*, seven-inch single audio recording, EMI, Johannesburg, 1982.
[43] Petersen, *Songs and sounds of Africa*, seven-inch single.

Although engagement with what might be considered "local" remains superficial in "Songs and sounds of Africa", this is in itself an indication of the difficulties inherent in assigning musical authenticity to a culture shaped by processes of creolization. Nonetheless, this track contains the germ of a desire that would be developed significantly during Taliep's life, sometimes in surprising ways. As such, these tracks are two sides of a coin representing a choice that Taliep, and many of his South African contemporaries, would have to make many times during their musical career.

Figure 2: "Songs and sounds of Africa", composed and sung by Taliep "Peterson [*sic*]". SOURCE: EMI Music South Africa, record contained in the SABC Record Library, photograph by Paula Fourie

Figure 3: "Carrie", composed by Yusuf Allie and sung by Taliep "Peterson [*sic*]." SOURCE: EMI Music South Africa, record contained in the SABC Record Library, photograph by Paula Fourie

Finally, a note on structure. Part I of this dissertation consists of two lengthy chapters that, together, chronicle the first thirty years of Taliep's life. In presenting Taliep's childhood in District Six, Chapter 1 has a tripartite function. It presents Taliep's childhood in District Six as a background to the rest of his life story, functions as an extended introduction to a significant space and culture (as regards this story) and, last, is an attempt at a biographical approach to the study of social experience in District Six as advocated by historian Bill Nasson.[44] Chapter 2 deals with the 1960s and 1970s, telling the story of a coloured entertainer attempting to succeed in an environment increasingly dominated by white concerns. The focus here is on the effect of political events on the life of an individual and on the development of his subjectivity. However, the effect of following Taliep so closely is that, not unlike Charles van Onselen's book on Kas Maine,[45] a hidden history is revealed. In both cases, this history is intensely specific and through this specificity offers new perspectives on the apartheid years. Finally, in discussing forgotten projects and by obsessively listing the names of Taliep's fellow musicians, this chapter documents that which has been hidden under the detritus of South African political history.

Part II consists of four chapters that take a closer look at specific projects interspersed over the remaining twenty-six years of Taliep's life. As such, there is a focus in these chapters on contextualization and theorization rather than on comprehensive chronology. The first of these chapters draws upon creolization theory in a discussion of Taliep's cover band, Sapphyre, and specifically their LP, *Rosa*, that consisted of contemporary versions of traditional Cape Malay folk songs. Chapter 4 focuses on the first of Taliep and Kramer's collaborative projects, *District Six: The musical*, employing Zoë Wicomb's discourse on coloured identity and shame[46] in a discussion on creolized musical forms and their role in the claiming of District Six as a marker of identity and subsequent object of memorialization.

Chapter 5 straddles three different projects of the mid-1990s: a musical (*Poison*), an album (*Tribute*) and a concert (*Two worlds – One heart*). Demonstrating Taliep's treatment of contemporary South African subject matter, as well as his exploration of identities outside of District Six that are centred in Islam and the heritage of slavery, this chapter also operates within Wicomb's dialectics of shame and pride. It furthermore employs Deleuze and Guattari's writing

[44] See B Nasson, "Oral history and the reconstruction of District Six", in S Jeppie and C Soudien (eds), *The struggle for District Six: Past and present*, Buchu Books, Cape Town, 1990, pp. 44–66.
[45] C van Onselen, *The seed is mine: The life of Kas Maine, a South African sharecropper, 1894-1985*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1997.
[46] Z Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", in D Attridge & R Jolly (eds), *Writing South Africa: Literature, apartheid and democracy*, 1970–1995, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 91–107.

to postulate identity as rhizomatic.[47] Chapter 6 deals with Taliep's work on Afrikaans television as well as the last musical he co-wrote with Kramer, *Ghoema*. Taliep's promotion of his particular dialect of Afrikaans, known as Kaaps, is discussed as an attempt to facilitate the reclaiming of this language by formerly oppressed communities. The celebration of a creole heritage and the showcasing of cultural forms popularly associated with the coloured population in Cape Town are regarded as an assertion of culture and discussed through creolization theory, specifically Glissant's "Poetics of Relation".[48] Here again, Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome is evoked in a discussion of Taliep's various identifications during the course of his lifetime.

Interspersed throughout the chapters are interludes of a diverse nature. These consist of fieldwork notes detailing the actual process of conducting research, family trees, perspectival sketches, maps and lists. As this life history document is influenced by a post-modern acceptance of epistemic relativism regarding representations of the subject, these interludes are included here to explore different mediums of representation and to explore their interaction within a linear account of a life lived.

[47] Deleuze & Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, pp. 3–28.
[48] É Glissant, *Poetics of relation.*

Part I

Ancestors

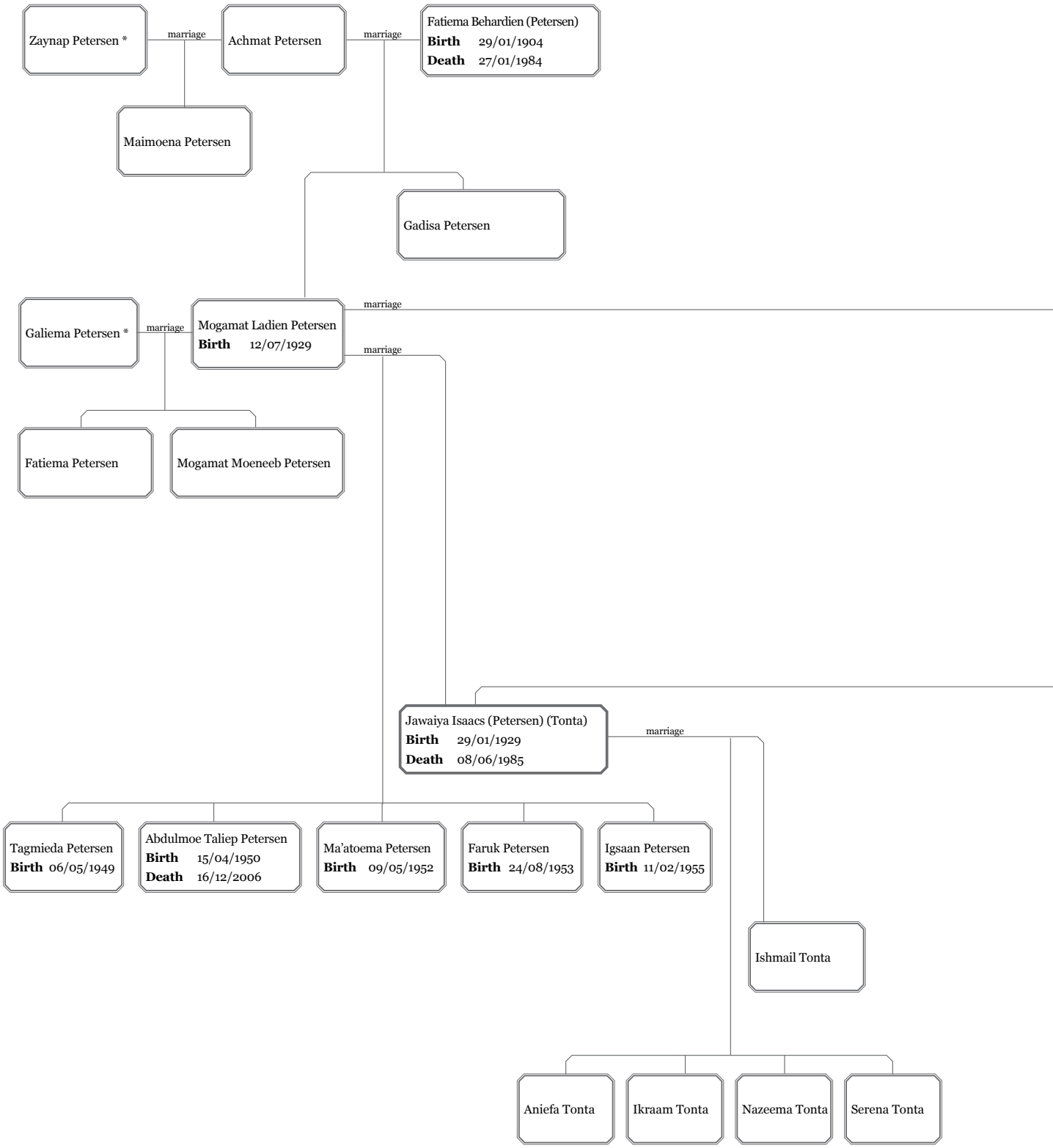
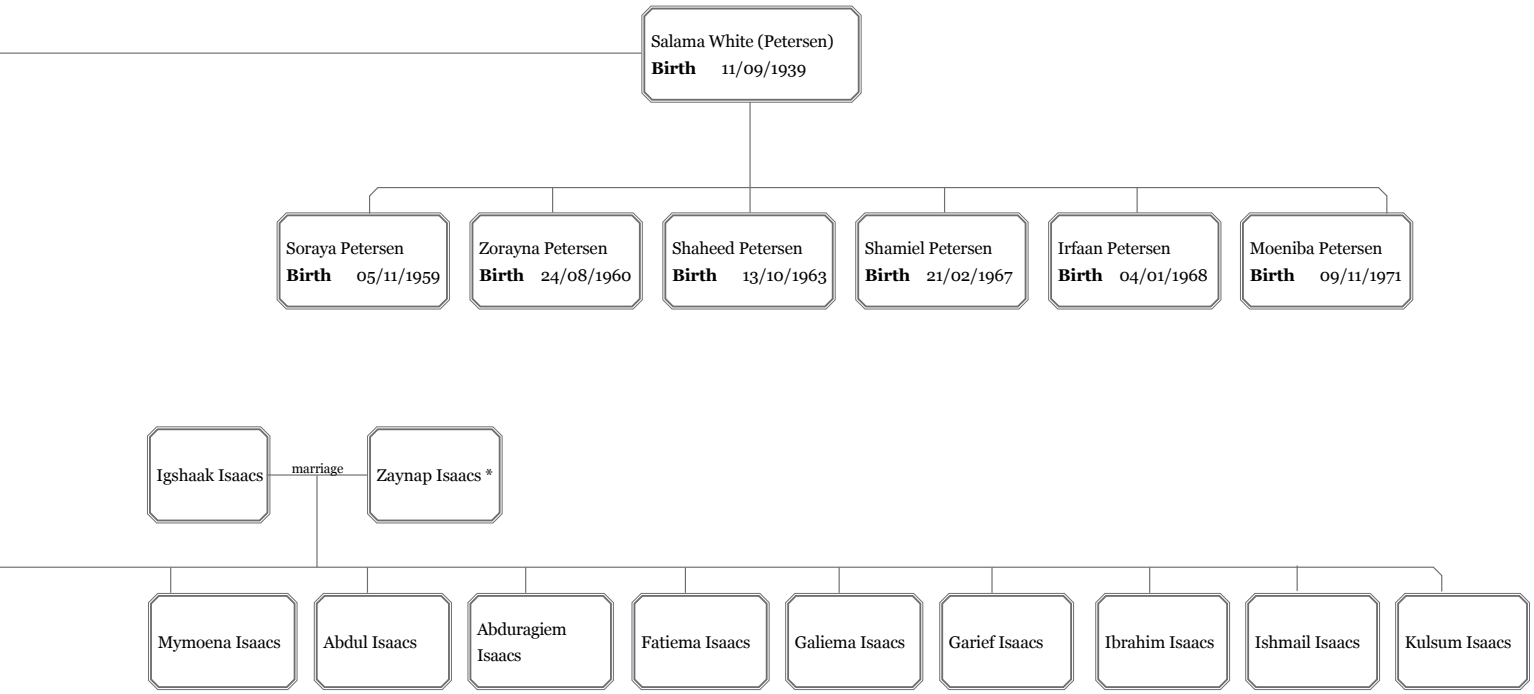


Figure 4: A family tree depicting Taliep's immediate ancestors and siblings.
SOURCE: Compiled from interviews with family members, design by Julia Eccles



* Maiden name unknown

It is beyond the scope of this research to establish the date of birth/death for all of Taliep's family members. Where this is the case, the relevant dates have been omitted.

The beginning

I am sitting at a wooden table with a glass top, in a big yellow house in the heart of Athlone. A large fish tank dominates the wall behind me. To my left, there is an upright piano made from dark wood. Its top door is inlaid with decorations – three rectangular blocks above the keyboard. Family photographs cluster together on the lid, young children dressed in graduation costumes, a baby, and a group of adults – the woman in the photograph has her head covered with a pink hijab head scarf. Opposite me at the table sits an elderly gentleman, Mogamat Ladien Petersen, also known as Boeta Diempie. He is wearing a white button-up shirt striped with a delicate paisley pattern, a navy tie with pin and dark trousers. His ensemble is completed with polished black shoes and an embroidered off-white fez. Today is my first interview with Taliep Petersen's father and I begin at the only place I can think of beginning, namely, at the start of his story.

> "Wanneer en waar is u gebore?"
> "Ek is gebore in District Six on the twelfth of July 1929."
> "En u het ook daar grootgeword?"
> "Grootgeword, gebore daar, wag om te dood daar."[1]

[1] "When and where were you born?/ I was born in District Six on the 12th of July 1929./ And did you grow up there as well?/ Grew up there, born there and waiting to die there." Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011. Unless otherwise indicated, all Afrikaans to English translations in this dissertation are by the present author.

Chapter 1

The first chronicle: A childhood in District Six

Mogamat Ladien Petersen was born in District Six, Cape Town, on 12 July 1929 into a coloured Muslim family presided over by his father, Achmat Petersen, and his mother, Fatiema Behardien.[1] The term "coloured" originated during the early history of South Africa to denote people of mixed racial origin. When codified by the apartheid government with the Population Registration Act of 1950, racial categories in South Africa became formalized and decisive; being classified as belonging to any specific group had considerable consequences. People classified as coloured were not only individuals of racially mixed descent, but included the Khoisan and individuals descended from slaves brought mainly from Southeast-Asia. This designation has included various subgroups, including the predominantly Muslim Cape Malays,[2] the subgroup that would include Mogamat Ladien and his family. The term "coloured" has since evolved to describe a diverse group of people whose heritage can best be seen in the light of creolization theory.[3]

The term "coloured" has a complex history that has at times included its rejection as an apartheid label and at others, its claiming as a self-referential term. As noted by Zoë Wicomb: "Such adoption of different names at various historical junctures shows perhaps the difficulty which the term 'coloured' has in taking on a fixed meaning, and as such exemplifies postmodernity in its shifting allegiances, its duplicitous play between the written capitalization and speech that denies or at least does not reveal the act of renaming – once again the silent inscription of shame."[4] In order to emphasize individual and collective agency in creating personal identity, I have decided to employ this term throughout without quotation marks or other qualifying appendages.

According to Mogamat Ladien, his father, Achmat, was raised in Constantia and had such a light skin that he could easily have been regarded as a white man.[5] In contrast to this, his mother, Fatiema, had roots in Zanzibar and, as Mogamat Ladien notes, had a darker skin tone.[6] The existence of ingrained attitudes regarding skin colour and supposed superiority are revealed by the following comments by Mogamat Ladien, and confirm Vivian Bickford-Smith's assertion

[1] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.

[2] The historical conditions leading to the formulation of the designation "Cape Malay", as well as the community it is understood to refer to, will be explained in Chapters 2 and 5.

[3] See DC Martin, "Cape Town: The ambiguous heritage of creolization in South Africa", in D de Lame & DC Rassool (eds), *Popular snapshots and tracks to the past: Cape Town, Nairobi, Lubumbashi,* Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, 2010, pp. 183–202.

[4] Z Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", in D Attridge & R Jolly (eds.), *Writing South Africa: Literature, apartheid and democracy, 1970–1995,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 93–94.

[5] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.

[6] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.

that there was a hierarchy of pigmentation in District Six, "where the lighter, in very general terms, tended to be better off than the darker":[7]

> My pa het blou oë in sy kop geheb, man. Ek het nou net nie 'n kiekie van hom nie, maar, baie mooi man gewees, my pa. 'n Taamlike mooi man. En my ma was donker van kleur. Dan vra ek: "Mamma, hoekom mamma's dan so donker, hoekom het Buya vir Mamma gelike?"[8]

The year of Mogamat Ladien's birth saw the re-election of General Barry Hertzog as prime minister of the Union of South Africa.[9] According to Hermann Giliomee, Hertzog was a main force behind South African policies of racial segregation. Having studied race relations of, amongst others, the United States of America, Hertzog came to the conclusion that integration was not feasible in South Africa. Although he did not subscribe to the notion that people of colour were inherently inferior, he believed that equality would only be possible if whites left the country entirely. It was also Hertzog who saw a solution to the "problem" of South African racial diversity in the creation of independent reserves for blacks, a foreshadowing of the Bantustans of later years. Giliomee writes that, regarding black ascension as a threat to white survival, "Herzog sought to ensure the security and solidarity of his own group."[10]

Bickford-Smith points out that Cape Town is often regarded as having been much more liberal and tolerant of racial diversity than the rest of South Africa.[11] After the emancipation of slaves in 1838, British policy in the Cape dictated that all subjects be awarded the same degree of political rights, ostensibly to make the Cape easier and less expensive to govern. However, as Bickford-Smith points out, this does not mean that racism was not a feature of Cape Liberal thinking; rather, it was believed that people of colour could change and become like whites through education and conversion to Christianity. Furthermore, longstanding inequalities between the races with regard to economic power and land-ownership meant that white supremacy at the Cape was not easy to threaten. Bickford-Smith notes that the tradition of Cape Liberalism underwent changes towards the end of the nineteenth century, slowly causing a shift away from

[7] V Bickford-Smith, "The origins and early history of District Six", in S Jeppie and C Soudien (eds), *The struggle for District Six: Past and present*, Buchu Books, Cape Town, 1990, p. 37.

[8] "My father had blue eyes in his head, man. I just don't have a photo of him, but, very beautiful man, was my father. A fairly beautiful man. And my mother was dark in colour. Then I ask: 'Mommy, why's Mommy then so dark, why did Buya like Mommy?'" Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.

[9] The information in this paragraph is taken from H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people*, 2nd edn, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2009, pp. 301–302.

[10] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people*, p. 301.

[11] The information in this paragraph is taken from V Bickford-Smith, "South African urban history, racial segregation and the unique case of Cape Town?", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1995, pp. 63–68.

assimilation and towards segregation. Nonetheless, the relatively limited social segregation of Cape Town that survived into the twentieth century was a product of a number of factors. According to Bickford-Smith:

> The most important of these were cost, the "notorious permeability of the colour line", incomplete correlation of ethnicity and divisions of labour, the nature of economic activity in the city, coloured political mobilisation and the fact that not all whites adhered to the ideology of social separation.[12]

Thus, although coloureds had formally been on an equal political footing with whites in the Cape Colony, this came to an end when the colonies were united in 1910 as the Union of South Africa, a protectorate of the British Empire.[13] After the Union Act it was determined that no coloured individual could become a member of the Senate or House of Assembly. The following years would see a gradual erosion of their rights as politically participating citizens of South Africa. In 1936, coloured individuals were relegated to a separate voter's roll, another step towards the complete negation of their political power. Mogamat Ladien was born into a South Africa where, although free from slavery, coloured people were steadily reduced to second class citizens. However, he was also born into the world of District Six, popularly remembered as a South Africa without apartheid and later considered to have been "the 'spiritual centre' of the coloured proletariat".[14]

District Six originated on the slopes of Devil's Peak at the middle of the nineteenth century and was popularly known as "Kanaladorp" or, officially, as the twelfth municipal district of the city before it was officially named in 1867 as the sixth municipal district of Cape Town. The name "Kanaladorp" has two possible meanings, either referring to the canals ("kanale", in Afrikaans) bordering the district, or to the word "kanala", derived from the Javanese word for "please".[15] Introduced by the slave population in the nineteenth century, this nickname has frequently been used in nostalgic reference to generosity and a culture of sharing that is associated with District Six in literary sources[16] and contemporary accounts. Since the late nineteenth century, District Six has had

[12] Bickford-Smith, "South African urban history, racial segregation and the unique case of Cape Town?", p. 74.
[13] The information in this paragraph is taken from D Pinnock, "From argie boys to skolly gangsters: The lumpen-proletarian challenge of the street-corner armies in District Six, 1900–1951", in C Saunders & H Phillips (eds), *Studies in the history of Cape Town*, vol. 3, University of Cape Town History Department in association with the Centre for African Studies, Cape Town, 1980, p. 136.
[14] Pinnock, "From argie boys to skolly gangsters: The lumpen-proletarian challenge of the street-corner armies in District Six, 1900–1951", p. 147.
[15] K McCormick, *Language in Cape Town's District Six*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, p. 48.
[16] See C Schoeman, *District Six: The spirit of kanala*, Human & Rousseau, Cape Town, 1994.

a reputation for being a diverse community and a melting pot of cultures, races and religions.[17] In the words of Mogamat Ladien:

> As I said, man, we were four, five, five, four different kind of a nation, but there was harmony. There was love. There was help-mekaar [help-each-other] It was the English, it was the Jew, it was the Bantus, it was Moslem people and it was the coloured people. And it was the Indians, they own these shops.[18]

Mediated as they are through the lens of time, Mogamat Ladien's memories of life in the district must be respected and regarded as an earnest response to his experiences, past and present. Yet although District Six is represented in popular memory work as "one happy melting pot" devoid of internal tension, Bickford-Smith has argued that District Six at the turn of the century was subject to ethnic solidarity (for example in the formation of Jewish trade unions and exclusively Malay choirs) and class stratification (seen in the relationships between landlord and tenant or shop-owner and assistant).[19] She notes that, by 1900, the district's largest population group was what the government was later to codify as Cape Malay and coloured, with Africans and Europeans second and third respectively. A large number of foreign immigrants resided in the district, including a sizeable Jewish contingent from Lithuania, Russia, Poland and Germany. References to the culture of neighbourly generosity in District Six, such as Mogamat Ladien's account, could relate to the fact that it was a very poor and crowded suburb in some places, largely due to neglect on the part of the Cape Town Council to provide adequate sanitation and address the housing problem.

Several factors contributed to the poverty of this area. Firstly, the population growth in District Six in the nineteenth century was due in large part to the emancipation of slaves in 1838, and while wealthier Capetonians relocated to the southern suburbs, District Six was available for those who were dependent on the city for an income and could not afford to live on its outskirts.[20] According to Bickford-Smith, the majority of the population in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were employed on a seasonal or casual basis (doing work in the docks, the railway or in the building trade) and many were "locked into structural poverty, living in overcrowded tenements, subject to high mortality rates and the recipients of few relieving facilities."[21] The cramped conditions in the district contributed to its growing reputation as an unhygienic and crime-infested

[17] DM Hart, "Political manipulation of urban space: The razing of District Six, Cape Town", *Urban Geography*, vol. 9, no. 6, 1988, p. 605.
[18] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
[19] The information in this paragraph is taken from Bickford-Smith, "The origins and early history of District Six", pp. 28–40.
[20] Hart, "Political manipulation of urban space: The razing of District Six, Cape Town", p. 605.
[21] Bickford-Smith, "The origins and early history of District Six", p. 38.

slum, a reputation that would eventually led to its demolition. As Deborah Hart notes, "The century-long failure on the part of the authorities to address the needs of the community contributed to the slum conditions which furnished the pretext for the dispossession and relocation of its occupants."[22]

District Six is frequently portrayed in contemporary accounts as a very musical place where everyone was singing and even the hawkers used music to sell their wares. On every street corner, so it has been said, you could find young men singing together.[23] Despite the nostalgic tone of these accounts, the musical life of this suburb actually was extensive. Besides groups of people singing together informally, District Six was home to the tradition of the Cape coon troupes,[24] known in Afrikaans as *Kaapse klopse,* the Christmas choirs, and the Cape Malay choirs, or *sangkore*. With their activities concentrated in the festive period from December to February or even March, these three musical traditions have played an important role in Cape Town since the early twentieth century. Then there is also the tradition of the *langarm* bands, Cape dance bands that provided music for social balls, a phenomenon that, according to Denis-Constant Martin, is rooted in a passion for dancing that the Cape Town coloured community has had since the nineteenth century.[25] Both the Cape coon and the Cape Malay choir traditions, with their at times overlapping repertoire, would come to play an important role in Taliep's life.

These musical traditions reflect the fact that South Africa, and especially Cape Town, is marked by a history of encounter and entanglement between different races and cultures, a history that has left its traces on much of its cultural life. Having originated near the end of the nineteenth century, the carnivalesque Cape coon tradition has its roots in Cape Town's early singing traditions (primarily practised by slaves), and in blackface minstrelsy imported from America.[26] Today the Cape Coon Carnival involves colourfully dressed and painted troupes marching through the streets of Cape Town on *Tweede Nuwe Jaar*, a traditional day of celebration for the slave population held on 2 January. The Cape coon troupes also take part in competitions held in various stadiums each January where they are judged in a number of categories for the quality of their marching, singing and their uniforms, which are required to change every year.

[22] Hart, "Political manipulation of urban space: The razing of District Six, Cape Town", p. 610.
[23] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.
[24] The term "coon" was initially used in nineteenth century United States as a racist reference to African-Americans. Although debates regarding its suitability are ongoing, South Africa's carnival troupes generally self-employ this term without a negative connotation. I have decided to employ this term in response to a statement made by Taliep in 1994: "The Americans come and they don't want us to use the word coon because it's derogatory. For the people here, coon is not derogatory, in our sense, for us, the minute you talk coon he sees new year day, he sees satin ..." Taliep Petersen interviewed by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.
[25] DC Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, African Minds, Somerset West, 2013, p. 108.
[26] For a comprehensive history of the Cape Coon Carnival tradition, see DC Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1999.

The Cape Malay choirs originated at roughly the same time as the Cape coon troupes. Wearing fezzes as a part of their uniform and including *nederlandsliedjies* (sung in a Dutch altered through oral transmission) in their repertoire, these choirs evince a strong Muslim foundation and Dutch heritage. The Cape Malay choirs consist of groups of all-male singers that rehearse throughout the year for the activities that take place during the first months of every year. Besides marching through the streets on New Year's Eve, the choirs also visit one another's houses to perform. Finally, the choirs participate very seriously in annual competitions from January through to March. The Christmas choirs are not in fact choirs, but orchestral groups affiliated to Christian churches who march on Christmas Eve, playing mainly hymns and marches. Band members are usually not able to read sheet music, but are coached in order to compete in Christmas choir competitions. According to Colin Howard these musical groups are not mutually exclusive:

> It has always been possible, at least since the fifties, for the same player to be part of a Christmas Choir, *sangkoor*, and *klops* in the same season. Some of these players have also formed the backbone of the lively and important dance band and jazz scene.[27]

A characteristic of many of these Western Cape musical traditions is the *ghoema* beat, described by Martin as the most recognizable Capetonian musical signifier.[28] This beat is usually played on the *ghoema* drum but able to be reproduced in rhythmic formations on string instruments such as banjos or guitars. The *ghoema* drum is made by stretching an animal skin over a wooden body constructed to resemble a small wine cask – indeed, this drum had its immediate origins in the South African winelands where many slaves worked as coopers.[29] The *ghoema* beat is usually played with the left hand marking the steady beat and the right hand playing a syncopated rhythm.[30] Although the beat is of ambiguous origin, Martin notes that it has been formed through processes of creolization, pervading Cape Town musics as a "unifying creole pulse".[31] The phenomenon of the *ghoema* drum and its beat will be discussed more fully in Chapter 6. However, for purposes of discussion throughout the interspersed chapters, a transcription of this rhythm, as provided by Sylvia Bruinders, is given below:[32]

[27] C Howard, *The "no-persons": An investigation into the aspects of secular popular music in Cape Town*, Masters thesis, University of London, 1994, p. 69, cited in Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 28.
[28] Martin, "Cape Town: The ambiguous heritage of creolization in South Africa", p. 100.
[29] Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, p. 108.
[30] S Bruinders, *Parading respectability: An ethnography of the Christmas bands movement in the Western Cape, South Africa,* Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2011, p. 74.
[31] Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, p. 108.
[32] Bruinders, *Parading respectability: An ethnography of the Christmas bands movement in the Western Cape, South Africa*, p. 75.

Figure 5: The *ghoema* beat as transcribed by Sylvia Bruinders.
SOURCE: Bruinders, *Parading respectability: An ethnography of the Christmas bands movement in the Western Cape, South Africa, p. 75.*

A strong mythology has been built up around District Six through a lens of time tinged with rosy nostalgia. Contradicting this representation, sociological research including census reports and City Council enquiries into the suburb paint a dramatically sombre image. Bill Nasson argues that neither of these perspectives should be regarded as exclusively correct, and neither should they be regarded as polar opposites.[33] He warns that the history of District Six inhabitants has been presented as an "undifferentiated mass history" and their lives "are presented to us partially, through the prism of intermediaries."[34] Arguing for a biographical approach to the study of District Six, Nasson writes that there is no single history for its inhabitants, but rather that "any detailed research will have to penetrate the individuality of social experience across different times and in different places."[35] The goal of this narrative is therefore to do just that: to stitch together the stories told by several individuals, not in order to prove them wrong or right, but to examine how these individuals created meaning in their world and indeed continue to do so through mediating memory.

Although he was born in Hanover Street further up in District Six, Mogamat Ladien spent a large part of his youth living in Longmarket Street.[36] Stressing the multicultural aspect of District Six and specifically Longmarket Street, he recalls that he used to visit two Jewish brothers, I. Levine and H. Levine, who worked and lived a few houses from each another and who also owned the house that Mogamat Ladien and his family occupied. He recalls eating with them at their table and visiting so frequently that people occasionally referred to him in jest as a Jewish boy. By day, he attended a primary school affiliated to St Philips Anglican Church in Chapel Street and in the afternoons, he went to the *slamseskool* or madrasa where he would receive his Islamic education. It was there that he would learn to recite from the Koran by memory, even without being able to read Arabic. Regarding his time in primary school next to the church, he

[33] B Nasson, "Oral history and the reconstruction of District Six", in S Jeppie and C Soudien (eds), *The struggle for District Six: Past and present*, Buchu Books, Cape Town, 1990, p. 48.
[34] Nasson, "Oral history and the reconstruction of District Six", p. 48.
[35] Nasson, "Oral history and the reconstruction of District Six", pp. 50–51.
[36] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.

remarks: "Dit was 'n Christelike kerk, ja, nou ons gaan sommer langsaan gaat ons 'While shepherds watched their flocks by night.'"[37] And although Mogamat Ladien was also required to sing Christian hymns at primary school during the day before reciting from the Koran in the afternoon, this did not bother him and he recalls enjoying hymn-singing. Today, these hymns remind him of his primary school days, and he mentions attending a Christian funeral in his adult life and being able to sing along.

When Mogamat Ladien was twelve years old, his father, Achmat, passed away, leaving behind his first wife, Zaynap, and her daughter, Maimoena, as well as his second wife, Fatiema, and her children: a boy, Mogamat Ladien, and a girl, Gadisa.[38] When Mogamat Ladien reached Standard 4 in primary school, he abandoned his formal schooling to help his mother support the family. By that time, Mogamat Ladien had already learnt to read and write. Today, he prides himself on an innate practicality and ability to work with his hands in lieu of formal schooling, stating: "Never went to school but these two hands aren't stupid ... he can ... he makes many things!"[39] His grandfather worked as a tailor making military suits and uniforms, and for his first job, the boy joined the firm as a delivery boy.[40] His first salary, under the British Imperial System, was 19 shillings and sixpence per week, just under a pound. In those early days, a packet of cigarettes cost sixpence, and it was also at the age of twelve that Mogamat Ladien started to smoke, having obtained his first cigarettes from his mother's sister.[41] Even though he earned less than a pound, Mogamat Ladien remembers that he could purchase quite a lot with the money he earned, in sharp contrast to today:

> You buy firecrackers today, you ... there's nothing in there. But, in my time! You could've burnt fire-crackers tomorrow also and the day next day. And the next day. So, the amount of stuff you got for that little money that you had.[42]

Mogamat Ladien never attended school again after Standard 4, but after working as a delivery boy, he joined the ranks of young men at the docks offloading ships.[43] During this time, he had to be at the docks at six o'clock in the morning, where the foreman would be handing out cards. There was only work if you

[37] "It was a Christian Church, yes, now we go just next door, we go 'While shepherds watched their flocks by night.'" Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[38] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen 10 November 2011.
[39] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[40] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.
[41] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[42] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
[43] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.

received a card for the day. During another period of his life, Mogamat Ladien worked as a painter, but became frustrated with the fluctuation of his earnings as he was not able to work on rainy days. He explains that, as a coloured man, he did not have the chances that young people have today:

> It was kept away from you! No engineering for you. No this, you can't do that! That was the way the coloured people was treated by the, the, these Boere. You see? That is the way they were ... that we were treated and then, now you, you have to decide: what am I going to do in life?[44]

Having been taught by "a bantu"[45] how to drive when he was seventeen years old, Mogamat Ladien later found work as a taxi-driver, a job that he was to keep for fourteen years.[46] Mogamat Ladien played the banjo and guitar and with his new job, he had less time to sit and make music with his friends than before. This loss of freedom was caused by fear of losing his job, as the taxi he drove belonged to a company that could determine the uses to which the vehicle was put to during the day. Mogamat Ladien explains:

> Kyk, ons het mos gehet, 'n technograph. Daai technograph aan jou kar sal sê hoe lang het jy stilgestaan, hy gaan jou wys, as hulle daai technograph uithet dan kan jy sien ... jy't rof gery met die kar, jy't stadig gery met die kar, hy wys alles uit, hy't mos 'n naald wat alles wys.[47]

When she was still alive, Mogamat Ladien's mother used to tell him that his father was a good singer who had taken part in the Cape Coon Carnival.[48] In his own youth, Mogamat Ladien was one of many young men who participated in the culture of singing on street corners. According to him, this practice was affiliated to gang culture and would consist of between eight and twelve young men who would gather to sing together until about eleven o'clock at night.[49] Some of these street corner songs, copied from American records, are still his favourites to this day, for example "You know it's a sin to tell a lie", "Yours till the stars lose their glory" and "Goodnight, wherever you are."[50] These young men also sang Dutch songs. According to Mogamat Ladien, the gangs of songsters did not fight one

[44] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
[45] This term is meant here as a reference to a black man, and though originally a linguistic reference, has since become associated with apartheid ideology.
[46] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.
[47] "Look, we of course had a technograph. That technograph attached to your car will say how long you stood still, he is going to show you, if they have that technograph out then you can see ... you drove roughly with the car, you drove slowly with the car, he reveals everything, he of course has a needle that shows everything." Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[48] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 24 May 2012.
[49] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[50] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 24 May 2012.

another, with violent gang culture being a later historical development. In the words of Mogamat Ladien: "Maar soos ek sê dat, in my kinderdae, um, Paula, moord ... daar was nie moord nie. Verkrag, ons ken hom nie."[51] However, in a different interview, Mogamat Ladien recalled an occasion when, after a female friend of his killed a man, her boyfriend took the blame, eventually receiving the death sentence as a reward for his loyalty to her.[52]

Mogamat Ladien's description of peace-loving gangs of youths in a world free of violence has certain points of contact with other accounts of life in District Six. In other ways it is strongly contradictory. Hart argues that, although violence and gangsterism is strongly associated with life in the district, "Oral testimony and social scientific study have suggested that gang activity was not only a means of economic survival, but also a form of internal policing which did not seem to threaten ordinary residents."[53] However, as was illustrated by Don Pinnock, gang culture in the first half of the twentieth century escalated from the interwar years to the 1940s with the dominion of a number of gangs in District Six, of which the Globe Gang is popularly regarded as the most powerful.[54] Between the pincers of landlords charging exorbitant rent and a bondage to liquor, families in District Six often neglected the supervision and education of children. As a consequence, many children ended up working the streets selling newspapers and committing petty crimes from an early age. These children frequently left school in their late primary school years and, in some cases, ended up delinquent. Pinnock notes that these factors combined to produce the *skollie* gangs, and although they were known to assault lone pedestrians and commit minor robberies, these groups of youths banded together more for mutual protection than organized crime.[55] Partly explaining the disparity of accounts regarding the safety of District Six by different members of society, the *skollie* gangs were selective in deciding who to rob and who to protect, as Pinnock notes: "They were not mindless gangs of blood thirsty killers, as the white newspaper-reading public of the time believed."[56]

[51] "But as I say that, in my childhood years, um, Paula, murder ... there was no murder. Rape, we don't know him." Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011

[52] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.

[53] Hart, "Political manipulation of urban space: The razing of District Six, Cape Town", p. 610.

[54] Pinnock, "From argie boys to skolly gangsters: The lumpen-proletarian challenge of the street-corner armies in District Six, 1900–1951", pp. 131–174.

[55] Pinnock, "From argie boys to skolly gangsters: The lumpen-proletarian challenge of the street-corner armies in District Six, 1900–1951", pp. 131–174.

[56] Pinnock, "From argie boys to skolly gangsters: The lumpen-proletarian challenge of the street-corner armies in District Six, 1900–1951", p. 154.

Pinnock distinguishes between the *skollies* and the bigger gangs consisting of older members who frequently had army or prison backgrounds and regarded *skollies* as inferior.[57] Nonetheless, both were heavily influenced by popular American culture as represented by Hollywood films shown in the bioscope and would frequently imitate the dress or language they saw there. In his case study on the Globe Gang, Pinnock notes that they were said to have stringent acceptance criteria, including fighting prowess and a Standard 6 certificate. Gang members wore a white shirt and grey slacks. Regarded as gentlemen, they were "feared by many adults and hero-worshipped by children."[58] Unless they were informers, working class residents were not targeted by the gang. Besides an interest in keeping their area quiet and free of disruption from *skollies*, the gang's activities consisted mainly of housebreaking and robbery of wealthier residents, "protection" of shebeens, hotels, or even individuals, and delivering *dagga* (marijuana) or alcohol.

Of particular interest to this story is Pinnock's assertion that the larger gangs were also frequently affiliated to the Cape Coon Carnival.[59] With the money that could be made as team captain from selling alcohol and uniforms to members at a profit, this was a favoured position and one that gang leaders frequently found themselves in, seeing as they were community leaders with considerable influence. In the first half of the twentieth century, the carnival still took place primarily in the streets of the city centre and, though competing against one another with their voices and their dress, members often wore weapons underneath their costumes in case a battle ensued. Although crime abated during the months in which the troupes prepared their programmes, violence was a frequent outcome of the actual event, so much so that the prizes for the 1948 competition were handed out from behind a protective wire-mesh screen.

According to Martin, during the days of District Six, the old Pennsylvanian Darkies Coon troupe used to be greeted with the call, "Here come the Globies!", a reference to their association with the Globe Gang.[60] He furthermore notes that gang culture during the first half of the twentieth century was frequently romanticized in popular memory, an idealization that frequently led to their portrayal as young men "who fought but would interrupt a brawl to help a young girl or old lady carry her shopping home safely."[61] Martin, however, seeks to

[57] The information in this paragraph is taken from Pinnock, "From argie boys to skolly gangsters: The lumpen-proletarian challenge of the street-corner armies in District Six, 1900–1951", pp. 154–159.
[58] Pinnock, "From argie boys to skolly gangsters: The lumpen-proletarian challenge of the street-corner armies in District Six, 1900–1951", p. 157.
[59] The information in this paragraph is taken from Pinnock, "From argie boys to skolly gangsters: The lumpen-proletarian challenge of the street-corner armies in District Six, 1900–1951", pp. 159–163.
[60] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 43.
[61] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 43.

demonstrate that this popular image of gangsters is not entirely fabricated by asserting that sociological research conducted in the 1940s and 1950s has shown that the gangs were not primarily economically motivated.

Since those early years the Coon Carnival has undergone many changes, with many associated individuals actively seeking to 'rescue' this tradition from its residual reputation of being lower-class, disruptive and drug-infested. Nonetheless, the gang element has not been completely eliminated. Referring to contemporary Carnival events, Martin acknowledges the continued existence of gang connections with certain troupes, but asserts that the New Year period is usually a period when opposing gangs enjoy a temporary truce.[62] However, Martin notes that the destruction of District Six had "disastrous effects on the coloured social fabric", including an increase in dangerous gang activity that make contemporary gangs very different from former gangs.[63] He also gives two examples of gang behaviour during the Carnival – one in 1968 when members of a gang harassed a troupe for refusing to hand out free uniforms to some of their members, and a contrasting account from 1994 when three gangs put aside their weapons to form a troupe. Here, Martin mentions that some contemporary troupe captains are also gang leaders who have been known to exploit their position for economic gain, much in the same way as Pinnock described the scene in the 1940s.[64]

Mogamat Ladien's assertion that District Six was a non-violent place in his childhood years seems to belie Pinnock's assertion that certain *skollies* were already armed with bicycle chains and knives in the mid-1920s, well before Mogamat Ladien was born. The activities of the larger gangs culminated in the 1940s and early 1950s, with the last great gang war of District Six having taken place between the Globe and Killer gangs on 19 December 1951.[65] After this battle, increased policing forced the gangs to go underground for a number of years before reforming on the Cape Flats after the destruction of District Six. If violent gang activity reached its peak during the 1940s, Mogamat Ladien would surely have witnessed this in his teenage years, thus begging the question why he would indicate that there were no gangsters when he was young and that there was relatively little violence in the district until the 1960s.

Although not mentioned in any interviews with Taliep's family members, Herman Binge, documentary filmmaker and collaborator in a number of Taliep's television

[62] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 38.
[63] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 44.
[64] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 44.
[65] Pinnock, "From argie boys to skolly gangsters: The lumpen-proletarian challenge of the street-corner armies in District Six, 1900–1951", p. 131.

projects, remembers that Taliep said to him on occasion: "My daddy was mos ook 'n gangster."[66] This is corroborated by David Kramer, who would become Taliep's long-time musical collaborator in the 1980s. According to Kramer, Taliep used to tell him that his father was a gang leader in District Six.[67] Binge states that it was the coon troupe that Mogamat Ladien was to found in the 1950s, the Darktown Strutters, that formed the basis of his activities as a gang leader.[68] However, Binge warns that this should always be contextualized historically, that the gang activities of the smaller gangs in the 1940s and 1950s were frequently very naive, consisting mainly of petty theft, territorial guarding and often manifesting itself in arguments over women. Mogamat Ladien's downplaying of the gang activity in District Six could thus be due to a number of reasons: firstly, he belonged to a working class family that was not threatened by ordinary gang activity, and secondly, he himself was engaged in gang activity in his youth.

Mogamat Ladien's story has certain points of contact with Pinnock's research, particularly in the latter's observation that children who left school at an early age to contribute to the household earnings frequently found themselves drawn to gang culture, as well as the link that he demonstrates between the leaders of coon troupes and gang leaders.[69] The death of Mogamat Ladien's father and his concomitant early entry into the work force meant that to a large degree he grew up without adult supervision and notions of protected childhood innocence. However, as will emerge from this chapter, Mogamat Ladien did not get fully absorbed into gang culture, but worked in a number of legal trades to support his family, and as emerges from interviews conducted with him, certainly seeks to distance himself from the violent gang culture of the present day. Differing sharply from the typical profile of a District Six *skollie* in the mid-twentieth century, as discussed by Pinnock,[70] Mogamat Ladien had a very close relationship with his mother. He states that, "Ek het 'n baie goeie ma geheb! Ek het 'n baie, ek het 'n A1 ma geheb! S'true. Vra maar vir 'Saan watse ma, watse Ouma het hulle geheb!"[71] Later, without revealing his own involvement in these activities, Mogamat Ladien would boast that he had a very good relationship with the gangsters in District Six. They knew him through his job as a taxi driver and all respected "Boeta Diempie", as they called him. They never physically assaulted him and today Mogamat Ladien proudly states:

66 "My daddy was of course also a gangster." Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.
67 Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
68 Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.
69 Pinnock, "From argie boys to skolly gangsters: The lumpen-proletarian challenge of the street-corner armies in District Six, 1900–1951", pp. 147, 161.
70 Pinnock, "From argie boys to skolly gangsters: The lumpen-proletarian challenge of the street-corner armies in District Six, 1900–1951", pp. 147-150.
71 "I had a very good mother! I had a very, I had an A1 mother. S'true. You can ask 'Saan what sort of a mother, what sort of a grandmother they had!" Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.

"I can undress myself, I have not got one stabbing, not one tattoo because these people said, no, look, that is against our policy. No stab, no tattoos."[72]

Mogamat Ladien sang in Malay choirs when he was younger, taking part in the annual competitions with the Proteas and the Young Men choirs.[73] Throughout this time, his uncle Mogamat Johaar Behardien played a very active role in the Proteas Cape Malay choir. Although he never sang the senior solo, Mogamat Ladien was an active member of the choir, parading in the streets with them every January to sing at the homes of all the choristers. He also played musical instruments, although he only learnt to play the banjo when he was eighteen years old, having been instructed by his friend, Moosa. Today, Mogamat Ladien says that he sings songs in his sleep and awakes sharply, suddenly realising that he thought he had forgotten that particular song already.

Mogamat Ladien met his first wife, Jawaiya Isaacs, in his teenage years, and they got married when they were both eighteen years old.[74] Jawaiya was also born and raised in District Six, the eldest of ten children born to Igshaak and Zaynap Isaacs. Although Mogamat Ladien does not know what level of schooling she had, he remembers that she was not in school anymore when they met. Jawaiya had a beautiful singing voice and she would sing while she did the washing or the dishes, causing people to ask, "Sing jy vir Diempie?".[75] During the early years of their marriage, the couple moved to 75 Hanover Street, a double-story house. They had a gramophone player in the house and the couple, joined by Mogamat Ladien's sister, Gadisa Petersen, tried to bring home as many records as they could find. Mogamat Ladien obtained many records from American passengers whom he transported from the docks. He developed a good relationship with these passengers because he was sought after as a taxi driver due to his connections in District Six: "Hulle't net vir my gesoek ... kom hulle, weet ek ken almal die connections. Ek ken hulle, ek ken die connections waarnatoe hulle gaan en waar kan ek vir hulle kry."[76] When the couple's children were born, it was into a family where they were readily exposed to the music of, amongst others, the Platters, the Inkspots, Dinah Washington, Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin. Tagmieda, the couple's first child, would later remember that her father's voice was so loud when he sang that he could make chandeliers rattle.[77]

[72] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[73] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[74] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.
[75] "Are you singing for Diempie?" Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[76] "They only looked for me ... they come, know I know all of the connections. I know them, I know the connections where they go and where I can get them." Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[77] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.

In 1948, the year after the marriage of Mogamat Ladien and Jawaiya, the National Party came to power. This government continued the implementation of a series of racial laws that served to further undermine the rights of South Africans classified as non-white. On 6 May 1949, the couple's eldest daughter, Tagmieda was born. She tells that, at the time, the family occupied the top two levels of a triple-storied house in Upper Darling Street, an extension of Hanover Street.[78] Christians lived on the ground floor, Mogamat Ladien and his wife occupied the middle level and the top level primarily housed Osman Behardien, Mogamat Ladien's uncle. For most of their lives, Mogamat Ladien's sister, Gadisa, and his mother, Fatiema, were also included in the nuclear family. However, for some time, the family also had another house at 67 Upper Darling Street at their disposal, a few shops down the road.[79] According to Tagmieda, it was in this house that Fatiema and her other brother, Mogamat Johaar, lived.[80] However, Mogamat Ladien states that the Behardien family, which would ostensibly include Osman, lived together at 67 Upper Darling Street and that Mogamat Ladien and his whole family occupied 75 Upper Darling Street.[81] Judging from inconsistencies in the narrative, it can perhaps be deduced that living arrangements were flexible and not consistent over time.

On 15 April 1950, the couple's first son, officially known to the government as Abdulmoe Taliep Petersen, was born.[82] On the day of his birth, South African newspaper *Die Burger* reported that D.F. Malan, in addressing the People's Council the previous day, had named Africa as the place of the future, stating that South Africa had a great responsibility because white settlers in northern countries increasingly looked south for "moral support".[83] In the *Cape Argus*, political commentary by H.G. Lawrence examined apartheid and debates surrounding the policies of segregation, concluding that, "There is not much time left for us. The sands are running out and potential disaster lies ahead. But it is still not too late for a united White South Africa to take the lead in playing a dominant and permanent role in Southern Africa."[84] Among the Cape Town theatre offerings on Saturday 15 April were performances of Joan Temple's *No room at the inn* and Arthur Laurents's *Home of the brave*. And in the *Cape Times*, an article appeared entitled "Housemaid becomes S.A.'s first African film star", reporting on the role that Dolly Rathebe, then twenty three years old,

78 Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
79 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 24 May 2012.
80 Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
81 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 24 May 2012.
82 *Certificate of death: Abdulmoe Taliep Petersen*, B5170952, Department of Home Affairs, Republic of South Africa, 2006, Master of the High Court Archive.
83 "Afrika land van die toekoms", *Die Burger*, 15 April 1950.
84 HG Lawrence, "Dr. Malan at last sees stark facts of country's native situation", *Cape Argus*, 15 April 1950.

had clinched in the first "African" film, *Jim comes to Jo'burg*. This article reports that, "Uncoached, untrained, she walked on to the set in Johannesburg as naturally as she had walked into her mistress's sitting room with the afternoon tea tray."[85] The weather forecast for the Cape Peninsula was "Partly cloudy and slightly cooler. Winds light to moderate southerly to south-westerly" with the noon temperature determined at 71 degrees Fahrenheit or 21,6 Celsius.[86]

The year of Abdulmoe Taliep Petersen's birth coincided with the creation of a number of laws that would come to play a large role in the events of Taliep Petersen's life. The passing of the Population Registration Act in 1950 would eventually require citizens of South Africa to register, by virtue of their supposed racial characteristics, their race as belonging to either white, black, coloured or Indian.[87] Defining a coloured person was not straightforward, as Giliomee confirms: "No-one could think of a positive definition of the coloured people (as distinct from a definition of who they were not)".[88] This ambiguity is reflected in the wording of the Act itself: "a 'white person means a person who in appearance obviously is, or who is generally accepted as a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a coloured person."[89] To make their decision, classifiers often drew on white stereotypes about racial difference; this involved questioning individuals about their descent, social standing and in some cases, examining their fingernails or hair.[90]

Another law that came into effect in that year was the Group Areas Act that sought geographically to separate races by defining urban areas for exclusive use by a particular racial group.[91] By 1950, nearly a third of the coloured population of Cape Town was living in mixed areas, something that would be systematically "remedied" by this law. The Group Areas Act would eventually be responsible for the forced removals in District Six that would later occupy a prominent place in Taliep's work. Following on the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 that banned all marriages between white and non-white races, 1950 also saw the implementation of the Immorality Amendment Act. Extending the Immorality Act

85 "Housemaid becomes S.A.'s first African film star", *Cape Times*, 15 April 1950.
86 "The weather", *Cape Times*, 15 April 1950.
87 H Giliomee, "Constructing the apartheid system", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, p. 316.
88 Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people*, p. 503.
89 Union of South Africa, *Population Registration Act: Act no 30 of 1950*, Union of South Africa government printer, Pretoria, 1950, p. 277.
90 Giliomee, "Constructing the apartheid system", p. 316.
91 The information in this paragraph is taken from Giliomee, "Constructing the apartheid system", pp. 316–318.

of 1927 that outlawed sexual intercourse between blacks and whites, this act decreed that no white person should have sexual intercourse with someone who was not classified white, now including those classified as coloured.

Throughout the evolution of South Africa's policies of segregation a further stratification had occurred which not only posited the white population hierarchically superior to black and coloured, but posited the coloured population hierarchically superior to the black population. Furthermore, within the category "coloured", Cape Malays were regarded as having a more sophisticated culture and therefore kept apart from the other coloureds. Giliomee points out that the coloured populace enjoyed certain privileges that the black population was denied in that they weren't subject to the hated Pass Laws regulating their movements at the height of apartheid.[92] Despite this, they were also restricted to living in their "group area", were prohibited from using many public facilities, couldn't participate in white competitive sport and were excluded from white schools. I.D. du Plessis, Commissioner of Coloured Affairs until 1962, explained that, despite policies of separation, his Department of Coloured Affairs "did not push the coloured man away but clasped him, as a Westerner, even more strongly to the West."[93] Informed by notions of racialism that located coloureds as in-betweeners, Marike de Klerk, erstwhile wife of former president F.W. de Klerk, stated in the late 1980s that coloureds "are the leftovers. They are the people that were left after the nations were sorted out. They are the rest. The coloureds were always under the wings of the whites. They have never been on their own ... "[94]

White patronage of coloureds placed the latter in a difficult position where they occupied a grey space between the polar opposites of white and black. They endured hardships under apartheid but were also made complicit by virtue of being located higher up in South Africa's hierarchy of pigmentation. Given the long history of inter-racial mingling that took place in South Africa and the subsequent permeability of the colour line, the grouping of diverse individuals into fixed racial categories based on their skin colour attempted to wrest away the subjectivity of people and thrust a collective identity onto them. According to Mohamed Adhikari, coloured identity discourse in those early years of apartheid was dominated by the essentialist school of thinking, a racialized mode whereby miscegenation was regarded as the defining characteristic of coloured identity or race.[95] According to this way of thinking, culture and identity equal race. An

[92] Giliomee, "Constructing the apartheid system", p. 322.
[93] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 130.
[94] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 176.
[95] M Adhikari, "From narratives of miscegenation to post-modernist re-imagining: Toward a historiography of coloured identity in South Africa", *American Historical Review*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2008, p. 84.

example of this is documented in *The Cape Malays* by Du Plessis (first published in 1944), where Cape Malays are described as a "Muslim sub-group of the Cape coloured people".[96] Although Du Plessis acknowledged social factors and diverse interaction as contributing factors to the "way of life" of the Cape Malays, he was beholden to the racial thinking of the time:

> Temperamentally the Cape Malays have retained much of the East. Oriental reserve and fatalism are features in their make-up; but when roused they tend not to become 'mata galap' (literally: "dark eye"; in a state of frenzy) and to run amok as in the East, although cases have occurred at the Cape.[97]

The ruling government's views on the identity of a coloured person or a Cape Malay person was of little consequence for the Petersen family. However, the measures introduced by the government to regulate their lives, were. Mogamat Ladien evinces a pragmatic attitude when speaking about apartheid legislation, reflecting stoically, "What else could you do? You had to abide by the laws."[98] But he does hold the government of the time responsible for disrupting harmony between the races, stating that "Die Boer was die oorsaak laat ons vandag haat mekaar".[99] In contrast to the years preceding apartheid, during which races were allowed to intermingle, the Group Areas Act dictated to people of all races, "you must be on your ground."[100] Born from a lighter-skinned father and a darker-skinned mother, Mogamat Ladien still resents the Immorality Amendment Act, stating:

> It made me upset, yes! I went out with white girls in my time when I was younger [...] Then I was ... it didn't worry me but, you had to be careful that you don't get caught. That was the difference of apartheid, you see?[101]

Mogamat Ladien and Jawaiya's third child was born on 9 May 1952, a girl whom they named Ma'atoema. Subsequently their second son, Faruk, was born on 24 August 1953.[102] Another significant development in 1953 was the passing of the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act that dictated that different races

[96] ID du Plessis, *The Cape Malays: History, religion, traditions, folk tales – The Malay Quarter*, A.A. Balkema, Cape Town, 1972, p. 1.
[97] Du Plessis, *The Cape Malays: History, religion, traditions, folk tales – The Malay Quarter*, p. 3.
[98] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[99] "The Boer was the reason that we hate each other today." Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[100] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
[101] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
[102] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.

Figure 6: Family friend Suleiman with Taliep in Plymouth Road, District Six, early 1950s.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

Figure 7: Taliep (left) and Tagmieda (right) in front of Gordon Primary School in District Six, early 1950s.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

Figure 8: The Petersen family, mid-1950s – Mogamat Ladien, Jawaiya, Ma'atoema, Taliep and Tagmieda.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

could not use the same public facilities, including the entrances of buildings, public transport vehicles, parks, public toilets, beaches, swimming pools and entertainment venues.[103] In addition to this, coloured and black patrons of restaurants in white areas could only be served over the counter and were not allowed to be seated at tables. This apartheid law had a direct effect on Mogamat Ladien, as he could no longer transport coloured, black and white patrons together, or even separately. His taxi eventually was designated for the use of "whites only".[104] As will be discovered in subsequent chapters, the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act would also have a significant effect on the adult life of his eldest son, Taliep.

The couple's last child, a boy named Igsaan, was born on 11 February 1955.[105] During these years the family moved to 43 Van de Leur Street, a three-bedroom house very near to Constitution Street. Because their home had no ablution facilities, Taliep and his family went to the public bath house where they would pay a *tickey*, or threepence, for fifteen minutes' use of the facility.[106] Taliep would later recall that you could sit in the wash house all day and listen to the singing of vocal harmony groups from District Six.[107] At that stage, the house in Van de Leur Street accommodated at least four adults and five children. Fatiema, the children's grandmother, occupied the *voorkamer*, or "sitting room"; Mogamat Ladien and his wife had a room; Gadisa, Mogamat Ladien's sister, had a room, and the children all shared a room at the top of the house.[108] Gadisa's room had no window, save for one in the roof that would let in a lot of light from twelve o'clock onwards. Tagmieda remembers how, as a young child, she used to find any excuse she could to go to her aunt's room to "lap up the sunshine".[109] Although Gadisa got married to a man called Tommy Naidoo in these years, she continued to live with the family until her early death at the age of thirty.[110]

According to Mogamat Ladien, he and his wife both had very strong personalities.[111] This led to conflict in the family: "There can't be two captains on one ship. But both wanted to be a captain."[112] In the late 1950s, most likely in 1957, Mogamat Ladien and Jawaiya were divorced. Due to the existence of conflicting accounts detailing

[103] Giliomee, "Constructing the apartheid system", p. 318.
[104] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[105] Interview with Igsaan Petersen, 24 November 2011.
[106] J Viall, "Petersen is nowhere near done", *Cape Argus*, 7 January 2005.
[107] P van Noord, "Distrik Ses se Taliep", *Insig*, 31 May 2001.
[108] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.
[109] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[110] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[111] In a conversation dated 14 November 2013, Taliep's siblings strongly opposed this statement, maintaining instead that their father was the only strong-willed partner in the relationship.
[112] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.

the divorce, there are two possible stories. According to Mogamat Ladien, Jawaiya met another man called Ishmail Tonta and married him, leaving her husband. According to another account, however, Jawaiya's move out of the house more or less coincided with Mogamat Ladien's marriage to his second wife, Salama.[113] Born to a Christian father, Salama was called Sibyl White before she got married, reverted to Islam and became known as Salama Petersen. When Jawaiya moved into her mother's home, she took the three youngest children, Ma'atoema, Faruk and Igsaan with her.[114] At the time, Jawaiya's mother, Zaynap Isaacs, was renting a room in what was known as "The Big House", a house in Plymouth Road that was occupied by five unrelated families.[115] At this stage Jawaiya's father, Igshaak Isaacs, had been dead for over ten years. Life was not uncomplicated for the recently divorced Jawaiya. Tagmieda remembers how her mother once showed her a photograph in which the young Jawaiya is walking down the street with one hand in her pocket and an angry look on her face. Jawaiya had told her eldest daughter that the expression on her face in the photograph was due to the fact that, that day, their father had failed to pay her the required child maintenance.[116]

Figure 9: The public wash house in Hanover Street, District Six.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

[113] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.
[114] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.
[115] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.
[116] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 30 January 2013.

Figure 10: Taliep's mother, Jawaiya Petersen (nee Isaacs) in District Six, late 1950s.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

In The Big House, Jawaiya and her three youngest children had to share a room with her mother and her unmarried siblings. The room was fairly big, but was used as a kitchen, bedroom and living room. Ma'atoema, although she was about five years old at the time, remembers her mother cooking on the primus stove on a table in the room.[117] At night, the floor would be covered with mattresses so that they would all lie together packed in like sardines, but in the morning, everything was picked up and the floor cleared for another day. Thus, although the five Petersen children were temporarily separated, they systematically moved back into the more comfortable lodgings with their father as soon as each of them reached school-going age.[118] Ma'atoema also remembers The Big House as a musical place where her grandmother, Zaynap, used to teach her songs, for instance, "It's just a little street where old friends meet".[119]

The two eldest Petersen children would periodically visit their own mother, and both Mogamat Ladien and their grandmother, Fatiema, would make an effort to ensure that the children were properly dressed for the occasion. In Mogamat Ladien's words: "Weekends. Dan stuur ek vir hulle. Trek vir hulle lekker aan. Ek wil ook hê dat hulle moet sien, nei, ek is nie slap nie. Ek is daar vir hulle."[120] Fatiema would examine the children's clothes and because she was a dressmaker, would make little dresses for Tagmieda to wear. She could make anything and did not need a pattern, merely a picture of the desired outfit and quiet solitude to complete it.[121] Although she was never a permanent resident of The Big House, Tagmieda recalls being introduced to "suiker en ou brood" by her grandmother, Zaynap.[122] She would ask the neighbours for stale bread, and after wetting it and putting sugar on it, would offer it to the children and their mother as lunch or supper. At other times, they had condensed milk on bread for their main meal.

Back in Van de Leur Street, Mogamat Ladien's mother increasingly became a mother-figure to the remaining children, Tagmieda and Taliep. According to Tagmieda, who referred to her as "my beskerm-engel",[123] the children's grandmother was a pivotal figure in their lives. As she states, "She filled in all the blank spaces with regards to emotions, with regards to love, caring, just taking the role of a mother."[124] The children's grandmother also forged a significant

[117] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.
[118] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.
[119] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[120] "Weekends. Then I send them. Dress them well. I also want them to see, no, I am not slack. I am there for them." Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[121] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[122] "sugar and stale bread". Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[123] "my guardian angel". Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[124] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.

relationship with Taliep, one that would endure up to her death, as Mogamat Ladien states, "She was over the moon with him!"[125] Fatiema took over the cooking duties in the house and made sure that the children were fed and clothed. As the younger siblings moved back into Van de Leur Street, Fatiema welcomed them as her own children and became very protective of them. This need seemed more pressing as time wore on because Jawaiya eventually had her own new family to look after, having subsequently remarried.[126] Ma'atoema speaks about her grandmother as follows:

> And my grandmother was a seamstress and my grandmother made all our clothing and we dressed to the nines from a very, very young age because every week we'd get a new dress, every week. Because she knew that we had to go and visit our mom and we must mos [of course] now look very, very smart, that we are being taken good care of ...[127]

Figure 11: Taliep's grandmother, Fatiema Petersen (nee Behardien).
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

Figure 12: Tagmieda (left) and Ma'atoema (right) in District Six, late 1950s.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

[125] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
[126] Jawaiya had met her second husband, Ishmail Tonta, during one of her visits to Fatiema's sister, the children's great-aunt, Galatie. Ishmail Tonta had been a hawker selling fruit and vegetables at the time, but later became a sailor and finally worked as an engineer aboard a ship. Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[127] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.

In the house in Van de Leur Street, Fatiema, who was very spiritual, placed considerable emphasis on teaching the children about tradition and religion.[128] She was very involved in the community and would host a lot of religious gatherings, for example prayer meetings for the deceased. People often came on a Thursday night for these prayer meetings and left with a *barakat*, a brown paper bag containing cake, fruit and dates, to take home with them. Today, Ma'atoema laughs at the fact that, inexplicably, they always put a piece of heavy fruit on top of the cake, reducing it to crumbs in the process.[129] Religion was an important part of their lives and Mogamat Ladien tried to raise his children to be devout Muslims: "It is through God that we live. It is through God that we got air today in our lungs. We, we have to, as I say, look, it's God first, then my parents ... remember where we came from."[130] Both of Fatiema's brothers, Osman and Mogamat Johaar, also contributed to instilling respect for tradition in the Petersen children, especially with regard to religion and music.[131]

Mogamat Johaar was the captain of the Proteas Cape Malay choir that occasionally used the upstairs room of the house as a rehearsal room.[132] Established in 1946, the Proteas were affiliated to the Cape Malay Choir Board, an organization started in 1939 with support of I.D. du Plessis and journalist and rugby player, Benny Osler. In preparation for the 1952 Jan van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival, a celebration of Jan van Riebeeck's landing at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, the Cape Malay Choir Board was requested by du Plessis to participate in order to showcase the achievements of coloured, and specifically Cape Malay, South Africans.[133] Due to a strong boycott headed by bodies affiliated to the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), more than half of the Cape Malay Choirs refused to participate.[134] As a result of pressures from the Cape Malay Choir Board to perform in this festival, Mogamat Johaar walked out of a meeting. He and the Proteas were joined by four other choirs to break away from the Cape Malay Choir Board and start their own board, known as the Suid-Afrikaanse Koorraad (SAKR).[135] Mogamat Johaar became chairperson of the new board, which until this day operates independently from the Cape Malay Choir Board.[136]

128 Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 28 May 2012.
129 Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 28 May 2012.
130 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
131 Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 28 May 2012.
132 *Programinhoud vir 'n reeks "musikale" dokumentêre programme vir SABC2 – Moontlike titel: "Dit kom van ver af ... "*, typed document: concept pitch, 2003, Taliep Petersen Archive.
133 Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 25.
134 C Rassool & L Witz, "The 1952 Jan van Riebeeck tercentenary festival: Constructing and contesting public national history in South Africa", *The Journal of African History*, vol. 34, no. 3, 1993, p. 462.
135 Taliep Petersen interviewed by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.
136 Interview with Adam Samodien, 31 May 2012.

As alluded to earlier, the musical life of District Six was heavily influenced by South Africa's history of encounter between diverse cultures and races, and transformed by processes of creolization. The slave population was specifically important in the development of Cape Town's musical landscape. Considering their African and Eastern origins, as well as their close physical proximity to their Dutch masters, the slave population was situated at a crossroad of these encounters, a condition compounded by the intermix facilitated by their urban existence. This was the context for creative musical exchange resulting in an overlapping body of folk music between slave and master. Musical influences included the slaves' own native music (such as the Indonesian *kroncong*), the Dutch folk songs of the slave masters and expressive forms absorbed from Islam, a religion that spread quickly under the slave population. Although recitation from the Koran and the call to prayer, or *adhān*, is not considered "music" by Muslims,[137] such vocalizations no doubt influenced vocal styles and melodic lines that found their way into the repertoire of especially the Cape Malay choirs.

Another important musical influence, particularly on the rise of the Cape Coon Carnival tradition, was popular American music and African-American spirituals through contact with blackface minstrelsy. Martin points out that American music and culture were particularly important in South Africa through the mythologization of America as the land of opportunity, a place where black slave-descendants were achieving success on economic and cultural fronts.[138] The influence of the blackface minstrels was further heightened by the advent of cinema and in particular the screening of American films. The bioscope fulfilled an important social function in the coloured community, and young men would frequently learn the songs featured in any particular film and preview them to the queuing audience members in the street. It is through this practice that the "copycat" phenomenon arose in Cape Town: coloured singers skilled in imitation of a particular American singer, such as Frank Sinatra or Bing Crosby, were typically said to be indistinguishable in sound and execution from the original artist.[139] District Six's diversity meant that there were many different cultural influences. Taliep would later express this as follows:

[137] Interview with Adam Samodien, 31 May 2012.

[138] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 177. For more information on the American influence on other forms of South African popular music, see DB Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, 2nd edn, Jacana Media, Johannesburg, 2007; also see CJ Ballantine, *Marabi nights: Early South African jazz and vaudeville,* Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1993; also see V Erlmann, *African stars: Studies in black South African performance,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991.

[139] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 115.

> But in District Six you mixed freely in the melting pot. And on every corner there would be singing – it was the Doo Wop period. There was a Jewish trader next to a Malay trader, an Indian trader, a Swahili herbalist. I was exposed to all kinds of music – I learnt all my songs from the street.[140]

Martin has noted that a long history of diverse cultural encounter has resulted in Cape Town musics that can best be understood as created though processes of creolization.[141] This includes the secular repertoire sung by the Cape Malay choirs and the Coon troupes, for example the *nederlandsliedjies* and *moppies*.[142] *Nederlandsliedjies* are sung by Cape Malay choirs and are responsorial, with a soloist who sings a melody characterized by melismatic ornamentations answered by a choir singing four part harmony using primary chords. Martin notes that the term "karienkel" is applied to these ornamentations, though it refers both to the tone quality and vocal technique employed by the soloist.[143] Although researchers have variously traced the *karienkel* to the Islamic call to prayer and vocal techniques found in Arab and Hindu singing,[144] Martin has suggested that the *karienkel* is an example of an original creole creation not directly traceable to a single root.[145] As their names suggest, these songs are based on old Dutch songs variously learnt through slave contact with seafarers and the ruling Dutch class, though Martin notes that they are "the product of a protracted process of blending and mixing, and have been created from the combination of musical elements coming from Europe, various Islamized regions and the United States."[146] The texts of these songs, although still recognizably derived from Dutch, have in time undergone their own processes of transformation. According to Martin, although some *nederlandsliedjies* are presumed to be two or three centuries old, most of these songs were arranged and collected in their present form only at the end of the nineteenth century, showing them to be younger than generally assumed.[147] These songs were also only introduced as a compulsory part of the Cape Malay choral competitions in the 1950s, at the insistence of Willem von Warmelo, a Dutch ethnomusicologist who was living and studying in South Africa at the time.[148]

[140] Viall, "Petersen is nowhere near done", *Cape Argus*.
[141] Martin, "Cape Town: The ambiguous heritage of creolization in South Africa", pp. 193–194. See Chapter 3 for a more comprehensive discussion on creolization theory.
[142] For a comprehensive discussion of these musical forms, see Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, pp. 111–118.
[143] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 27.
[144] See D Desai, *"Cape Malay" music and its application in the school,* Masters thesis, University of Cape Town, 1983, p. 179; see also Davids, A, "Music and Islam", in *Fifth symposium on ethnomusicology, 30 August – 1 September 1984*, International Library of African Music, Grahamstown, 1985, p. 37.
[145] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 173.
[146] Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, p. 115.
[147] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, pp. 26-27.
[148] AM Van der Wal, *The Cape Malay Choir Board & their moppies: Governing a culture and community, 1939-2009*, African Studies Centre, Leiden, 2009, p. 58.

Moppies, also known as comic songs, are sung by coon troupes as well as Cape Malay choirs. These rhythmical songs incorporate the *ghoema* beat discussed earlier in this chapter, and are a "contemporary offspring" of the *ghoemaliedjies* or *pieknieklied*jies sung by slaves at picnics and during other times of leisure, and which are still sung as folk songs in contemporary South Africa.[149] Martin notes that *ghoemaliedjies* constitute a creole repertoire derived from musical forms found in Indonesia since the times of slavery, namely *kroncong* and *pantun*.[150] Contemporary *moppies* are sung to Afrikaans or English texts, contain multiple contrasting sections and are usually sung to melodies and harmonies strongly influenced by American popular music.[151] They are typically humorous, frequently comment on contemporary social issues and are sung by the choir joined by a soloist who is also an energetic dancer. Like the *nederlandsliedjies*, *moppies* constitute a repertoire created in moments of musical encounter and shaped through processes of creolization. Desmond Desai distinguishes another form of secular song found in the Cape Malay community, namely *ouliedere*, which translates as "old songs", loosely defined as choral compositions sung in part harmony with instrumental accompaniment.[152] These are Dutch songs, distinguished by melodies that have not changed significantly from their original forms.[153]

Besides the *moppie* and the *nederlandslied*, other items sung during the annual Cape Malay choir competitions are the juvenile sentimental, the senior sentimental, and the combined chorus. These three items also form a part of the annual Cape coon competitions. In the "Sentimental" category, solo songs are sung by either an adult or a junior member of the group, without any support from the choir. Traditionally, as their name implies, these solos are sentimental ballads sung in a crooning style. Martin notes that the repertoire performed in this category consists either of original compositions or imported American popular hits (sometimes sung to new texts),[154] though it is not uncommon for operatic arias to be sung as well. In the Cape Malay choir competitions, combined choruses are songs sung by the entire group without a soloist, often consisting of Western choral compositions or contemporary American popular hits with new Afrikaans texts written specifically by the group. Some combined choruses, however, are derived from *ouliedere*, whereas others

[149] Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, p. 112.
[150] Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, p. 112.
[151] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 172.
[152] D Desai, "The musical context of the Ratiep performance in relation to South African Islamic and Cape Malay music", in C Muller (ed.), *Eleventh symposium on ethnomusicology*, *23 – 25 August 1993*, International Library of African Music, Grahamstown, 1993, p. 16.
[153] D Desai, "'Cape Malay' music", in *Fifth symposium on ethnomusicology, 30 August – 1 September 1984*, International Library of African Music, Grahamstown, 1985, pp. 39–44.
[154] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 26.

are entirely newly composed. A fundamental characteristic of the sentimental and the combined chorus can be inferred by a statement Taliep made in 1994 while discussing this repertoire: "My people are very sentimental people, very sentimental, they love beautiful melodies and stuff ... "[155]

Mogamat Ladien also contributed to the musical life of Cape Town, both in the Cape Malay choirs and the coon troupes. After he got married, he stopped singing in Cape Malay choirs. However, in the late 1950s, he started his own coon troupe called the Darktown Strutters.[156] As mentioned previously, the Darktown Strutters are thought to have operated as a gang, or at least had ties with a gang that Mogamat Ladien headed. The extent of their gang-related activities did not emerge from my research. However, what did emerge from an interview with Mogamat Ladien is that Taliep, as a boy, occasionally had to walk around in the *suikerhuisies* (brothels) collecting money the prostitutes owed his father. Mogamat Ladien did not fear for his son's safety, as the prostitutes respected the boy as much as they respected his father for being gentle with them, and not discourteous in any way.[157] It is uncertain whether this money was owed to Mogamat Ladien for supplying the prostitutes with clients picked up from the docks or, as Binge speculates, as protection money.[158]

Due to the focus of my research, much more is known about the activities of the Darktown Strutters as a musical group. In an unpublished interview Martin conducted with Taliep, the singer states that his father acted as the troupe captain and coach, with Osman acting as second captain, while the troupe was financed by Mogamat Johaar.[159] The Darktown Strutters was a big troupe, with a hundred members in the first year and a hundred and fifty in the second. Mogamat Ladien did not allow any "spare gas", extras that come to participate without having regularly practised with the troupe on Wednesdays and Sundays and without knowing the music well.[160] When the Darktown Strutters were started, most of the musicians were taken from his pool of friends. The troupe grew quickly, and largely through word of mouth, because people saw them parading and would want to join their ranks. The Darktown Strutters had their *klopskammer*, or rehearsal room, in an otherwise unused garage in Vrede Street adjacent to the house of a man called Fakir.[161] It was a double-garage large enough to fit a hundred and fifty people. However, as New Year approached and

155 Taliep Petersen interviewed by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.
156 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.
157 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
158 Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.
159 Taliep Petersen interviewed by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.
160 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
161 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.

when they were rehearsing very often, the troupe used the top room in Mogamat Ladien's house in Van de Leur Street normally occupied by the children.[162]

According to Mogamat Ladien, when he was active in the Cape Coon Carnival, brass instruments were not used.[163] Instead, musical accompaniment consisted of a combination of banjo, guitar, shakers, bones (sticks hit together for percussion) and tambourine. Instruments were not amplified and the resultant sound was loud enough, as they had very good players and, as Mogamat Ladien states, "Banjo's die hardste ding wat jy kan kry."[164] During competitions, troupes would parade into the stadium to stand in their *vakke* (their designated places), before being called upon to perform their musical items on stage. During the course of more than one day, the troupe would perform a number of items including the juvenile and senior sentimentals, the combined chorus, *moppies* and the older *ghoemaliedjies* such as "Emma ko lê ma, Emma wil 'n baby hê" (Emma, you may come lie down, Emma wants a baby). The choir was also judged in the category "Grand March Past", during which the choir's uniform and prowess at marching were assessed.[165]

The Cape Coon Carnival was an important part of growing up in District Six. When the family was living in Van de Leur Street, the children could watch the carnival pass by, as Caledon Street formed part of the route the coons took and was merely a few houses away from them.[166] Every year their grandmother, Fatiema, would sow new dresses for the girls to wear during the New Year celebrations. Today, both Ma'atoema and Tagmieda still attend the Coon Carnival as the vibrant colours of the troupes remind them strongly of their childhood.[167] Ma'atoema recalls how, as a little girl, she would stay rooted to the spot for hours on end: "You'd practically sit here, on the side of the pavement, you know, the pavement, and then you would have a whole day's food. That's your spot for the whole day."[168]

The Darktown Strutters was a family enterprise in many senses of the word. Fatiema and her brother, Osman, made the uniforms, and the children would help her, receiving a small sum for their contribution.[169] Taliep would later state that the Darktown Strutters went against established norms as far as their

[162] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 24 May 2012.
[163] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[164] "Banjo's the loudest thing you can find." Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[165] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[166] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[167] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[168] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[169] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.

uniform was concerned because they were the first troupe to incorporate polka dots.[170] Fatiema on occasion also made costumes for other coon troupes. As Martin has demonstrated, coon troupe costumes play a very important role in the carnival: if a member does not have a uniform, he cannot participate as a part of the troupe.[171] As troupes are required to have a new uniform every year, tailoring is something of a cottage industry and good tailors can earn most of their yearly income in the months leading up to the New Year. In this, Fatiema had some help. She would demarcate a series of strips to be cut from shiny material of two different colours, and the children would be responsible for cutting them out so that she could then sow strips of alternating colours together.[172] In addition to enabling Mogamat Ladien to make more of a profit from selling uniforms to troupe members, Fatiema's efforts would have brought extra income from outside tailoring jobs, thus contributing significantly to the household income.

It was only a matter of time before Taliep would become involved musically in his father's coon troupe. Mogamat Ladien describes his eldest son as having been a "very quiet person" who would hide away behind his father's legs instead of playing with the other children: "It can be an hour or two he will just stand here, he was so quiet that I many times wondered: I wonder what is going to be happening of this child. Too quiet for my liking."[173] Yet on New Year's Eve of 1956/1957[174] Taliep became the juvenile sentimental soloist of the Darktown Strutters. Another young boy was meant to sing this item, but withdrew from participation the night before he was meant to perform. Mogamat Ladien continues this story as follows:

> What are we going to do now? That's now a problem because tomorrow is New Year, and, um, in the time, we were busy rehearsing, I was staying there in, in District Six in Van de Leur Street, and I shout down, I shouted down to my mammie, "Where is Taliep"? She shout: "He's going to bed now." I say, "Just, can, can ... send him upstairs." And he came up, I ask him: "Can you sing?" He say, "Yes." I say, "Ok, let me hear you sing." And

[170] Interview with Taliep Petersen conducted by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.
[171] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 21.
[172] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[173] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.
[174] Interviewees and newspaper sources consistently give Taliep's age as six at this occasion. However, in an interview conducted by Denis-Constant Martin, Taliep gives the date of his first performance as January 1956, which would make him a few months short of his sixth birthday. This would be impossible, as the song that he sang, "Around the world", was only released in 1956 together with the film, *Around the world in 80 days*. Although Mogamat Ladien maintains that the Darktown Strutters were established in 1957, I deduced that the most likely date for Taliep's performance was during the transition from 1956 to 1957, meaning that they must have been established one year earlier. Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011; Taliep Petersen interviewed by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.

> I ask my, my banjo um, player to play for him. Well, I was a very strict person when I was younger. Nothing went past my eyes; I did not give a fly a chance to sit on my nose. And then, I knew there that he was a bit um ... nervous for me so I told the banjo player, "Look, I'm going downstairs, but, um, you take him over, you take it over. And I will listen from below." And then I heard him sing. Well, that time, he was still, he was still young, heard of songs but now he sings the same line over, afterwards it didn't worry me. Because we are reckoned, that is not a song that we actually ... I just want to hear your voice. And um, so, I came up, I say: "Hm, you're singing well, you're singing well." And I tell Moos, "This is the song that we want him to sing. Um, play it over three or four times over for him." Well, the child's mind is always, imperfect [indistinct], you know? So, um, I went down again, and, the banjo played it over, over, three times, four times and when ... and I came up and he sang the song without a paper, without a help or nobody! I said, "It's fine, it's fine, it's fine. Well, you are going to sing on Hartley Vale tomorrow."
>
> And the next day when we entered Hartley Vale ... and he was just so, he was a very short chap, he wasn't tall like me now, he was shorter than Igsaan too. And now, for his age of six he looked so small, and, when he came and when he came onto the stage, the people all stood up, stood up, and well, we start to play ... and, um, he got a standing ovation. He got a standing ovation! So, well, all the, all the, everybody had a chance to sing this juvenile sentimentals and by the evening when it came out now, who ... is the winner of ... it was him. Then he won first prize. The second year, the same thing applied. He won again first prize. And the third year ... well, you see, the thing is this, you can't win first place every time then that cup is a floating thing then it means I have to give it to you. So, he, he got second prize ... didn't worry me because I knew that he is, he actually deserved a first prize again. Okay, and after that, coons went a bit out of hand, so I reckoned to myself, it is not a kind of coons that it was in my hey-day. In my hey-day the sports was much different, and now in this time, it's starting to change and that is the thing that I did not like. So I closed up. So after that the Malay choirs came to ask him to sing for them.[175]

Several important points arise from this account. We learn that it was Mogamat Ladien Petersen who chose the particular song that Taliep Petersen sang. This song was "Around the world", the title song of the 1956 American film, *Around the world in 80 days*, directed by Michael Anderson and based on a novel by Jules Verne. The title song was composed by Victor Young to words by Harold Adamson. Mogamat Ladien's choice for the juvenile sentimental is noteworthy for two reasons. As Martin notes, the bioscope fulfilled a very important role

[175] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.

in District Six, both as a form of entertainment and a model for emulation. According to him, films became an important source of inspiration for troupe captains and members regarding costume and song repertoire.[176] Mogamat Ladien's choice of "Around the world" would seem to confirm this practice.

Although it is not known whether Taliep sang an unaltered version of the film score, the original version of this song has a vocal range spanning the interval of an eleventh.[177] Studies have shown that children between the ages of five and six are generally considered to have a singing range limited from C4 to C5, although most studies determining children's vocal range tend to omit the head or chest registers, an added range to which many children have limited access.[178] Other sources ascribe an even more limited vocal range to young children, positing their singing voices between C4 to B4 at the age of six or seven years.[179] Research has also noted that the ability to sing in harmony with good intonation typically develops only around the ages of nine to ten years.[180] Given that "Around the world" has a relatively expanded range for a six year-old, Taliep's successful performance could be considered an achievement indicative of his musical talent.

Another interesting feature of Mogamat Ladien's narrative is his question to his son at the beginning of the story: "Can you sing?" Would he not have known that his son could sing, given that both Mogamat Ladien and Jawaiya sang regularly, and also frequently played records at home? It seems likely that Mogamat Ladien would have had an idea of his children's singing capabilities as Ma'atoema remembers sitting together as a family, singing old songs while her father strummed his guitar.[181] Perhaps the reason for his question was that he doubted whether his "very, very quiet" son had it in him to perform a solo song at short notice in front of a packed stadium. Lastly, a strong feature in this narrative is a father's pride of his son's achievements, spoken from a vantage point where Taliep has already achieved considerable success as a musician. He is proud that Taliep sang the song without a paper or any help after only having heard it played a few times. According to this narrative, Taliep also won the competition for a number of years, only coming second later because of a technical reason. There is also a sense of wanting to claim agency in the story. Mogamat Ladien was the first person who ever gave his son an opportunity to sing, and this is a source of great pride to him.

[176] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 114.
[177] V Young & H Adamson, "Around the world", printed sheet music, Warner Bros. Publications U.S., 1956.
[178] F Laurence, "Children's singing" in J Potter (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to singing*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2000, pp. 221–222.
[179] PS Campbell & C Scott-Kassner, *Music in childhood: From pre-school through the elementary years*, 3rd edn, Schirmer, Boston, 2010, p. 69.
[180] Laurence, "Children's singing", pp. 221–222.
[181] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.

As shown by the following excerpt from an interview between Taliep and Kramer, recorded by Pieter van Noord in 2001, Taliep's narrative of this event differs in important respects from that of his father. He describes his own debut as follows:

> As ek dink aan my birth – die birth van my career ... Dit was 'n Oujaar'aand. En my pa – ek was vas aan die slaap so by two o'clock in die nag. En hy maak my wakker. Nou, in District Six het ons pet names of nicknames gehad. Myne was Balle. Nou seg hy: "Balle, kan jy sing?" Djy weet. Ek was so bang vir my pa, man. The last thing you wanted to say was "nei man, ek kan nie sing nie". [...] Jy gaan nie vir die ou nee sê nie – jy gaan op jou moer kry! Die ou staan so hovering oor jou ... like a fucking ... [...] "Kan djy sing?" En hy sê "raait, wat gaat djy sing?" En ek sê (effens desperaat) "Round the World". Now in District Six was beautiful melodies important, man. Jy kan nie net enige ding kom sing daar nie! Nei, fok dit. Sing dat hulle kan hoor jy kan sing, you know? That's the way how I got to sing for the coons.[182]

In an interview conducted with Taliep in 2005, this story is documented as follows by Jeanne Viall:

> Petersen comes from extremely humble beginnings, and as he tells the story of his singing debut at the tender age of six, I am aware of how powerfully evocative it is for him of a time so many worlds away from his present one.
>
> "I knew I could sing, from an early age, and like many performers I had my birth in the Coon Carnival. My dad had a troupe, The Darktown Strutters, and he was strict. Major Dad before the movie ... "
>
> "When he chastised the youngster who was meant to sing that year for being 'ougat' (precocious), the boy refused to sing for them. It ended up that on New Year's Eve, at 1:30 am, fast asleep, I was woken by my dad saying 'Balle, kan jy sing?' (can you sing?) And even if I couldn't, I would have said yes. My mother told him to leave me alone, I was sleeping, but my granny stepped in and said, let him sing. I went to the only upstairs room, where it was quite chaotic, the final touches were being made to the costumes, and my dad told the banjo player 'Balle gaan sing' (is going to sing). I sang Around the world I search for you and he laughed and said: 'Yho, daai laaitie kan nogal sing' (that youngster can sing)."

[182] "If I think of my birth – the birth of my career ... It was a New Year's Eve. And my dad – I was fast asleep around two o'clock at night. And he wakes me up. Now, in District Six, we had pet names or nicknames. Mine was Balle. Now he says: 'Balle, can you sing?' You know. I was so afraid of my father, man. The last thing you wanted to say was 'no man, I can't sing.' [...] You are not going to say no to the guy – you will get your moer! The guy is standing hovering over you ... like a fucking [...] 'Can you sing?' And he says, 'raait, what are you going to sing?' And I say (slightly desperate) 'Round the World'. Now in District Six, beautiful melodies were important, man. You can't just come and sing anything there! No, fuck that. Sing that they can hear you can sing, you know? That's the way how I got to sing for the coons." Van Noord, "Distrik Ses se Taliep", *Insig.*

> And so it was that a small boy stood on a wooden chair – not even the gooseneck microphone could reach him – and sang in front of thousands of people at the Coon Carnival at Hartleyvale Stadium 48 years ago.
>
> "I was nervous as hell. I couldn't understand why the white people stood up afterwards. And I revelled in the moment."
>
> That was the only singing competition in his life he didn't win – he came second.[183]

Taliep also mediated his memories. As oral history research has shown, retellings of the past are always informed by the present. Like Mogamat Ladien, Taliep was telling this story from a vantage point where he had already become a successful entertainer. According to Taliep, he was already asleep when his father called for him at a very late hour. He also states emphatically that singing "Around the world" was his own choice. By doing so Taliep is claiming his own agency. He wasn't a helpless six year-old facing his dominating father, but a child who woke up in the middle of the night to stand up and choose his own song.

According to Ma'atoema, her father was a strict man and a troupe captain who would have chosen this song himself.[184] She also notes that "Around the world" was a very famous song at the time because of its cover by Nat King Cole. In all likelihood, Taliep would have heard this song many times before, but simply have learnt to sing it with instrumental accompaniment up in the *klopskammer* with Mogamat Ladien and his banjo player, Moos. An interesting feature of Ma'atoema's account is that, like Mogamat Ladien's account, and unlike Taliep's own account, it posits him as the first prize winner.[185] While one could read Taliep's account as an attempt to downplay his own achievements, the phrase "That was the only singing competition in his life he didn't win – he came second" suggests that this is not the case.[186] Perhaps Taliep did win the second prize after all. This story would have been told many times before my interview with the individuals concerned and perhaps through shaping and re-shaping the narrative, this moment had acquired mythical proportions making only the most positive outcome acceptable. This story was also told to me by Taliep's family members after his death, and it is entirely possible that their anger and sense of loss also informed certain features of their narrative.

[183] Viall, "Petersen is nowhere near done", *Cape Argus*.
[184] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[185] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[186] Viall, "Petersen is nowhere near done", *Cape Argus*.

There is one corresponding element that emerges strongly from both Mogamat Ladien and Taliep's narratives, namely that Mogamat Ladien was a very strict man whose children were, at times, afraid of him. According to Ma'atoema, Mogamat Ladien used to put up a schedule on the wall in their house with the children's names on, and when they arrived home from school, they were required to go to the schedule to see what they had to do next.[187] As the eldest boy in the family, Taliep had a lot of chores to perform for his father. This included grooming and feeding the family's horses, kept because Mogamat Ladien at one stage sold wares off the back of a wagon.[188] It was in working with the horses that Taliep learnt how to plait and comb thick hair, a skill that he would use many years later when his first wife was in the hospital maternity ward.[189] During the days of District Six, Mogamat Ladien also owned two white Alsatians called Romeo and Juliet. A third was born later and named Caesar. In addition to his work with the horses, Taliep was responsible for picking up the dogs' faeces and cleaning the yard.[190] Tagmieda notes that Taliep also had to buy raw sheep heads and clean them so that they could be fed to the dogs.[191] On days when he wasn't working, Mogamat Ladien used to walk his dogs into the centre of Cape Town. He describes these walks as follows:

> Man, Paula, whenever ek geloop het met my honde, en ek het in daai ... Kaap toe gegaan ... nou gat ek af, Adderley straat toe, en daai mense, soos die blankes dan kyk hulle ... no, you can see that these dogs are very well looked after. Moenie aan my vat nie, jy gaat nie aan my vat nie.[192]

Mogamat Ladien considered cleanliness a priority, especially where his "whites-only" taxi was concerned. Accordingly, another one of Taliep's responsibilities was to clean his father's taxi in the mornings. This would take him a while to do, and the children were frequently late for school. Mogamat Ladien did not have a lot of consideration for the children being late, and would sometimes threaten to march onto the school grounds to confront the teachers.[193] As a result of the strenuous demands of his home life and regular conflict with teachers in the mornings, Tagmieda notes that Taliep's "nose was always clean" at school.[194] Mogamat Ladien's childhood had perhaps taught him that being on time for

[187] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[188] Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2013.
[189] Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2013.
[190] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[191] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[192] "Man, Paula, whenever I walked with my dogs, and I did in those ... went to Cape Town ... now I go down, to Adderley street, and those people, like the whites then they look ... no, you can see that these dogs are very well looked after. Don't touch me, you're not gonna touch me." Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[193] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[194] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.

school was not as important as putting food on the table, but this resulted in the children frequently feeling trapped between conflicting forces.[195] Their father could be very severe with them at times, ostensibly because he did not want them to get into trouble on the streets. In Mogamat Ladien's own words:

> Ek was baie hardegat, man. Baie vinnig gewees. Baie strak met my kinders gekom, op die voorwaarde. Ek het huurmotor gery. Daar was nie TV in daai tyd nie. Daai windscreen, daai was my TV. I know a lot about life, hey? [...] So het ek dit kom sien, hoe het street children gekom.[196]

Though it did not emerge from interviews conducted with either Mogamat Ladien or his children, Taliep's second-eldest child, Jawaahier, would later recall the stories told to her by various members of the family about her father's harsh childhood.[197] These included a story in which her father was woken up at four o'clock in the morning to realize that Mogamat Ladien was beating him with a belt. Taliep had forgotten to feed the dogs that night, and when his father had finished working for the night, he returned home to find them wailing. In another story, Taliep was so befuddled with sleep when he arrived at the stables early one morning that he walked behind one of the horses and was kicked. However, he was too afraid to tell his father what had happened, for fear of receiving a hiding for his carelessness. Jawaahier notes, "I mean, I think my father's childhood damaged him a lot."[198] However, she also emphasizes the respect that her father had for her grandfather and, particularly in Taliep's adult years, the mutual empathy that existed between them.[199]

When they reached school-going age, the three eldest siblings, Tagmieda, Taliep and Ma'atoema started attending Walmer Preparatory School in Walmer Estate, about twenty minutes' walk away from home.[200] The two youngest children, Faruk and Igsaan, were the only ones who did not attend Walmer Preparatory School, as the Gordon School was opposite The Big House where they stayed with their mother and maternal grandmother.[201] Although Mogamat Ladien would sometimes take the children to school, they were essentially responsible for getting themselves there, either by foot or by taking the bus. The children's grandmother taught them to stay together and walk in groups as they moved

[195] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[196] "I was very stubborn, man. Was very fast. Became very severe with my children, on the condition. I drove a taxi. There wasn't TV in those days. That windscreen, that was my TV. I know a lot about life, hey? [...] That is how I came to see it, how street children came." Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[197] Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2013.
[198] Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2013.
[199] Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2013.
[200] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[201] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.

around District Six. In the mornings they were given a penny and told to use it to take the bus home from school. Tagmieda remembers that they used to swear solemnly to their grandmother that they would do just that. Sometimes her brother would come to her in the middle of the day and ask, "Hoe voel jy vir 'n dhaltjie vanmiddag?"[202] On those days they would skip the bus and buy a *dhaltjie*, *samosa* or *koesister* instead, traditional Cape Malay treats.[203] They would walk home together munching their purchase. Sometimes it was delicious, at other times you could throw it at the wall and it would come bouncing back to you, "harde deeg" (hard dough).[204] When they finally arrived at home, they would simply say that they had felt like having a *dhaltjie* instead, and to their abiding gratitude, their grandmother would never be angry with them.[205]

As there was little by way of formal recreation for the children, no television and few toys, they would play games that required no or few props.[206] One of these was called *handeklip* (rock hand) and all that was needed to play were five stones. The game would essentially involve two opponents throwing a stone in the air and challenging each other progressively to pick up more stones on the ground while the one was in the air. Another game they frequently played was called *bok, bok, hoeveel op die rug* (bok, bok, how many on the back) an equivalent of the game of leapfrog. During this game, children would hope to clear a hurdle that grew progressively larger as the game continued, namely a line-up of each other's stooped backs. According to Tagmieda, Taliep was also a consummate marble player. He frequently won a lot of marbles at school and always shared half of them with his eldest sister.

When Taliep was roughly nine years old, Mogamat Ladien shut down his coon troupe.[207] By this time, Taliep was, according to his own admission, regarded as "Cape Town's wonder boy", performing as soloist with a number of groups including the Boarding Boys Malay choir, affiliated to the Suid-Afrikaanse Koorraad (SAKR).[208] However, when Mogamat Ladien shut down his coon troupe, his eldest son was not yet interested in taking up the guitar or banjo, resulting in the sale of all the instruments. The Cape Coon Carnival scene had changed too much for Mogamat Ladien's liking, as the combination of banjo, guitar, shakers, bones and tambourine had been replaced by brass instruments.[209] Indeed,

[202] "How do you feel for a dhaltjie this afternoon?" Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[203] *Dhaltjies* are spicy savoury snacks made primarily from chickpea flour, *samosas* are characteristically triangular savoury snacks with a meat or vegetable filling, and *koesisters* are sweet snacks consisting of fried dough boiled in syrup and sprinkled with dried coconut shavings.
[204] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[205] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[206] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[207] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.
[208] T Seale, "Beyond the impossible dream", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[209] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.

Martin notes that, during the 1950s and 1960s, the music of the coons changed to reflect changes in the international music scene – contemporary genres such as pop, rock and soul were increasingly introduced into the repertoire and progressively, string bands gave way to trumpets, trombones and saxophones.[210] Today, Mogamat Ladien recognizes little of his heyday in the contemporary Cape Coon Carnival scene. When he was younger the only drug people used at the Coon Carnival was marijuana, but today harder drugs are consumed. In Mogamat Ladien's words:

> Now, now with the drugs out, now man, look at that time it was only dagga, man. And dagga wasn't, dagga wasn't a serious thing. Dagga was only, say: "Jy's weer lekker gerook, né?" Because it's just, you, you just smile all the time, you laugh all the time like somebody who's mad. You want to laugh and you just want to eat![211]

When the children reached Standard 2, they were moved to George Golding Primary School, housed in a red brick building in Constitution Street. Today, this building still exists and is home to a Muslim school called Rahmaniyah. At George Golding Primary School, Taliep used to look forward to singing the Christian Lord's Prayer, primarily because he could practise his singing and hear his voice rise above the rest of the children.[212] Mogamat Ladien referred to George Golding Primary School and Walmer Preparatory School as Christian schools, in order to distinguish between the children's daytime schooling and their Islamic religious schooling in the afternoons, also known as *slamseskool* or madrasa.[213] At the start of every year, Mogamat Ladien would receive a letter from George Golding Primary School asking if he objected to his children receiving Bible study in a Christian environment. He had no objections, since the children went to the mosque in Alfred Street every afternoon at three o'clock. The children's Christian education also took place in an informal setting, as Taliep would later note: "Saans was ek in die Muslimskool, maar Sondagoggende sit die teologiese studente by ons op die sypaadjie en dan síng ons – "Fishing for Jesus", "Building the temple of the Lord" ... ons gooi hom! Dan gee hulle vir ons lekkers, sien."[214] According to Ma'atoema, they did not object to receiving a Christian education in conjunction with their Islamic education:

[210] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, p. 136.
[211] " ... 'You're stoned again, right?' ... " Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
[212] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[213] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.
[214] "In the evenings I was in the Muslim school, but on Sunday mornings the theology students would sit on the sidewalk with us and then we would sing – 'Fishing for Jesus,' 'Building the temple of the Lord' ... and we would sing! Then they gave us candy, see?" S Truter, "Daar kyk James Bond na my show", *Sarie*, 19 September 2001.

I say it was very, it was good that we, that we had this diverse religious background so that we could also understand different people's religions and then also, the Bible had a lot of things that is in our Koran, you know? And so, ja, we didn't have a problem because, like we had, growing up with our neighbours, Christian neighbours and Muslim neighbours so you say, "Ja, my vriend is 'n Kristen vriend."[215]

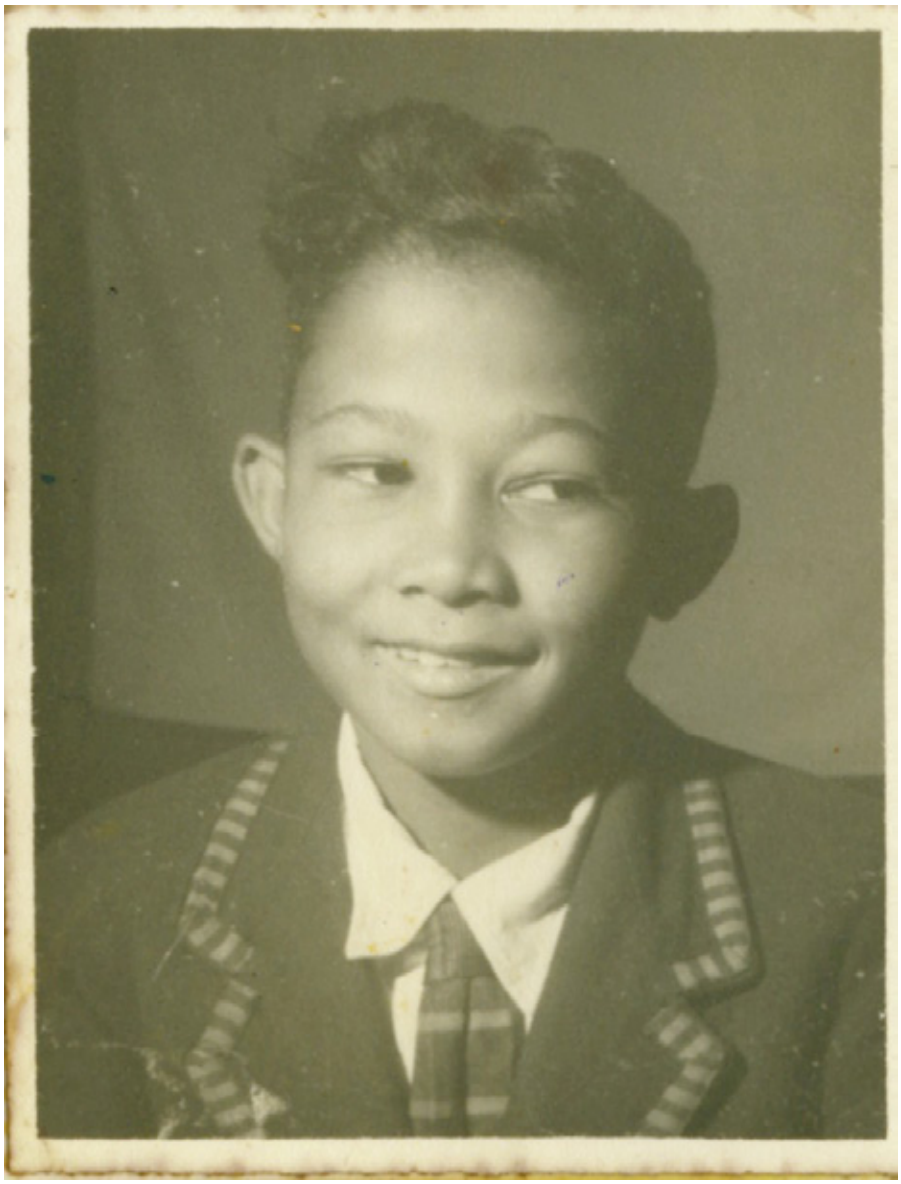


Figure 13: Taliep as a schoolboy in George Golding Primary School, District Six, late 1950s.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

[215] " ... 'Yes, my friend is a Christian friend.'" Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.

Mogamat Ladien Petersen recalls that Taliep was an honest and very religious boy who never smoked or drank. He states, "I had no trouble with him. I could have put down, 'That is the money for your Moslem school, this is your money for the Christian school, and this is your bus fare and so.'"[216] His eldest son would take the money and go to both schools without hesitation. He was also very good at recitation of the Koran, although in keeping with Islamic practices he did not consider melodious prayers as music.[217] Mogamat Ladien recalls that once, at a funeral, someone asked for a Koran and Taliep began to recite. Referring to the surprised faces of the mourners, Taliep said to his father, "Nee, hulle't gedink ek kan net sing!"[218]

Throughout these years in District Six, Mogamat Ladien's first three children from his marriage to Salama were born: Soraya, Zorayna and Shaheed. The other three, Shamiel, Irfaan and Moeniba would only be born once the family had left District Six. According to Mogamat Ladien, his eldest son's relationship with his stepmother was unremarkable and he did not pay much attention to her.[219] According to Tagmieda, this relationship was not strong and the children did not get along with their step-mother.[220] Jawaiya's relationship with Salama was cordial and she would on occasion come to the house to see the children – at this stage she had already re-married and was living in Lansdowne with her new husband in a relationship that would eventually produce four children.[221] As documented earlier, Mogamat Ladien had come from a family where his father had two wives. Ma'atoema recalls that, as children, they were required on certain nights to dress neatly in clean pyjamas because they would be visiting someone called "Annema". Ma'atoema only found out many years later that "Annema" actually referred to "Ander ma" (other mother) and was actually their grandfather Achmat's first wife Zaynap.[222]

Mogamat Ladien emphasizes that he worked very hard to put food on the table for the children and they reputedly never went hungry in his house. As time went on, he had to drive more and more shifts to put food on the table, especially after the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act changed the profile of his clientele. Feeding his children was his first priority, because they were not on earth of their own volition: "I asked God to have children. It's my duty to see that they get food on the table, and to see that they got clothes and

216 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
217 Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012
218 "No, they thought I could only sing!" Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.
219 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
220 Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 30 January 2013.
221 Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
222 Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.

Figure 14: The Petersen children, early 1960s – Soraya (front), Igsaan and Ma'atoema (middle), Taliep, Tagmieda and Faruk (back).
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

that, you see, I was very, with my two hands I could have done a lot of things. I even made their own sandals."[223] But the Petersen children did not have an uncomplicated childhood. Tagmieda remembers that, due to failure to pay their electricity bill, the house frequently had no electricity supply and they had to survive with a wood stove and candles. Many years later, when Taliep was performing in London's West End for the first time, he would think back to his childhood years. In Tagmieda's words:

> Ja, and look, when he went to London and saw his name in neon lights, hey? How it humbled him. Ja and he cried, he sobbed. He said to me, he sobbed when he saw how his name was flickering. Now can you understand where he was coming from?[224]

As a driver, Mogamat Ladien sometimes got into skirmishes with his patrons over the taxi fare. Although his job was not always free of danger, he would never tell his mother about what had happened: "I never told her, so I ... alright, kept quiet because I must work for the youngsters."[225] During these years, Fatiema would send Taliep down to the Parade where his father was parked, in order to give Mogamat Ladien his lunch. This would never consist of cold food such as sandwiches, but always of warm food such as curry and rice or a "kleine emmertjie vol sop".[226] During his time as a taxi driver, Mogamat Ladien got to know the streets of District Six very well, as he states, "Daarvoor sê ek, ek ken vir hom soos die palm van my hand."[227] Taliep frequently accompanied his father in the streets of District Six. Besides becoming very well acquainted with the inhabitants of the area, the young Taliep began to form a mental map of the district that he could recall for many subsequent years.[228]

When asked about the razing of District Six, Mogamat Ladien replies: "Daai's 'n hartseer ding hoe daai plek ... daai was my loopbaan!"[229] Under the Group Areas Act of 1950, District Six was formally declared a "whites only" area in 1966. In the following two decades, approximately 55 000 people were displaced to areas delineated for coloured use, the majority of them ending up on the sandy and windswept Cape Flats situated outside Cape Town city bowl.[230] At the same time, District Six was systematically bulldozed to eradicate what was regarded

[223] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
[224] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[225] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.
[226] "small bucket full of soup". Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[227] "That's why I say, I know him like the palm of my hand." Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[228] Taliep's relationship to District Six will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4.
[229] "That's a sad thing how that place ... that was my career!" Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 10 November 2011.
[230] Hart, "Political manipulation of urban space: The razing of District Six, Cape Town", p. 603.

as a slum. On the Cape Flats, displaced individuals endured hardship as a result of being torn from their schools, churches, mosques, places of entertainment, and separated from their neighbours and family members. In addition to these problems, a very active gang culture emerged on the Cape Flats, in many cases a reforming of the gangs of District Six. However, as Martin has noted, the tearing of the social fabric of District Six's coloured community arguably resulted in more dangerous gang activity than ever before.[231]

Although District Six received its death knell in 1966, the seeds of its destruction can be traced back to 1934 with the passing of the Slums Act, enabling the government legally to eliminate slum areas. As noted by Naomi Barnett, District Six was very nearly destroyed in the 1940s through an engineering project generated in response to a Town Planning Ordinance that required the Cape Town Council to produce a plan for the city's development, including rezoning, slum clearance and rehousing.[232] Although this engineering project was ostensibly not aimed at removing the coloured population from District Six, its execution would have resulted in the loss of a substantial amount of residential land and it was feared that residents thus deprived of their homes would have to be removed to the coloured "cottages" of the Cape Flats. Although the City of Cape Town had a measure of regard for the political voice of coloureds, the threat of segregation was never far off, leading many protestors to believe that the District Six redevelopment plan was "segregation in disguise".[233] The District Six redevelopment plan had not been executed by 1948, effectively moving the fate of District Six out of the hands of the Cape Town City Council and into those of the National Party. According to Hart, the destruction of District Six was finally initiated in 1965, seven months before the government's public announcement of its new status as a white area.[234]

Tagmieda, born in 1949, remembers that she was thirteen years old when the Petersen family left District Six.[235] Ma'atoema, born in 1952, remembers that she was eleven years old.[236] Finally, according to Igsaan, born in 1955, they moved when he was six years old and at the end of his first school year.[237] This would chronologically locate the family's move from District Six between 1961 and 1963, well before the government announced its plans for District Six. According

[231] Pinnock, "From argie boys to skolly gangsters: The lumpen-proletarian challenge of the street-corner armies in District Six, 1900–1951", p. 131.
[232] N Barnett, "The planned destruction of District Six in 1940", in E van Heyningen (ed.), *Studies in the history of Cape Town*, vol. 7, University of Cape Town History Department in association with the Centre for African Studies, Cape Town, 1994, p. 162.
[233] Barnett, "The planned destruction of District Six in 1940", p. 179.
[234] Hart, "Political manipulation of urban space: The razing of District Six, Cape Town", p. 613.
[235] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[236] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[237] Interview with Igsaan Petersen, 24 November 2011.

to Mogamat Ladien, he knew that evictions were afoot and that "they would soon come for us too" when he approached his landlord to tell him that they were going to demolish the house in Van de Leur Street.[238] In response to Mogamat Ladien's plea, his landlord offered him a choice of two houses in Salt River, one in Westminster Street and one in Greef Street. Salt River was only three kilometres away and therefore the closest to Cape Town of all his possible options. Mogamat Ladien inspected both of these properties and finally settled on the house in Greef Street because the house let in more light than the other one. Mogamat Ladien experienced this as a very traumatic move, primarily because he was separated from his neighbours and his immediate community. He recalls:

> Now you know these neighbours, you know them all! Because they, you are people are seeing every day! But, now, moving you and putting you this far and moving you and putting you this far and bringing other people and putting other people in-between ... you don't know them, you see, now that is where the fighting now goes on because they don't want to buy a face with you. They don't want to be friendly with you. But in our time, in my time it was different.[239]

According to Herman Binge, rumours abounded from the early 1960s that District Six was to be declared a "whites only" suburb, years before the formal announcement in 1966 and the subsequent evictions.[240] Landlords, although still collecting rent, ceased to maintain their properties as they were waiting for the government to act. The district became more and more derelict as sanitation facilities deteriorated and damp caused by broken gutters and leaky roofs continued to do damage. According to Binge, this intensified the ghetto element in District Six and people wanted to move to cleaner and safer lodgings. This would certainly have been a concern for Mogamat Ladien, as his family by then consisted of sixteen people who had all been all living under one roof. Perhaps an earlier move out of the district also enabled the Petersen family to secure lodgings in Salt River, and escape a move to the sprawling Cape Flats. Thus, although Mogamat Ladien saw the writing on the wall and in fact left District Six well ahead of the eviction notices, over the past five decades his (and Taliep's) story has joined the dominant narrative about living in District Six, and leaving it.

Ma'atoema believes that the move from District Six did not affect her as strongly as it might have affected Taliep, as she did not have a full understanding of

238 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
239 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
240 Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.

what forced removals meant.[241] She was quite young and perceived it mainly as a change of school and a loss of friends. However, she was also aware that Salt River was not as safe as District Six had been. While Mogamat Ladien was very strict with the children in terms of their movements in the street, it was safe enough in Van de Leur Street to drag their mattresses onto the *stoep* (patio) in the summer and sleep out in the open. In her words: "There was not danger of somebody coming to kidnap you or going to molest you, because I can remember, we didn't have to lock our doors."[242] However, the situation changed in Salt River. Moving out of the district had eroded a sense of community and *kanala* that had been important elements in District Six. Ma'atoema describes the situation in Salt River as follows:

> There was a skollie element in Salt River, so ja, my father had to be strict with us there. "You stay on the stoep, you children cannot play in the street," and I did disobey him, and I did go play in the street and when I saw my father's car turn the corner, then I must run. But I was spotted a lot. And then I would get a hiding.[243]

Tagmieda, the eldest of the children, experienced the loss of District Six keenly.[244] To her, District Six was a big family where they had a sense of belonging. Taliep used to tell her that if you wanted to bake a cake in the district and had no money, you simply had to walk to all the neighbours' houses to collect eggs, flour, a "slight suggestion of baking powder" and whatever else was needed, and you would have your cake.[245] In contrast to this, Tagmieda experienced Salt River as lacking in a sense of neighbourly responsibility. Likewise, Mogamat Ladien missed the safety of knowing who your neighbours were, and his neighbours knowing who he was. In the past, everybody knew which house was Mogamat Ladien's, but "today's different," he says, "Today you can't, you can't even trust your shadow."[246] He also resented losing contact with old friends: "Today you don't even know where your friends – oraait, most of my friends are dead – but, who's still alive, you don't know where he's staying!"[247] Nonetheless, Mogamat Ladien's approach to living in Salt River was stoical, as he says, "Maak die beste van die lewe!"[248] With time he got to know the people living in his street, people who he refers to as "loveable" and who respected him.[249]

[241] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[242] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[243] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[244] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[245] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[246] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
[247] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
[248] "Make the best of life!" Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
[249] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.

As is the case with a great number of other ex-District Six inhabitants, the Petersen family's accounts of leaving District Six are very nostalgic. In addition to the emphasis placed on community belonging in District Six, Bickford-Smith notes that District Six had come to symbolize an alternative to segregated living in a racially ordered society.[250] Perhaps the strongest lure of District Six was that ex-residents' memories of what it meant to be a good neighbour stood in marked contrast to Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd's explanation of apartheid as essentially a policy of good neighbourliness. Ironically, the apartheid policies of segregation threatened to destroy this concept for many coloured and black families displaced by its laws. As time passed, District Six had come to symbolize safety, community and non-racialism. Already legendary in its time, this suburb became an even more powerful symbol after its destruction. The cramped conditions of District Six were forgotten and replaced with a keen sense of longing for this vibrant neighbourhood and the tight-knitted community that it offered, despite elements that would be considered undesirable by outsiders. As Pinnock notes:

> In a system which was denying a social identity to individuals above that of units of labour, in which one felt powerless to effect any changes, the hawkers, the gangs and the shebeens were forging a social and cultural identity (as opposed to a political one) within which the individual could regain some degree of his humanity.[251]

In *The myths we live by*, Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson note that "personal history is informed and shaped by symbolic notions of the past."[252] Here, the concept of myth is not of something that is not true, but rather of a powerful symbolism that underlies much of human thought. They note that a prominent recurring human myth is that of the "good old days", seen at work in a longing for some past state of being, whether it be the Lost Eden of Genesis, the Golden Age of the Poets or, in this case, life in District Six. According to Samuel and Thompson, the past then operates as a "reverse image of the present", where life was secure, people were good neighbours and there were no arguments between family members.[253] This myth also has the power to transform slums. Samuel and Thompson describe its effect as follows:

> The slum, for so many years a byword for poverty and deprivation, is transfigured into a warm and homely place, a little commonwealth where there was always a helping hand. The narrative of hard times

[250] Bickford-Smith, "The origins and early history of District Six", p. 43.
[251] Pinnock, "From argie boys to skolly gangsters: The lumpen-proletarian challenge of the street-corner armies in District Six, 1900–1951", p. 147.
[252] R Samuel & P Thompson, "Introduction", in R Samuel & P Thompson (eds), *The myths we live by*, Routledge, London, 1990, p. 8.
[253] Samuel & Thompson, "Introduction", p. 8.

> becomes a record of courage and endurance. The characteristic note is elegiac, saying goodbye to what will never be seen again, an affectionate leave-taking.[254]

A prominent feature of this understanding of myths is the realization that they are archetypal in nature. They are not localized, but occupy a universal space in that they are capable of emerging in a number of diverse situations, in many different places and times. A case in point here is that Samuel and Thompson are not in fact discussing District Six literature, although their description is highly applicable to contemporary retellings of life in District Six. Bringing the concept of myth to bear on informants' stories is not to devaluate them or to deny their validity by questioning the "truthfulness" of their narratives. Stories are told in the present to make sense of the past, and in the case of District Six, this myth has been intensified by the sheer violence with which residents of District Six lost their Eden. As will be seen in the rest of my reconstruction of this life, Taliep would go on to mine the rich mythological vein running through District Six for the greatest period of his creative life.

In many ways, Taliep's childhood in District Six also lays the foundations of his life story as a myth about humble beginnings and a meteoric rise, the start of his rags-to-riches story. Taliep's childhood was characterized by poverty and hardship. As a child, he had to perform chores under a strict taskmaster in a home where his mother had been replaced by a stepmother. He was also confronted with certain facts of life and elements of society that the majority of children are protected from. At the same time, he received significant exposure as a young performer, learning to sing and to develop a stage personality in front of large audiences, perhaps in the process developing a resistance to stage-fright. Taliep emerged from these years with a respect for discipline and the seeds of his emergent drive to succeed as a musician. These early years in District Six also laid the foundations for Taliep's religious beliefs; he was to become a staunch Muslim who made frequent pilgrimages to Mecca and was thought never to have drunk a drop of alcohol or smoked a cigarette in his entire life.

The narrative of Taliep's childhood presented in this chapter is embroidered with significant details about his and his family's lived experience. The amount of information presented here is intentional. As Nasson has argued, a biographical approach to the history of District Six illustrates the individuality and multiplicity of histories that can be told.[255] Oral history is an effective tool for illustrating the

[254] Samuel & Thompson, "Introduction", p. 9.
[255] Nasson, "Oral history and the reconstruction of District Six", p. 50–51.

lived experience of individuals, and it is with the aid of the peculiarities of that experience that subjectivity can emerge. Nasson insists that " ... it is through the biographical memory of this narrative that we might begin to understand how its subjects made their world, and the particularities of its economy and its culture."[256] This view was shared by Taliep: "Because onse mense is nie boekemense nie; my mense het nie geskryf nie. Because the story of District Six is the history of the mind [...] look, the books are outside there – mense soos my pa-hulle wat nog lewe – die boeke is daar!"[257]

By imbuing this narrative in thick contextual detail from the outset, I also hope to draw a line through what is often implicit in much white thinking in South Africa, namely that coloured and black experiences are undifferentiated realities. Learning what Taliep ate on the way home from school, as well as the grain and distinctiveness of the home life that awaited him, is imperative to locate the individual in a history that is often presented as collective. I have therefore chosen not to iron out specificities that would increase the possibility of generalizing my research. Finally, perhaps the most conclusive argument for immersing Taliep's biography in this richly textured background is that, as mentioned in the Introduction, these specificities emerged from individual interviews that form the bulk of my research. It is precisely in the weaving together of details that stories are constructed and told by individuals, indeed that lived lives are storied.

[256] Nasson, "Oral history and the reconstruction of District Six", p. 50.
[257] "Because our people are not book people; my people did not write. Because the story of District Six is the history of the mind [...] look, the books are outside there – people like my father and them who are still alive – the books are there!" Van Noord, "Distrik Ses se Taliep", *Insig*.

Maps

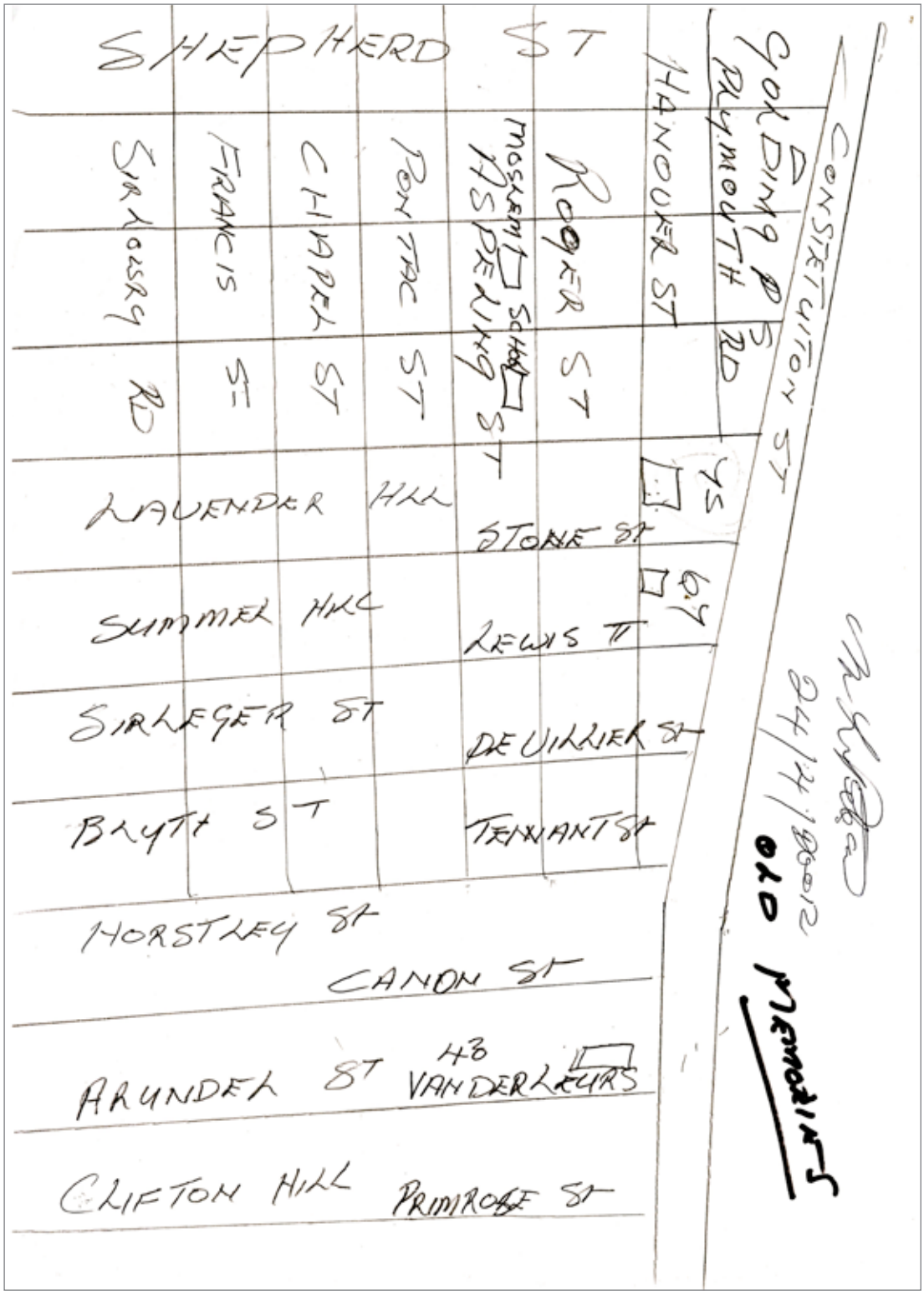


Figure 15: "Old memories" by Mogamat Ladien Petersen: this map is hand-drawn from memory and shows the locations of George Golding Primary School, the mosque where the Petersen family worshipped, as well as their houses in Hanover Street and Van de Leur Street, 2012.
SOURCE: Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 2012

Figure 16: Originally forming part of the "Streets" exhibition, this map of District Six currently occupies the floor of the District Six Museum. On this photograph, Mogamat Ladien has added the Petersen landmarks to the existing inscriptions made by other former residents, 2012.
SOURCE: District Six Museum, inscriptions by Mogamat Ladien Petersen, photograph by Paula Fourie

One man's possessions equal an archive

I get the closest to knowing Taliep Petersen in a bedroom where large unmarked boxes are stacked up to the ceiling amid an array of musical instruments, reel to reel players, mixers and amplifiers. After Taliep's death, these objects were stored in this room in the first house he had bought. For many years before his death, the house had belonged to his brother, Igsaan Petersen.

After an initial attempt at pre-sorting, a process with which I am assisted by my supervisor and a number of colleagues, I am left alone to do a more thorough sorting. Besides roughly twenty boxes of documents, seventeen boxes of unopened *Alie Barber* and *Deur dik en dun* CDs, six boxes of technical equipment and cables, four boxes of audio cassettes, one box of various CDs, one box of video tapes, roughly five boxes of reel to reel tapes, numerous trophies, framed awards and an impressive stock of sound equipment, the pre-sorting revealed a huge collection of musical instruments including fourteen guitars (six acoustic, six electric and two bass), four banjos, three mandolins, four electric keyboards, one clarinet and a bugle horn. Taliep's children, his siblings and father have agreed to give me access to this room, and have even agreed to let me take material to Stellenbosch University where I can go through it in my office. This process does not only consist of sorting the material of each box into folders and carefully listing the contents of each, but also in gathering material that I think will be of interest to my study. Alongside my own research, and despite my limited knowledge of archival practice, this amounts to drawing up a pre-sorted list for what is henceforth known as the Taliep Petersen Archive. This is done not only to enable me to find particular material again once I have finished working through a box, but also to aid the final sorting of this collection, should the family eventually decide to entrust the archive to a museum or university.

My first day of working through the collection on my own yields rich rewards. Amongst what I took out of the room to Stellenbosch, I have found what looks like Taliep's first scrapbooks. One is a large book with purple pages containing photographs and newspaper articles from roughly 1968 to 1982. Fixing a definite date to any of the documents proves difficult for, as I am to discover more and more, Taliep was not a model archivist. I decide that, henceforth, this book will be called the *Early years scrapbook*.[1] The other scrapbook has a poster for the Royal Swazi Hotel's production of *Carnival a la District Six* pasted on its cover. Containing newspaper clippings and photos of this show that roughly span the years 1979 to 1981, this book becomes the *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*.[2] Other material in this first sample includes personal photographs, books of handwritten song lyrics, plastic bags containing more newspaper clippings, and other documents such as scripts and letters, usually undated and mystifying at first sight.

At the start of this PhD project, I was afraid that I would not have enough material. It was difficult to line up interviews, and weeks in the National Library in the Company Gardens in Cape Town had only delivered a handful of newspaper articles about these early years. Now that I have successfully forged contact with Taliep's family, interviews are easier to get and, importantly, I have access to Taliep's room. I suddenly have over twenty boxes to sort through and catalogue. At the rate of one box per week, this will take me about six months. And then the real task remains: deciding what will make it into my thesis.

[1] *Early years scrapbook*, scrapbook containing miscellaneous items, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[2] *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook,* scrapbook containing miscellaneous items, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.

Chapter 2

The second chronicle: A coloured performer in a white world

In 1510, seven years after Europeans had become aware of its existence, explorer and first viceroy of the Portuguese East Indies, Francisco de Almeida, sailed his fleet into Table Bay.[1] Interested in bartering for livestock, a party of his crew approached a village of Khoikhoi farmers. Not content to leave merely with cattle and sheep in hand, they attempted to take two of the Khoikhoi as well. This led to a physical confrontation, and when a soldier returned sporting wounds on his face, de Almeida and some of his men returned to the village to "teach the Khoi a lesson in European superiority".[2] After the Europeans had captured cattle and children, the Khoikhoi responded by killing de Almeida and forty of his men. The Khoikhoi settlement in question was located on the site of modern Salt River, Cape Town.

More than three hundred years later, Cape Town's first industrial area was established with the construction of the new railway works on the marshy, windswept lands next to the Salt River.[3] In the first half of the twentieth century, Salt River appeared to be a "typically British colonial working-class suburb", but it in fact housed a racially mixed society, home to a large community of coloured and Muslim inhabitants.[4] In the words of Nigel Worden, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Vivian Bickford-Smith, Salt River was "partly an overflow of District Six."[5] Indeed, its vibrant street culture and racially mixed population (containing a sizable Jewish contingent), as well as its inclusion on the route of Cape Coon Carnival on 2 January, resulted in the embodiment of a spirit closer to the character of District Six than possibly any other Cape Town suburb. Unlike District Six, however, Salt River became home to a number of impoverished white Afrikaners near the end of the Second World War, further diversifying its multicultural profile.[6] Salt River was largely unaffected by de facto segregation in Cape Town suburbs in the first half of the twentieth century, and maintained its multi-racial character for longer than most suburbs before it was finally affected by the Group Areas Act.[7] In "Home town revisited", an article that appeared in the *Cape Herald* in 1980, a writer identified only as HA reflects on the once vibrant and culturally diverse Salt River of his or her youth, stating that: "The Salt River of my day was before the Group Areas Act and the Petersens, Benjamins, Parkers and Khans lived cheek by jowl with the De Votis, De Jagers, Krugers and

1 This story, as relayed here, is taken from N Worden, E van Heyningen & V Bickford–Smith, *Cape Town: The making of a city*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1998, pp. 13–14.
2 Worden, Van Heyningen & Bickford–Smith, *Cape Town: The making of a city*, p. 13.
3 Worden, Van Heyningen & Bickford–Smith, *Cape Town: The making of a city*, p. 257.
4 Worden, Van Heyningen & Bickford–Smith, *Cape Town: The making of a city*, p. 257.
5 Worden, Van Heyningen & Bickford–Smith, *Cape Town: The making of a city*, p. 257.
6 V Bickford–Smith, E van Heyningen & N Worden, *Cape Town in the twentieth century*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1999, p. 70.
7 Bickford–Smith, Van Heyningen & Worden, *Cape Town in the twentieth century*, p. 159.

colonial English types whose dining rooms were filled with hunting trophies."[8] When Mogamat Ladien and his family moved into the house in Greef Street in the early 1960s, Salt River still retained much of its historically culturally diverse character, more so because it was located less than three kilometres from parts of Woodstock that remained undesignated until the late 1970s.[9]

Taliep's first years in Salt River unfolded in the relative lull following the violent events of 1960, including a failed attempt to assassinate prime minister Hendrik Verwoerd and the massacre at Sharpeville, during which 69 protesters were shot in an anti-pass law demonstration in the Witwatersrand.[10] On 8 April 1960, one day before Verwoerd was shot and seriously injured by David Pratt, the government banned the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan African Congress (PAC), in response to which Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), the armed wing of the ANC, was established.[11] During the Rivonia trial of 1963, ten individuals, including Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, and Govan Mbeki, were tried for sabotage with the aim of overthrowing the apartheid government.[12] Eight of the accused were sentenced to life imprisonment. Giliomee notes that during the following years, South Africa "settled down to a political reality that was quite different from what had gone before" and that, although the country would become increasingly isolated from the world, the "ruthless repression of black protests and of black labour made it unlikely that there would soon be another challenge to the political order."[13] He calls these "The 'fabulous years.'"[14]

In Salt River, the last of Taliep's half-siblings from his father's side were born. Eventually, this house accommodated patriarch Mogamat Ladien, his wife Salama, as well as eleven children and their grandmother, Fatiema, who continued to cook for the entire family.[15] The couple and their youngest children occupied one room, Fatiema and the girls occupied another, while the boys had their own room.[16] This third bedroom was at the back of the house and had been added on by Mogamat Ladien after the family had relocated.[17] Years later, Taliep's eldest sister, Tagmieda, remembers that despite being in close physical proximity to other people, it was

8 HA, "Home town revisited", *Cape Herald*, 29 March 1980.
9 Bickford–Smith, Van Heyningen & Worden, *Cape Town in the twentieth century*, p. 171.
10 H Giliomee, "1960: A fateful year", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, pp. 333–334.
11 Giliomee, "1960: A fateful year", pp. 335–336.
12 H Giliomee, "The Rivonia Trial", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, p. 339.
13 H Giliomee, "The 'fabulous years'", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, p. 340.
14 Giliomee, "The 'fabulous years'", p. 340.
15 Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
16 Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 28 May 2012.
17 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 24 May 2012.

possible to pull oneself out of the company, to be alone in a crowd. She and Taliep were very close to each other, and they could stand at either end of a room full of people and communicate using only their eyes.[18]

When the Petersen family moved to Salt River, Taliep was still in primary school. He completed his primary school education in District Six, after which he was enrolled in Salt River High in Rochester Road.[19] According to an undated typed document found in the archive and written by Taliep in the first person detailing his activities up to the year 1984 (which I will henceforth call the *Autobiographical chronology*),[20] he participated in the Cape Coon Carnival up to the age of fifteen, having been "sold to the 'highest bidding troupe'" for three years after he had sung for the Darktown Strutters for six years. This would seem to be a contradiction of Mogamat Ladien's assertion that the troupe was closed down when Taliep was roughly nine years old. According to the *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep's high school years involved a focus on his academic subjects as opposed to his musical pursuits: "Thereafter it was decided that I spend more time with my high-school studies and the subject I love immensely: The Islamic Religion."[21] Taliep's Islamic education was continued at a mosque in District Six, even after starting his high-school career.[22] Thus, despite the Petersen's move to Salt River, he would continue to visit the area of his childhood every day.

However, it is also likely that it was during these years that Taliep honed his skills on the guitar. According to Mogamat Ladien, Taliep had not been interested in learning to play the guitar when his father closed down The Darktown Strutters in the late 1950s.[23] Taliep would later state that it was difficult for him to get an opportunity to play an instrument when he was a child, despite the fact that there were many instruments in the house: "Ek mag net gespeel het as daar nie ander, ouer, mense was nie. Jy moes gesien en nie gehoor word nie."[24] Despite this, he certainly developed this skill during the 1960s, though it would appear that he did not have the benefit of patient guidance. In later years, Taliep would tell a story about learning to play the guitar in his youth. One day, he asked Mogamat Ladien to tune his guitar for him, something that his father did readily. When Taliep returned a number of days later to have it tuned again, his father

18 Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
19 Interview with Igsaan Petersen, 24 November 2011.
20 T Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, typed document, c. 1984, Taliep Petersen Archive.
21 Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
22 M Allie, "Taliep is working on the 'people's music'", *Prisma*, 1987.
23 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.
24 "I was only allowed to play when there were no other, older people around. You had to be seen and not heard." P van Noord, "Distrik Ses se Taliep", *Insig*, 31 May 2001.

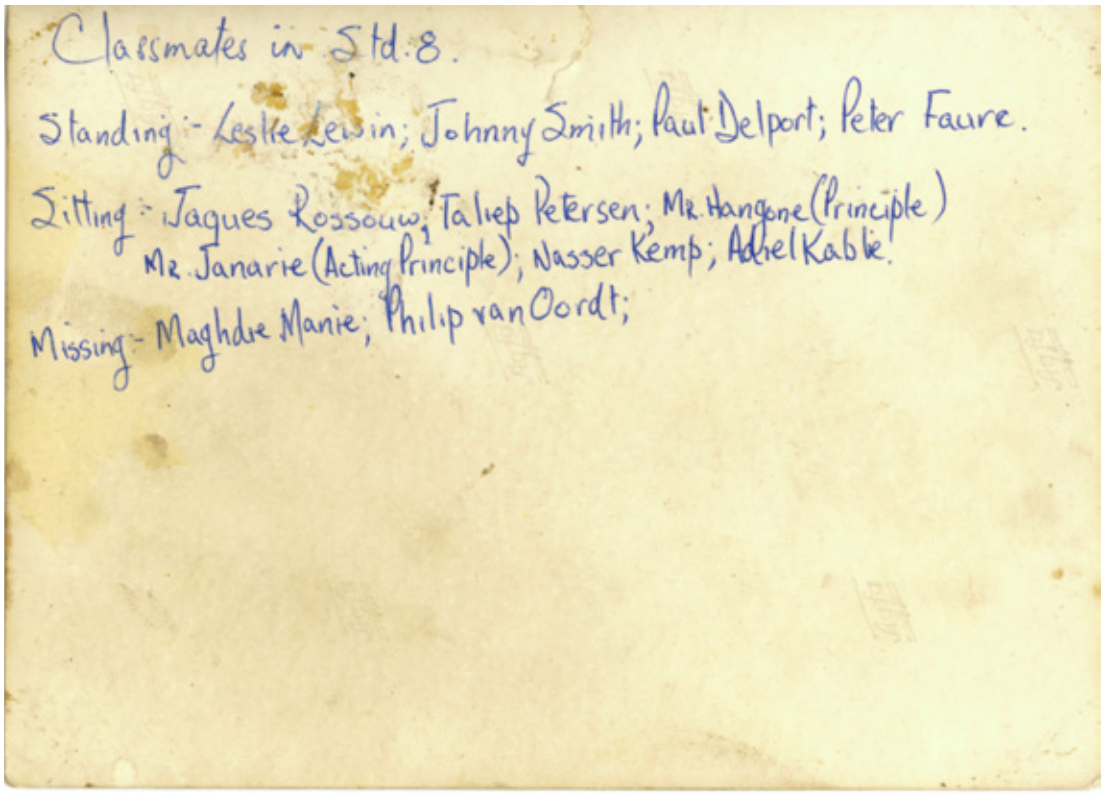


Figure 17: Salt River High Standard 8 class, circa 1965.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

gave him a blow and reprimanded him strongly, saying that he would only do it one more time and that Taliep had to pay proper attention to the process so that he would not have to ask again.[25] During his high school years, Taliep also continued his performing career by taking part in school concerts and singing at public events. Tagmieda remembers: "Taliep spread himself over the place, I'm saying it with love, ja, he just spread himself all over the place. And not thinly, he made his mark wherever he went." [26]

Mogamat Ladien also relates how Taliep performed at various clubs during his high school career, travelling on his own to different venues, and often without the express permission of his father.[27] According to fellow entertainer, Terry Hector, he and Taliep were part of a group of young men that included Zayne Adams and Sammy Hartman. These entertainers all grew up in the world of the Cape Coon Carnival, and would compete with and against each other for many years afterwards.[28] Having met each other roughly at the age of nine, they all sang for different troupes. Later, in their teenage years, they would continue to meet on stage in variety shows organized by show promoters.[29] The landscape of popular culture that these young coloured artists were moving into, however, was laid out along racial lines. Stage performance was no exception.

The promoters that Taliep and his contemporaries had to deal with in the 1960s and 1970s were not necessarily coloured individuals, but sometimes Indian or white.[30] Promoters would seek out both young and old talent – in Hector's words, "the cream of Cape Town" – and build up a variety show out of these performances.[31] A number of the larger-scale touring productions that relied on black and coloured performers had white promoters at their head, such as Alfred Herbert with *African jazz and variety* in the 1950s and 1960s. David Coplan points out that, although black organizers of African stage companies such as Wilfred Sentso and Griffiths Motsieloa continued their activities in the 1930s and 1940s, segregationist trends in South Africa meant that performers seeking to reach a larger audience increasingly turned to white promoters: "They could command greater organizational and financial resources and stand between performers and the mass of segregationist legal restrictions that inhibited interracial contact and independent African enterprise."[32] In contrast

25 Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
26 Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
27 Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011.
28 Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
29 Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
30 Telephonic communication with Howard Links, 26 February 2013.
31 Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
32 DB Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, 2nd edn, Jacana Media, Johannesburg, 2007, p. 183.

to the variety shows that Taliep was involved with during these years, touring productions such as the *African jazz and variety* were concerned with exposing black and coloured talent to a new audience of white patrons. As emphasized by Coplan, Lara Allen has argued that the establishment of this audience was possibly the most important development for black South African performance in the middle of the twentieth century.[33]

In the 1950s, theatrical and musical performances were increasingly controlled by the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, passed in 1953.[34] Although it was still possible under certain circumstances to perform to a racially mixed audience in those years, pressure from the government meant that it became increasingly difficult, and eventually nearly impossible in the 1960s. Apartheid legislation governing the arts culminated in the passing of the Publication and Entertainment Act of 1963, leading to a newly-formed Publications Control Board that could prohibit public entertainment for a number of reasons.[35] Coplan writes that, from 1964 onwards, multi-racial casts and other performing groups were increasingly outlawed and artists required a permit to perform or attend performances in areas designated for the use of another racial group.[36] These developments prompted South African playwright Athol Fugard to proclaim in 1968: "The legislation that governs the performing arts in various forms makes it impossible for an African and me to get together on the stage as we did five or six years ago ... It's an appalling deterioration."[37] *African jazz and variety* also suffered under these laws, prompting the *Post* to comment on Herbert's dilemma in their 9 to 16 May 1965 edition, as relayed by Robert Kavanagh: "The complexities of the Group Areas Act clamping down on the travels of his cast, the tough no-mixing rules on audiences (are) threatening to destroy him at the box-office."[38] Indeed, Coplan notes that, due to the political environment in 1965, *African jazz and variety* was forced to stop touring.[39]

Thus, before Taliep had begun to perform outside of the Cape Coon Carnival and local community events, South Africa's entertainment industry was already subject to race laws impinging on both performers and audiences. As Taliep would later recall, white audience members would not only attend the Cape Coon Carnival during the days of grand apartheid, they would also get the best seats:

[33] Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 201.
[34] Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 211.
[35] RM Kavanagh, *Theatre and cultural struggle in South Africa*, Zed Books, London, 1985, p. 51.
[36] Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 270.
[37] A Fugard quoted in Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 270.
[38] Kavanagh, *Theatre and cultural struggle in South Africa*, p. 52.
[39] Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 226.

while they would sit facing the performers, the coloured audience members had to contend with looking at the back of the coon troupes.[40] Racially mixed audiences were allowed at these events, but seating was clearly segregated. Although legislation was the same throughout the country, Coplan alleges that apartheid legislation was initially less enforced in the Cape,[41] something Fugard ascribes to the legacy of Cape Town's "special tradition of multiracialism",[42] a concept discussed in the previous chapter. However, considering the ambiguous position of coloured individuals in the apartheid system, as well as the fact that this historical cultural practice received significant attention from white authorities such as I.D. du Plessis, white attendance of the Cape Coon stadium performances may not be the best example to illustrate restrictions on the performing arts during apartheid.

There is evidence to suggest that, by the time Taliep began to perform solo in his teenage years, he had to contend with all of the restrictions applicable to a non-white performer in a world dominated by white concerns. Taliep's early performances took place in venues situated in coloured areas.[43] Considering the support that the popular performing arts enjoyed in coloured areas, this may not initially have appeared that restrictive to the young Taliep. As noted by Hector, they had no difficulties in organising concerts during those years as there was always support from an audience desperate for entertainment.[44] However, as will be detailed later on, Taliep also had early experiences of performing in venues in white areas. On occasion, he also had the not uncommon experience of having to enter and exit through the back door of such an establishment.[45] Some of these performances must have taken place without a permit. Taliep would later describe how he and his fellow musicians would perform in white venues until the police arrived, then each grab a tray to pose as waiters until the coast was clear again.[46]

Particularly relevant to Taliep's story was the opening of the Wynberg Luxurama in 1964 by producer and impresario Ronnie Quibell, an important milestone in the struggle to stage productions in front of racially mixed audiences.[47] Ronnie and his brother, originally building contractors, built theatres on the land that they owned; besides the Luxurama, this included the Three Arts Theatre, also in

40 Taliep Petersen interviewed by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.
41 Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 211.
42 Personal communication with Athol Fugard, 26 February 2013.
43 Telephonic communication with Terry Hector, 25 February 2013.
44 Telephonic communication with Terry Hector, 25 February 2013.
45 Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.
46 Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.
47 B Nasson, "Legend of the fall", in S Haw, A Unsworth & H Robertson (eds), *Rediscovering South Africa: A wayward guide*, Spearhead, Claremont, 2001, p. 104.

Wynberg, Cape Town. Under the name of Quibell Brothers, they also produced a number of local and international productions on South African stages.[48] In the process, they frequently opposed the restrictions enforced by apartheid legislation. According to Bill Nasson, "the Lux had a brief and cheeky existence as a multiracial theatre in the supreme decade of Apartheid."[49] From 1964 to 1967 the theatre afforded international artists such as Tom Jones and Engelbert Humperdinck the opportunity to perform in front of racially mixed audiences. However, the Luxurama was forced to adhere to apartheid legislation from 1967, henceforth only admitting segregated audiences. Although marginal in its impact, Bill Nasson recognizes this three-year period in the Luxurama's existence as "the last flickering of what some urban histories have called Cape Town's 'special tradition of multiracialism.'"[50]

According to Hector, the opening of the Luxurama was a significant event, as it was the first venue of its kind in a coloured area.[51] Even in the early years of the Luxurama's existence, Hector, Hartman, Adams and Taliep performed there frequently, each with his own backing band and playing to his own fans. In Hector's words, "I promise you, I think we were the luckiest four guys, kids, youngsters as we grew up."[52] Taliep was the youngest of the group and initially, not necessarily the most popular or well-known of the four. Although they were all friends, there was competition between them to be known as the best singer. According to television producer Herman Binge, Taliep used to remark that although "Zayne was better looking," Taliep's advantage was a more powerful stage personality.[53] Frequently, this competitiveness would result in them choosing to perform the same cover songs. One such song was "Il mondo", composed by Jimmy Fontana with English and Italian lyrics. Adams was the first to perform this song, eventually spurring Taliep on to sing it better than his rival.[54] This Taliep did so successfully that, in later years, this song would be strongly associated with him. As Abdullah Maged, prominent member of the Cape Malay choral community, remembers: "Ek het Taliep ontmoet ... hy het gesing by 'n kermis, en uhm, daai tyd toe sing hy nog 'Il mondo', yoh! As 'n man kom wat daardie Italiaanse dingese na, word die mense mal vir die Maleier wat nou Italiaans kan sing."[55]

48 P Tucker, "Ronnie Quibell", *The encyclopedia of South African theatre and performance*, Stellenbosch, 1997, accessed on 17 February 2013, www.esat.sun.ac.za/index.php/Ronnie_Quibell.
49 Nasson, "Legend of the fall", p. 104.
50 Nasson, "Legend of the fall", p. 104.
51 Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
52 Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
53 Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.
54 Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
55 "I met Taliep ... he sang at a bazaar, and uhm, those days he still sang 'Il mondo', yoh! If a man comes who copies that Italian thing, the people become crazy for the Malay who can sing Italian." Interview with Abdullah Maged, 4 August 2011.

Taliep matriculated from Salt River High in 1967 at the age of 17. This was also the age, according to Hector, at which he "found his direction," eventually surpassing other singers who were older than he was.[56] It was also in 1967 that bass guitarist Howard Links met Taliep in the Woodstock Town Hall, the start of a working relationship that would eventually span thirty years.[57] This first meeting came about because Links had been asked by a promoter to play for the singer on a song entitled "Before you go", originally sung by Matt Monroe. Above all, Links remembers Taliep's professionalism at the age of seventeen. There were about twelve singers on the show, but unlike the others, Taliep insisted that no-one else be present during his rehearsal.[58] Eventually, Links would form part of Taliep's regular backing band, The Playboys, consisting of Links on bass guitar, Cecil Fry on rhythm guitar, his brother Claude Fry on lead guitar and Ebrahim Petersen on drums. Together they performed with Taliep in various venues across Cape Town, including the Luxurama, the Woodstock Town Hall, the Bonteheuwel Civic Centre, the Elsiesriver Civic Centre and the Avalon and Star Bioscopes (the latter two both in District Six).[59] At these performances they would play an overwhelmingly American repertoire in front of paying audiences, covering songs by, amongst others, Peaches & Herb, The Beatles, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole and The Monkeys.[60] According to Maged, Taliep had a tremendous stage personality, and was almost a sort of Elvis-figure among his fellow teenagers with an extraordinary ability to interpret, even at that age: "Hy het alles geheb … Taliep het 'n manier geheb om die woorde uit te bring."[61]

Taliep would also play with The Playboys during his lunch break from 13:00 to 14:00 when, after leaving school, he began work as a clerk at a company called Derma Fashions in Woodstock.[62] These short gigs essentially consisted of performing for female factory workers during their own lunch breaks, something that ostensibly formed a part of a factory worker upliftment programme.[63] After resigning his post at Derma Fashions, Taliep worked for a while at a company located in Cartwright's Corner, an office building at the intersection of Adderley and Darling Streets, Cape Town.[64] This foray into the world of company administration and bookkeeping ended in the late 1960s or early 1970s, when Taliep decided to pursue music full-time. In the *Autobiographical chronology*,

[56] Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
[57] Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013.
[58] Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013.
[59] Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013
[60] Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013.
[61] "He had everything … Taliep had a way to bring the words out." Interview with Abdullah Maged, 4 August 2013.
[62] Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013.
[63] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[64] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.

Taliep follows up the news of his matriculation with the following sentence: "My parents wanted me to go to university but the yearning for the stage became unbearable."[65] It is possible that financial and political reasons would also have made it difficult for him to go to university. Although he could in theory attend the coloured-designated University of the Western Cape, they did not have a music department. As will be discussed later in this chapter, Taliep became increasingly eager for formal music education as he grew older.

When Taliep turned eighteen years old, he received his identification card from the South African government, a concrete manifestation of their obsession with race. He was classified "Malay".[66] This intensely specific designation located Taliep as a Muslim descendent of Cape Town's erstwhile slave population, one of South Africa's smallest population groups who nevertheless exerted considerable cultural influence in the Cape. As discussed in the previous chapter, apartheid race classifications were artificial constructs that in many cases purported to signify identity. As will emerge from this and subsequent narratives, Taliep not only had a significant number of non-Malay friends and musical colleagues, but also identified himself broadly with other coloured individuals and, indeed, with South Africans of other population groups. However, interviews have suggested that Taliep felt a strong sense of identification with what he called "my people".[67] Hector remembers that Taliep would frequently refer to this collective, leading Hector to wonder: "You say 'my people', you mean coloureds, Muslims? Coloured or Muslims and I wasn't sure."[68]

According to Robert Shell, slaves imported to the Cape Colony hailed (nearly in equal measure) from roughly four different locations: Africa, Madagascar, India and the Indonesian Archipelago together with its neighbouring islands.[69] As is reflected by contemporaneous accounts cited in Shell, a small number of these slaves came from Malaysia, specifically the area known as Malacca.[70] As the lingua franca of the Indonesian Archipelago, however, Malay became a commonly spoken language amongst the diverse slave population at the Cape, eventually resulting in the name "Cape Malay" – more for linguistic than ethnic reasons.[71] Nigel Worden notes that in the twentieth century, the apartheid state

[65] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[66] H Retief, "Afrikaans deur dik en dun", *Rapport*, 26 February 2006, p. 3.
[67] Interview with Terry Hector, 15 February 2013.
[68] Interview with Terry Hector, 15 February 2013.
[69] RCH Shell, *Children of bondage: A social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1952–1838,* Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1994, pp. 40–41.
[70] Shell, *Children of bondage: A social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1952–1838,* pp. 60–62.
[71] Shell, *Children of bondage: A social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1952–1838,* pp. 63–64.

was concerned with constituting a specifically Malay identity for the Muslims of Cape Town with South-East Asian origins, even though they did not necessarily have origins in Malaysia.[72] Afrikaans writer I.D. du Plessis was particularly influential in this regard, not only in his promotion of a Cape Malay cuisine and the constitution of a specific "Cape Malay quarter" in Cape Town, but especially in his efforts to encourage a distinctive choral culture, eventually leading to the establishment of the Cape Malay Choir Board in 1939. Worden rightly concludes that this process involved a romanticization of origins: "In this ethnic and cultural construction, little or nothing was said about slavery."[73]

Indeed, although he remained active in the Cape Coon Carnival, Taliep's religion, family life and a significant portion of his musical activities were situated in the Cape Malay community. An example of this is his involvement with Cape Malay choirs. Although he had been involved with the Boarding Boys as a child, in his eighteenth year Taliep joined the Rio Oranges, based in Maitland, Cape Town.[74] According to Maged, Taliep received help from Boeta Asid Rossie in these years, a well-known coach of Cape Malay choirs.[75] In his first year of joining the choir, he won the Senior Sentimental category for his solo-performance in the annual Cape Malay choir competition hosted by the Suid-Afrikaanse Koorraad (SAKR). As discussed in the previous chapter, this board was established when a number of Cape Malay Choir Board members, including Taliep's great uncle Mogamat Johaar Behardien, broke away from the parent organization in the 1950s to begin a new board. Starting in 1968, Taliep would win this category consecutively for eleven years, later becoming involved in the direction of the choir.[76] Tagmieda remembers that her brother used to ask her for comments on his performance, and how she would frequently be quite critical and tell him truthfully whether she thought that anyone sang better than he did. Taliep would sometimes agree, but argued that his instrumental accompaniment was better, saying, "But what did you think of my music? The arrangement? Did you hear how the mandolin came in, ever so gently?"[77] During subsequent years, Taliep continued his work with the Cape Malay choirs, later becoming involved in the coaching of the Buccaneers.[78]

[72] N Worden, "The changing politics of slave heritage in the Western Cape, South Africa", *The Journal of African History*, vol. 50, no.1, 2009, p. 26.
[73] Worden, "The changing politics of slave heritage in the Western Cape, South Africa", p. 26.
[74] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 13 October 2011; Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[75] Interview with Abdullah Maged, 4 April 2011.
[76] Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013.
[77] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[78] Interview with Mitch Adams, 8 November 2011.

Figure 18: The victorious Taliep at the SAKR choir competition, circa 1970.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

An event that may have contributed to Taliep's decision to pursue music full-time was the 1968 Mr. Entertainment competition, hosted by a local newspaper called *The Post*. One of the first pages of the *Early years scrapbook* contains a newspaper clipping of unknown origin entitled "The big, big show", detailing this event.[79] Held at the Green Point track, this competition attracted nearly five thousand spectators who came to see a handful of coloured singers compete for the titles "Mr. Entertainment", "Ms. Entertainment" and "Mr. Entertainment Junior". In addition to these categories, the 1968 Mr. Entertainment competition was held in conjunction with a Battle of the Bands competition, organized by the Central Sports Board, Cape Town. In his category, Taliep competed against Ismail Parker, Roy Gabriels, Vernon Saunders, Chico Levy, Ebrahim Rodrigues, Norman Linden, Jay Jay, Paul Isaacs, Little Manie, Richard Roman and Dave Bestman.[80]

For this competition, Taliep sang "Il mondo", which according to the article, "had the edge over the other three finalists."[81] The judges, Steven Haggart, Betsy van Rooyen, Dirk Senekal, Mel Fourie and Selwyn Miller (this group would have included Joseph Manca from the Eoan Opera Group, had he not fallen ill) pronounced Taliep the winner of the competition. Taliep Petersen, Mr. Entertainment 1968, walked away with a cash prize, a trophy and the offer of a recording contract with Meteor Records.

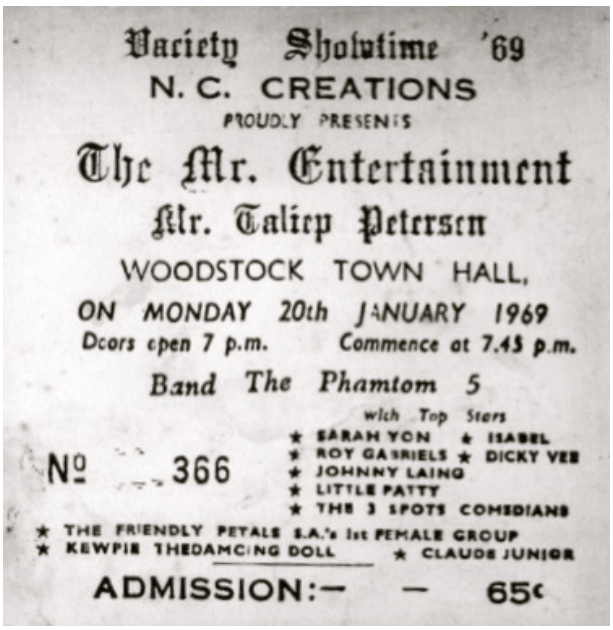

Variety Showtime '69
N. C. CREATIONS
PROUDLY PRESENTS
The Mr. Entertainment
Mr. Taliep Petersen
WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL,
ON MONDAY 20th JANUARY 1969
Doors open 7 p.m. Commence at 7.45 p.m.
Band The Phamtom 5
with Top Stars
★ SARAH VON ★ ISABEL
★ ROY GABRIELS ★ DICKY VER
★ JOHNNY LAING
★ LITTLE PATTY
★ THE 3 SPOTS COMEDIANS
★ THE FRIENDLY PETALS S.A.'s 1st FEMALE GROUP
★ KEWPIE THEDAMCING DOLL ★ CLAUDE JUNIOR
№ 366
ADMISSION:— — 65¢

Figure 19: An example of a newspaper advertisement that refers to Taliep as Mr. Entertainment, 1969.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

79 "The big, big show", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
80 "The big, big show", *Early years scrapbook*.
81 "The big, big show", *Early years scrapbook*.

Winning this competition was clearly not insignificant, as the writer of "The big, big show" states: "To young Taliep Pietersen [*sic*], who now emerges as the Star of the Year, a sparkling career lies ahead in which he can be expected to hit even greater success. Our congratulations and best hopes go with him."[82] For a number of years subsequent to the Mr. Entertainment competition, there was frequent use of this title to refer to Taliep in variety show advertisements as well as newspaper articles. In an undated article of unknown origin in the *Early years scrapbook* that refers to his recent success in this competition, Taliep is quoted as saying: "I've signed up with one of Cape Town's top recording companies and will try cutting a few discs soon and maybe even an LP."[83] However, what became of his recording contract remains a question, as his first commercial recording was only released in 1974.[84]

There is some confusion surrounding the Mr. Entertainment competition of the following year. In the *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep writes that he won this competition in both 1968 and 1969. In an undated *Cape Herald* newspaper article presumed to be from the early 1970s, the reporter details a performance at the Luxurama in which Taliep and Adams would not only sing together, but also promote and organize the show themselves. According to this article, Adams, who won the 1967 Mr. Entertainment competition, did not enter in 1968. The reporter continues: "It would have been interesting to see and hear these two competing against each other, but we never got the chance as the Mr. Entertainment contests also came to an end after Taliep got the title (in 1968)."[85] If one is to believe this newspaper article, then this perhaps serves as an early example of how a number of events that never happened eventually became associated with Taliep in the creation of his popular life story.

The *Cape Herald* newspaper article is important for another reason. It details a production the artists were determined to put on stage without the help of a promoter: "We're out to show the public of Cape Town what we can do on our own, what our artists can do without having to support the billing of an overseas import – and with proper organisation with the artists being treated like professionals."[86] The same page of the *Early years scrapbook* has another undated *Cape Herald* article related to this development. Written by a regular

[82] "The big, big show", *Early years scrapbook*.

[83] "Taliep – The man with rhythm in every bone in his body", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive. A reference in this article to Taliep as "POST's Mr. Entertainment in last year's contest" suggests the year of the article as 1969.

[84] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

[85] "What a scene this will be", *Cape Herald*, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

[86] "What a scene this will be", *Cape Herald.*

columnist known as Hipcat, this article paints Taliep as an "angry young man" who feels that artists like himself are "underpaid, overworked and grossly exploited" by show promoters.[87] Taliep is quoted as saying that "promoters are getting fat on our backs", paying artists "peanuts" for their performances, even though they are playing to full houses.[88] This article concludes with the following quote:

> Meanwhile, the promoters get into their flashy cars with the lion's share of the boodle. Which brings me to another sore point. Very seldom the businessmen arrange proper or sufficient transport for the entertainers. Non-white residential areas are spread far and wide, and it just ain't fair to leave the poor showbiz guys and dolls in the lurch like that.[89]

Despite these early signs of discontent, Taliep was still dependent on promoters for a number years subsequent to this reportage. As detailed in the *Autobiographical chronology*, the highlights of the next few years consisted of touring with Danny Williams in 1969, with Adam Wade and Juanita Fleming in 1970 and with Brooke Benton in 1971.[90] Taliep's precise involvement in these tours is not known. The *Early years scrapbook* contains a photograph of Adam Wade with the following scribbled on it: "To Taliep, Sorry about the spelling (smile). You're my main man. Sincerely, Adam Wade,"[91] perhaps suggesting that Taliep played a significant role in the American's shows. However, there is also evidence to suggest that Taliep's involvement was not as a solo performer, but as member of the Continental Strings who were backing some of the artists.

A newspaper clipping of unknown origin in the *Early years scrapbook* features a photograph of three female singers, Tandie Klaassen, Juanita Fleming and Rushda Conradie, performing with the Continental Strings in the Wynberg Luxurama during what was clearly billed as the Adam Wade show.[92] Led by Flamenco guitarist Armien Allie, the Continental Strings was a group specialising in Spanish guitar music.[93] According to Taliep's youngest sister Ma'atoema, the group consisted of Taliep, a man called Kariem who played the bongo, as well a number of Armien's brothers: Fuart Allie, Armien Allie and Salie Allie.[94] There was one more guitar-playing Allie brother, Yusuf, who was not a member of this group because he became the lead guitarist for Greek singer Nana Mouskouri's

87 Hipcat, "Taliep Petersen", *Cape Herald*, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
88 Hipcat, "Taliep Petersen", *Cape Herald*.
89 Hipcat, "Taliep Petersen", *Cape Herald*.
90 Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
91 "Adam Wade", signed photograph, 1970, *Early years scrapbook,* Taliep Petersen Archive.
92 "Skitterend", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
93 "Grand final", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
94 Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.

band, and was based in London during those years.[95] Another source that acknowledges Taliep's membership of the Continental Strings is found in the *Early years scrapbook*. This is a page that can be dated with relative certainty to either 1971 or 1972, and that contains pasted pictures and captions of various artists, one of the Continental Strings, under the main heading "Grand final".[96] A photograph showing Taliep playing an acoustic guitar with the group has also been found in an envelope in the Taliep Petersen Archive.

Figure 20: Taliep (third from the right) performing with the Continental Strings, early 1970s.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

Another highlight of 1971 was a performance with Peaches and Herb, Oscar Toney Junior and Arthur Conley.[97] Bass guitarist Links, who was also involved in this performance as member of The Playboys, remembers that it took place at The Funfair, a Muslim community event held opposite the Athlone Police station that year.[98] According to Links, the Quibell brothers were involved in bringing these three American artists to South Africa, artists that Taliep and his friends had previously only ever heard on records or over the radio. At various stages of their lives, Hector, Adams and Bestman all performed in the *Golden city*

95 Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.
96 "Grand final", *Early years scrapbook*.
97 Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
98 Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013.

*dixie*s, a travelling variety show that was one of the first South African groups to tour abroad in the late 1950s.[99] According to the *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep did not perform in the *Golden city dixie*s, but became a member of Alfred Herbert's *African follies*, touring South Africa and Portuguese East Africa during 1971 and 1972.[100]

Herbert produced his first *African jazz and variety* show at the Windmill Theatre in Johannesburg in 1962.[101] Herbert's shows attracted high-quality acts, not only because he offered performers a relatively steady income and exposure to a new audience, but more importantly because he did not dictate to the performers regarding their musical style or choice of programming.[102] Artists who were involved in this show at various stages of its existence include Dolly Rathebe, Hugh Masekela, Miriam Makeba and Sathima Bea Benjamin.[103] Coplan writes that in the late 1950s and 1960s, this show became "more a burlesque than a showcase for urban African professional artistry."[104] Indeed, according to Fugard, while touring productions such as *African jazz and variety* "played an important role in many white minds towards legitimizing the idea of a black or coloured performer on stage," they were also compromised in that they "pandered to white stereotypes about black people".[105] An example of this is the inclusion in 1959 of a "rural pastiche" written by Herbert and entitled "Kraal tone poem". With reference to the *African jazz and variety* 1959 programme, Coplan points out that although this item was advertised as an "authentically ethnic" item presenting "the songs, the dances, the life and the laughter from the home of jazz, the Kraal", this show in fact featured provocative dancing by a bevy of beautiful black ladies dressed in leopard-print bikinis.[106]

According to Carol Muller, *African jazz and variety* was later renamed *African follies*.[107] It is uncertain whether Taliep performed with this group, as he maintains in the *Autobiographical chronology*, or whether he in fact toured with one of Herbert's later shows, *Minstrel follies*. In an undated newspaper article in the *Early years scrapbook* entitled "'Minstrel Follies' a hit", Ray ka Msengana reports on Taliep's participation in this production, a creation by "Alf 'Papa' Herbert" following on his success with *African jazz and variety* and

[99] Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2012.
[100] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[101] Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 210.
[102] Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 210.
[103] CA Muller & SB Benjamin, *Musical echoes: South African women thinking in jazz*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2011, p. 73.
[104] Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 211.
[105] Personal communication with Athol Fugard, 26 February 2013.
[106] Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, 2007, p. 211.
[107] Muller & Benjamin, *Musical echoes: South African women thinking in jazz*, p. 73.

African follies.[108] This show featured artists such as Salie Daniels, Solly Junior, Cynthia Josephs, Daphne Malgas, Ivy Malgas, Charlotte House, Brian Young, Cyril Valentine and "topping the bill in the variety acts", Taliep Petersen.[109] According to this article, Herbert included a short story in *Minstrel follies* entitled "District Six" that introduced some acting into the show. Msengana writes: "The dialogue does not flow naturally and it often seems contrived, but the music is the right kind for this type of act and the story is mainly a vehicle for the music."[110] Unfortunately, there is no mention of its author, leaving open the distinct possibility that the script was contributed by Taliep and, as such, a foreshadowing of what was to develop over the following years, first at the Royal Swazi Spa in Swaziland, and later in Cape Town's Baxter Theatre.

Interestingly, though, at least ten years after Herbert's 1959 *African jazz and variety, Minstrel follies* still featured scantily-clad ladies in leopard-print bikini's. Msengana's article includes a photograph of these ladies under the caption: "'Amatshitshi' in Zulu gear feature in the kraal scene from the 'Minstrel Follies'. They are, from left, Anitta, Cynthia, Charlotte and Jeanita."[111]

Figure 21: Alfred Herbert's "Amashitshi" from the *Minstrel Follies*, early 1970s.
SOURCE: R ka Msengana, "'Minstrel Follies' a hit", *Early years scrapbook,* Taliep Petersen Archive.

[108] R ka Msengana, "'Minstrel Follies' a hit", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[109] Ka Msengana, "'Minstrel Follies' a hit", *Early years scrapbook*.
[110] Ka Msengana, "'Minstrel Follies' a hit", *Early years scrapbook*.
[111] Ka Msengana, "'Minstrel Follies' a hit", *Early years scrapbook*.

The show's title, the names of the performing artists and the fact that it was held at the Wynberg Luxurama in the early 1970s, when it was no longer a multi-racial venue, suggests that this show consisted exclusively of coloured performers and played to an exclusively coloured audience. Here, the superposition of black ethnicity, filtered through white stereotypes, onto coloured performance confirms Herbert's lack of interest in anything approaching "authentic" cultural engagement. However, it could be argued that the "covering" of Zulu culture (however burlesque to begin with) in this show was in keeping with the rest of the offering – covers of hit numbers from various countries, from the "Can-can" to "Cucurucucu paloma".

As discussed in Chapter 1, a culture of copying was established in mid-twentieth century Cape Town. Coloured artists would perform covers of popular songs, and in some cases, style themselves after a particular performer and make a living through imitation. According to Taliep, the culture of performing covers and copying other artists was not only an attempt to provide entertainment when there was none, it was rooted in aspiration towards something better than was afforded by apartheid South Africa. It allowed performers, in Taliep's words, "to be able to be somebody within the perimeters of the law."[112] However, although he performed mainly covers, Taliep reportedly did not attempt to sound like anyone else, but focused on recreative artistry while maintaining his own voice and his own persona.[113] Given the predilection of coloured Capetonian audiences for contemporary and familiar popular songs, particularly of American origin, Taliep's reasons for singing his regular repertoire of covers during solo and variety shows becomes clearer.[114] Links explains this tendency in practical terms: "But, you see, in the coloured community, they don't want to hear your original songs."[115] However, while touring the country as a solo performer, Taliep not only performed for coloured audiences, but, as can be seen from the example below, also to racially mixed audiences. A photograph found in the W under the caption: "Taliep Petersen starring show with Sammy Brown in Tahiti Theatre in Jo'burg, Nov '72" (a rare exception to Taliep's tendency not to label or date photographs and newspaper articles), shows a multi-racial audience watching a predominantly coloured, but multi-racial group of performers.[116]

[112] Taliep Petersen interviewed by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.
[113] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
[114] See Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of the cover band phenomenon.
[115] Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013.
[116] "Taliep Petersen starring show with Sammy Brown in Tahiti Theatre in Jo'burg, Nov '72", photograph, 1972, Taliep Petersen Archive.

Figure 22: Taliep performing with Sammy Brown in the Tahiti Theatre in Johannesburg, 1972.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

In Maseru in 1973 or 1974, Taliep met folksinging duo Des and Dawn Lindberg, who were at that time producing their first musical, *Godspell*, an American import with lyrics and music by Stephen Schwartz and based on the book by John-Michael Tebelak. This meeting was the start of a working relationship and friendship that would last for over thirty years. According to Des Lindberg, he was immediately struck by Taliep's attitude towards substance abuse: "When I first met Taliep, all the musos around him, all the people playing with him in that show, were all smoking grass, and doing what, heaven knows what else. Taliep never did that."[117] An interesting inconsistency regarding Taliep's participation in *Godspell* has emerged from this research. A number of interviewees have stated that Taliep performed in this musical.[118] This is also alleged in the *Autobiographical chronology*, where the date of this production is incorrectly given as 1975.[119] However, according to an interview published in 1975, Taliep was asked to perform in *Godspell* in 1973, but declined on the grounds of preferring "some solo experience".[120] Another interview alleges that he could not join the cast of

[117] Interview with Des and Dawn Lindberg, 28 November 2011.
[118] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012; Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012; Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013.
[119] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[120] "'Hair' gives boost to Black stars", *Eastern Province Herald*, 21 October 1975.

this musical due to a previous commitment with a promoter.[121] Subsequently Taliep's alleged participation in this production has found its place in countless biographical sketches about the entertainer, another example where something that almost happened (but didn't) became a part of Taliep's popular life story.

According to the *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep also starred in a production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* in 1974, playing the part of the first priest.[122] There are no newspaper articles in the *Early years scrapbook* on this production, but a mention of this musical occasionally surfaces in interviews with Taliep. Unfortunately, though, as it appears alongside claims of his participation in *Godspell* it is not always possible to correlate this with his actual lived experience. One newspaper article from the early 1980s, however, mentions that Taliep starred in a Rhodesian production of *Jesus Christ superstar* with the Salisbury Repertory Group. Indeed, the amateur theatre group (the Repertory Players of Harare, as they are currently known), list a 1974 production of this musical on their website.[123] As it quite possibly did not receive enough reportage to reflect in the *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep's participation in this amateur production cannot be ruled out. However, Taliep's confirmed introduction to the world of musicals came in 1974 with a production of *Hair* (lyrics by James Rado and Gerome Ragni, and music by Galt Mac Dermot) staged in Lesotho and directed by Michael Maurer.[124]

An article entitled "Cape singer for 'Hair'" in the *Early years scrapbook* reports that Taliep was introduced to the American producers of *Hair* by a South African promoter, Joe Amlay, and subsequently auditioned for a role in Sea Point early in 1974.[125] This musical had been banned in South Africa, according to the article, due to the fact that it contained profanities and a nude scene. However, there must have been many more reasons why the apartheid government did not want South African citizens to see this production. Having had its genesis in the hippie culture and sexual revolution of the 1960s, *Hair* dealt extensively with sexual freedom and racial tolerance, not exactly themes that would have pleased the censors. According to promoter Amlay, Taliep was preferred above a number of

[121] R Hill, "Taliep has scored a 'first'", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[122] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[123] Reps Theatre, "Complete list of productions", Harare, 2013, accessed on 26 February 2013, http://www.reps.co.zw/repslist.php.
[124] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[125] "Cape singer for 'Hair'", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

Figure 23: Taliep and co-actress in *Hair*, Maseru, 1974.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

white hopefuls who also auditioned, and was the only South African chosen to become part of the cast.[126] However, when the production opened, there were four other South Africans on the cast list: Edwin van Wyk (who was indeed white) Sammy Brown, Sammy Bodibe and Lorraine Klaasen, daughter of Johannesburg-based singer Thandi Klaasen.[127]

Produced by Ignazio Occhi, the rest of the cast, or tribe, as they were called in *Hair*, consisted of Steve Curry, De Marest Grey, Keith Henderson, Armelia McQueen, Amy Farber, Errol Stanley, Robert I. Rubinsky, Zora Rasmussen, Sunny Chayes, Geoff Norris, Gerry Josephson and Lorraine Napier.[128] Roger Frith was responsible for lighting, Frank Jooste acted as technical consultant and the stage design was by John Stanbridge & Household. Unlike fellow South Africans Edwin van Wyk and Sammy Brown, Taliep did not play one of the leading roles, as his promoter Amlay suggested in an interview, but was cast as a member of the tribe.[129] Taliep's experiences of working with a multi-racial and international cast were personally significant, as he said at the time: "I am loving my experience with this cast, the easy way all the races mix, the way we smile at each other, and mean it. Man, that's just beautiful."[130]

Hair opened to a full house on 29 June 1974 at the Maseru Holiday Inn, Lesotho, where it would run until the end of September.[131] Although, according to Taliep, a certain Afrikaans daily in Bloemfontein claimed that *Hair* "caused those who saw it to long for a bath",[132] reviews were generally positive. *Hair* was hailed as an entirely new experience for South Africans, with journalist Sydney Matlhaku calling it "a full-frontal attack on South Africa."[133] As one reviewer, Bruce Heilbuth noted: "Hair was explosive, brazen, brash, irresponsible, insulting to my age group, violently anti-establishment, irreligious – and quite delightful."[134]

According to him, a large number of South Africans crossed the border in search of pornography after having heard about *Hair*'s controversial nude scene, in which the performers are initially covered by a white canopy suggesting the womb before they emerge naked. Heilbuth describes this twenty second scene as predominantly symbolic and states that "only the most prurient, with the eyesight of a hawk

126 "Cape singer for 'Hair'", *Early years scrapbook*.
127 "Cast list: *Hair*", programme fragment, 1974, *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
128 "Cast list: *Hair*", *Early years scrapbook.*
129 "Cape singer for 'Hair'", *Early years scrapbook*.
130 B Heilbuth, "Hair: Sensational – but no joy for porn hunters", *Weekend Argus*, 6 July 1974.
131 Heilbuth, "Hair: Sensational – but no joy for porn hunters", *Weekend Argus*.
132 B Jongbloed, "Petersen: Sarie show hog-wash", *Sunday Times*, 1974, *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
133 S Matlhaku, "'Hair' makes a full-frontal attack on South Africa", *The World*, 2 July 1974.
134 Heilbuth, "Hair: Sensational – but no joy for porn hunters", *Weekend Argus*.

could have found it titillating."[135] This did not mean that it did not elicit reaction, as Heilbuth continues: "Not everybody was caught unprepared by the brevity and blackness, I must admit. The woman beside me whipped up a pair of opera glasses – or were they binoculars – and stared intently at somethings or others."[136] Although Taliep declined to strip for religious reasons, he is quoted as saying: "I don't know why people have seen it fit to turn this sophisticated scene into a controversy ... It is beautiful really, if you have the right attitude of mind towards it. If it can corrupt you, then you must be corrupt in any case."[137]

In his article, Heilbuth compares *Hair* with the recent Lindberg production of *Godspell*, examining the reasons for the banning of *Hair* in South Africa. Like *Hair*, *Godspell* had had its opening in Maseru, Lesotho. Despite conflicts with apartheid legislation prohibiting the activities of racially mixed casts, *Godspell* managed to tour South Africa for eighteen months after a supreme court ruling in their favour.[138] Heilbuth concludes that there is a world of difference between *Godspell* and *Hair*, and that besides the irreligious nature of the latter, his own "hackles rose a little at some of the pawing scenes, especially those between male and male – usually involving a Black and White member of the cast."[139] In concluding his article, Heilbuth consults two South African members of the cast regarding the likelihood of *Hair* ever being performed in their home country. The disparity of their answers is telling. Edwin van Wyk's opinion was that this show could never be staged in South Africa and, moreover, that he would never agree to act in a censored version: "It's not the sex that would rule out Hair in South Africa, it's the constant, close, Black-White contact. And that is so integral a part of the production that [it] just couldn't be cut."[140]

The other cast member who was consulted, was Taliep, described by Heilbuth as "the surprise packet of the evening, with the best voice of them all ... ".[141] Taliep's opinion is given as follows: the show could definitely be staged in South Africa, albeit "with a few judicious cuts", and that it would take the country by storm, indeed that "it would almost be a crime to deprive our people of the chance of enjoying it."[142] Perhaps, instead of regarding Taliep's willingness to compromise as a lack of protest against apartheid, one can regard it as evidence of his intense hunger to perform, perhaps also to expose his friends and family in Cape Town to

[135] Heilbuth, "Hair: Sensational – but no joy for porn hunters", *Weekend Argus.*
[136] Heilbuth, "Hair: Sensational – but no joy for porn hunters", *Weekend Argus.*
[137] N West, "Taliep Petersen is seeking Cape talent for Hair", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[138] Interview with Des and Dawn Lindberg, 28 November 2011.
[139] Heilbuth, "Hair: Sensational – but no joy for porn hunters", *Weekend Argus*.
[140] Heilbuth, "Hair: Sensational – but no joy for porn hunters", *Weekend Argus.*
[141] Heilbuth, "Hair: Sensational – but no joy for porn hunters", *Weekend Argus.*
[142] Heilbuth, "Hair: Sensational – but no joy for porn hunters", *Weekend Argus*.

new modes of thinking. He was quoted in a newspaper article that appeared in the *Cape Herald* in August 1974: "I realize now the vast difference there is between what I did at home and what is being done all over the world."[143] Fugard recognizes the disparate opinions of Edwin van Wyk and Taliep as two sides of a central issue facing any creative artist during the apartheid years:

> Do you compromise in order to be heard? Revolutions are built on ideas and what we needed during those years, more than anything else, was exposure to new ways of thinking. You won't win a battle by refusing to fight, simply because government restrictions prevent you from charging right in. But, those years, you ended up feeling guilty no matter what you did.[144]

This dilemma was central to issues surrounding the international cultural boycott that, from 1968 onwards, limited the exposure of South Africans to new artistic and intellectual developments in the rest of the world.[145] According to Fugard, he initially encouraged this boycott through an open letter to playwrights abroad, in the hope that a strong anti-apartheid message would be sent out by international playwrights refusing to have their work performed in front of racially segregated audiences. However, the apartheid government did not feel the effects of the cultural boycott as negatively as those of the sporting boycott that banned South Africa from the international sports stage. Fugard notes that, ironically, the cultural boycott served the intellectual aims of the government in that it kept its ideological waters free from "dangerous ideas" and views that could challenge its supposed supremacy: "Eventually, between the censors and the cultural boycott, we were in danger of intellectual starvation."[146] Fugard and a number of other role-players including Barney Simon, Peter Toerien, Leonard Schach, Clive Hirschhorn, Ruth Oppenheim, Taubie Kushlick and Des and Dawn Lindberg began encouraging composers and playwrights to relent on the boycott, and by 1975 a number of these, including Peter Shaffer, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Robert Patrick and Stephen Schwartz had allowed their work to be performed in South Africa once more.[147]

At the age of twenty four, Taliep was not only committed to pursuing an international music career, he was also determined not to neglect what he regarded as his family responsibilities, outlining his "main objective" to a reporter as follows: "to make enough money to buy my parents a fine new

143 "Local artists sought for 'Hair;" *Cape Herald*, 7 August 1974.
144 Personal communication with Athol Fugard, 26 February 2013.
145 Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 248.
146 Personal communication with Athol Fugard, 26 February 2013.
147 M Venables, "Mixed audiences: What would a poll reveal?", *Sunday Times TVTime Magazine*, 6 July 1975.

home."[148] On 19 July 1974, Taliep received a telegram from Rowena Veldman informing him of his provisional success at a prominent recording company, and that the next step would be a studio audition. In an article that appeared in the *Sunday Times* later that same year, Bernard Jongbloed reports that Taliep signed a three-year recording contract with EMI, and that he wanted to record a new seven-inch single, to be released near the end of 1974. Taliep, whose new stage name is given as "Taliep Peters", would now be "going 'international'".[149] The same interview describes Taliep as "a firm believer in Black Consciousness" who wholeheartedly rejects the recent *Sarie* entertainment awards as "an insult to the Black entertainer and not necessary for the Black man's advance!"[150] In the interview, Taliep calls the event "a racist affair" during which Richard Jon Smith, Margaret Singana and Lionel Petersen were overlooked in favour of undeserving white performers, and expresses his disappointment that Lionel Petersen stooped to accept what was eventually offered to him.

The South African Black Consciousness movement emerged in the wake of the banning of the ANC and PAC and the imprisonment of a number of black leaders after the events of 1960 to 1961.[151] Led by Steve Biko and heavily influenced by the American Black Power movement, Black Consciousness ideology asserted that black people should take pride in their blackness and reject entrenched ideas about their supposed inferiority, inadvertently adopted through years of oppression in a white society. In contrast to the ANC's multi-racial approach, Biko argued that the task of fighting apartheid belonged to black people alone, and that whites, regardless of political alignment, could not truly partake in the struggle.[152] However, there was an important inclusive aspect to Black Consciousness in that it embraced everyone who was oppressed on the basis of the colour of his or her skin, thereby including individuals classified as Indian and coloured according to the Population Registration Act.[153]

The ideals of Black Consciousness would eventually led in part to the Soweto uprising of 1976, during which some twenty thousand black schoolchildren marched in protest against the proposed inclusion of Afrikaans as a language

[148] Heilbuth, "Hair: Sensational – but no joy for porn hunters", *Weekend Argus*.
[149] Jongbloed, "Petersen: Sarie show hog-wash", *Sunday Times*.
[150] Jongbloed, "Petersen: Sarie show hog-wash", *Sunday Times*.
[151] D Hirschmann, "The Black Consciousness movement in South Africa", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1, March 1990, p. 2.
[152] H Giliomee, "The distinct voice of Steve Biko", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, p. 354.
[153] Hirschmann, "The Black Consciousness movement in South Africa", p. 2.

of instruction in their high schools.[154] Police involvement resulted in several deaths, the first of which was reported to be 13-year old Hector Petersen. The Soweto uprising eventually spread to other areas in South Africa, notably Cape Town, where coloured students and high school pupils held demonstrations in Langa, Guguletu and Nyanga, and both black and coloured youths marched to the centre of Cape Town where they were likewise met with violent police action. In 1977, these uprisings led to the banning of all organizations associated with Black Consciousness, as well as the imprisonment and death of Biko in prison. Muhammed Adhikari identifies Black Consciousness as the impetus for instrumentalism, an approach that developed in the post-Soweto era in coloured identity discourse.[155] Supplanting notions of essentialism discussed in the first chapter, instrumentalism was informed by principles of non-racialism. Instrumentalist writing rejected apartheid racial classifications and regarded coloured identity as constructed by the government to serve its ideological purposes. Adhikari writes:

> Although this approach seemed blind to the reality of racial divisions within black South Africa and of Coloured exclusivism, it did score significant political successes in that it helped create a united front against apartheid and played a role in undermining white domination.[156]

In 1974, Taliep had plans to join the Holiday Inn and Southern Sun cabaret circuit in Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Swaziland. His first seven-inch single containing the songs "Sweet sunshine" and "Friends and brothers", was released later that same year.[157] It can only be surmised that these new developments occasioned a move away from collaborative musical theatre and towards solo performance. Thus, joined by seven others, including Steve Curry (who played the lead in Maseru and on Broadway) and fellow South African Sammy Brown, Taliep left the Maseru production of *Hair* in September 1974.[158] Although there were rumours that departing cast members would be replaced by members of the London cast, Taliep returned to Cape Town one month before the end of the run with a mandate from the creative team: to recruit

[154] The information in this paragraph about the Soweto uprising is taken from K Shubane, "The Soweto uprising of 1976", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, pp. 362–365.

[155] M Adhikari, "From narratives of miscegenation to post-modernist re-imagining: Toward a historiography of coloured identity in South Africa", *American Historical Review*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2008, p. 90.

[156] Adhikari, "From narratives of miscegenation to post-modernist re-imagining: Toward a historiography of coloured identity in South Africa", p. 90.

[157] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive; B Jongbloed, "Taliep Petersen advises Cape talent – Grass is greener in the city of gold", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

[158] "Seven quit 'Hair'", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

seven local artists to join the production.[159] In an interview with Norman West conducted in the period that *Hair* auditions were held at the house in Greef Street, Salt River, Taliep commented on the recent success of South African singer Richard Jon Smith:

> Today, the doors are still sadly barred for Black artists. The few who manage to breakthrough [*sic*], show that given the opportunity, they can do it. But with the lack of plugging, bad management and prejudice against Blacks in live shows, it is still an uphill struggle. The fact that so few Blacks are heard over the Springbok Radio hit parade is not their fault.[160]

Hector notes that Taliep's politics were "strong", and that he was very proud and stubborn as a young man.[161] He recalls an occasion in the early 1970s when he and Taliep were travelling together in Taliep's car, a black Volkswagen Beetle, and were stopped by the police. When the policemen enquired in Afrikaans about their movements, Taliep answered in English, angering them by both refusing to speak Afrikaans and by contradicting them with his own knowledge of apartheid legislation. Hector recalls: "He knew his rights, so that Boere couldn't understand a coloured guy coming, you know?"[162] According to Hector, although the police got angry and slapped Taliep, the issue was eventually resolved without further physical violence, allegedly because Taliep knew someone who was in the police force.[163] Taliep also had a scar on his forehead dating from the early 1970s, ostensibly the result of a confrontation with a policeman because Taliep and a white woman were suspected of having violated the Immorality Amendment Act.[164]

Already in 1966, the white controlled musicians' unions of Natal, Transvaal and the Cape Province had called on the government to bar black entertainers from white hotels and clubs, requiring establishments who had formerly marketed black and coloured artists to their white clientele to use white performers instead.[165] The result of these and other restrictions meant that, in South Africa, permits were required to perform anywhere outside venues like the Woodstock town hall or the Luxurama. This no doubt motivated Taliep to perform in South Africa's neighbouring countries where such restrictions did not exist and where he could be heard by a new audience. Taliep was not alone; among the other

[159] West, "Taliep Petersen is seeking Cape talent for Hair", *Early years scrapbook*.
[160] West, "Taliep Petersen is seeking Cape talent for Hair", *Early years scrapbook*.
[161] Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
[162] Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
[163] Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
[164] Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2013.
[165] Kavanagh, *Theatre and cultural struggle in South Africa*, p. 52.

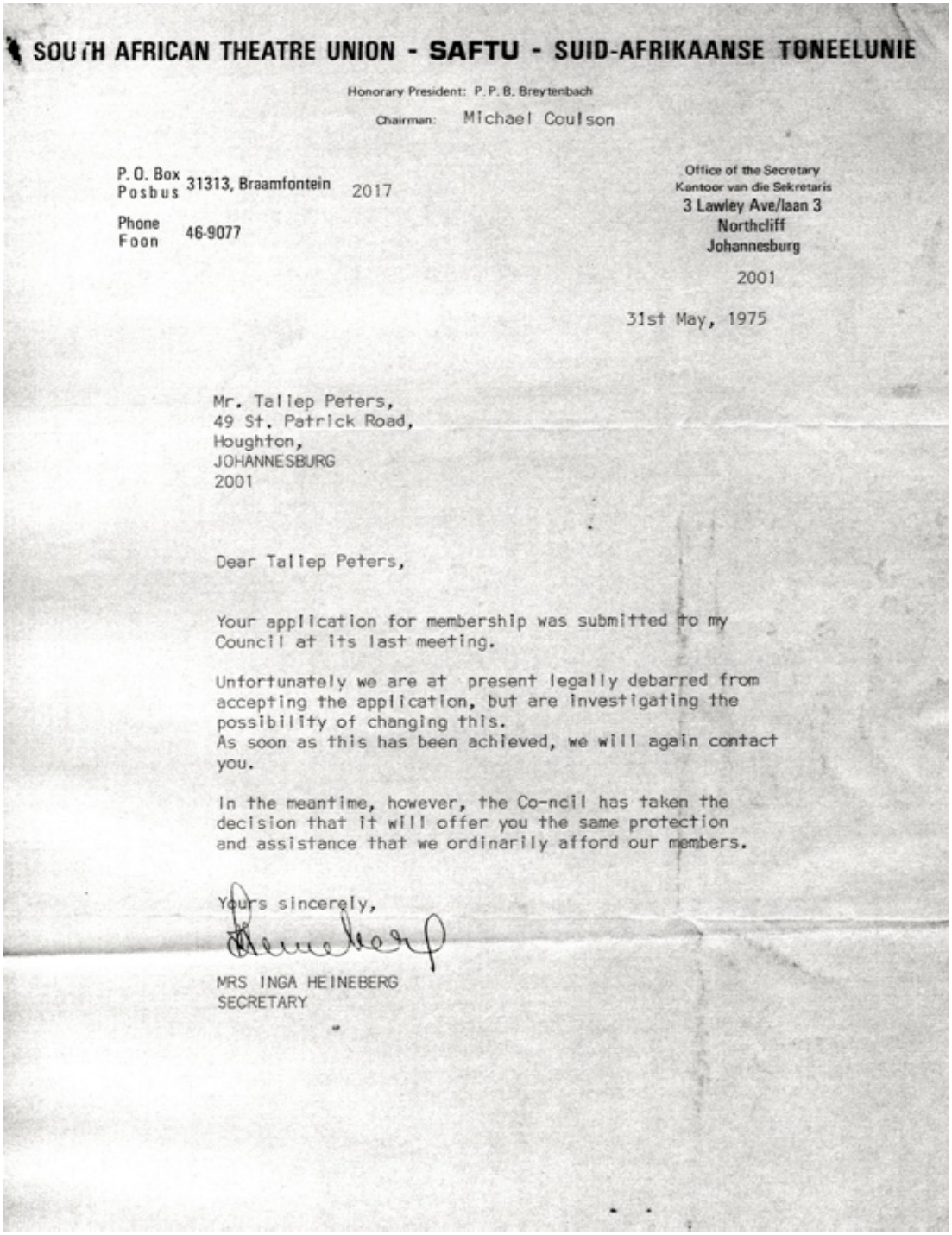
individuals doing cabaret in the Maseru, Gaborone and Swaziland Holiday Inns were Dave Bestman (one of Taliep's fellow-contenders for the 1968 Mr. Entertainment competition), Don Stanton, Daphne Malgas and Paul Andrews.[166] Taliep's success is confirmed in a recommendation letter dated 10 November 1974 and written by the managing director of the Maseru Holiday Inn, P.A. Iwand: "Standing ovations happen very seldom to a cabaret artist in Maseru – it happened to Taliep Petersen who was with us from the 8th to the 10th November 1974, and we can highly recommend him."[167]

Although certain restrictions still applied regarding black performances in white hotels and nightclubs, the stance of white-run unions changed by the mid-1970s. On 31 May 1974, Taliep received a letter from the South African Theatre Union (SAFTU), in existence from 1957, regarding an application for membership. Addressed to "Mr. Taliep Peters" at "49 St. Patrick Road, Houghton, Johannesburg", the letter indicated that Taliep was regrettably barred from joining the organization, but that SAFTU had decided to afford him the same degree of "protection and assistance" that they afford their ordinary members.[168] It can only be surmised that the use of Taliep's new stage name and a Houghton street address (that of Des and Dawn Lindberg), were failed attempts at hiding his race therefore aiding his acceptance into SAFTU.

In 1975, Taliep would again become involved in musical theatre, this time with a production of *Pippin*, the second Stephen Schwartz musical produced by the Lindbergs in the early 1970s. As a result of the cultural boycott, the Lindbergs travelled to New York in June 1974 to negotiate with Stephen Schwartz for the rights to perform *Pippin* in South Africa.[169] They were successful in their negotiations, partly because of the fate of *Godspell* in 1973: although the musical had been banned in South Africa on the grounds of its racially mixed cast, the Lindbergs had taken the issue to the supreme court where they had won, and according to Dawn Lindberg, "spearheaded the opening of theatres to all races in South Africa which happened in 1977."[170] But by 1974, although the Nico Malan theatre complex in Cape Town had recently been opened to audience members of all races, there was no guarantee that *Pippin* would be able to play to racially mixed audiences throughout its proposed run in South Africa.

[166] Holiday Inn, "Cabaret: Gaborone, Maseru, Swaziland", programme fragment, 1974, *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[167] PA Iwand, "Recommendation letter from Maseru Holiday Inn", correspondence, 10 November 1974, *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[168] I Heineberg, "Letter from South African Theatre Union to Taliep Peters [*sic*]", correspondence, 31 May 1975, *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[169] "Auditions for Pippin", *Rand Daily Mail*, 3 December 2012.
[170] Interview with Des and Dawn Lindberg, 28 November 2011.

Optimistic about their prospects of opening this production up to audiences, and mindful of their success with *Godpell*, the Lindbergs were also committed to staging *Pippin* with a multi-racial cast.



SOUTH AFRICAN THEATRE UNION - SAFTU - SUID-AFRIKAANSE TONEELUNIE

Honorary President: P. P. B. Breytenbach

Chairman: Michael Coulson

P. O. Box / Posbus 31313, Braamfontein 2017

Phone / Foon 46-9077

Office of the Secretary
Kantoor van die Sekretaris
3 Lawley Ave/laan 3
Northcliff
Johannesburg
2001

31st May, 1975

Mr. Taliep Peters,
49 St. Patrick Road,
Houghton,
JOHANNESBURG
2001

Dear Taliep Peters,

Your application for membership was submitted to my Council at its last meeting.

Unfortunately we are at present legally debarred from accepting the application, but are investigating the possibility of changing this.
As soon as this has been achieved, we will again contact you.

In the meantime, however, the Co-ncil has taken the decision that it will offer you the same protection and assistance that we ordinarily afford our members.

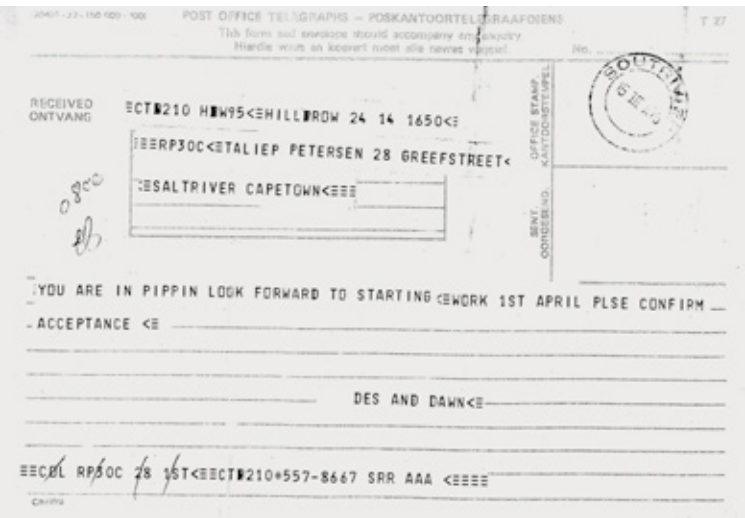
Yours sincerely,

MRS INGA HEINEBERG
SECRETARY

Figure 24: A letter from the South African Theatre Union denying Taliep's request for membership, 31 May 1975.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

Occasioned by his first meeting with the Lindbergs in 1973 in Maseru, Taliep successfully auditioned for a part in *Pippin* late in 1974. Dawn Lindberg describes Taliep at the time of his audition as follows: "He was terribly diffident about his own talent. And, every time I asked him, um, if he could play something, he'd just nod: 'Yes, yes, yes, I can play that!' or 'Let me just listen to it.' He had the most amazing ear that I have actually encountered."[171] With Walter Fairlie as musical director, the eventual cast consisted of Broadway singer Hal Watters in the lead, and local singers/actors Robin Dolton, Bess Finney, Graham Clarke, Anne Carstens, Shelly Bester, Solly Junior, Alan Johns, Jo-Anne Pezarro, Ros Monat, Michael Fisher, June Buthelezi, Andre Hattingh, Sophia Foster, Sammy Modibe, Sammy Brown and Taliep Petersen.[172] Of the three South Africans who had been in the Maseru production of *Hair* and were subsequently cast for *Pippin*, only twenty-six year old Sammy Brown was given a leading role, namely that of the narrator. This was a substantial role that was advertised in the weeks leading up to auditions as follows: "This dynamic man must have a powerful voice of baritone or tenor range, be agile as a mountain leopard, and, acting-wise, be able to combine all the best qualities of Sammy Davis Jnr. Harry Belafonte and Lovelace Watkins."[173] Conscious of the controversy surrounding his casting, Brown commented in an interview with the *Rand Daily Mail*:

> Some people will probably think that *Pippin* will be a cheaply cast show because a local black man is doing the narration. But I will give it everything I've got and justify the confidence of those who have selected me and the other black artists. I can't tell you what this show means to me.[174]


POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS – POSKANTOORTELEGRAAFDIENS

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DES AND DAWN<E

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Figure 25: A telegram from Des and Dawn Lindberg confirming Taliep's casting in *Pippin*, 1975.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

171 Interview with Des and Dawn Lindberg, 28 November 2011.
172 "Des and Dawn have finally announced the full cast of the musical, 'Pippin', which they are presenting at His Majesty's Theatre in June", *Rand Daily Mail*, 24–25 April 1975.
173 "Auditions for Pippin", *Rand Daily Mail*.
174 J Keill, "Sammy is paving the way", *Rand Daily Mail*, 17 April 1975.

Figure 26: The Players in Des and Dawn Lindberg' production of *Pippin*, 1975.
SOURCE: Des and Dawn Lindberg Archive

Paid R100 per week, Taliep was cast as a member of the company, called The Players.[175] Besides singing and acting with them, he played the guitar and sang in a duet, "Simple joys", with Sammy Brown. The members of The Players, joined by the narrator, begin the musical by inviting the audience to join them in the story that is about to unfold. This story then deals with the travails of Pippin, son of Charlemagne and heir to the Holy Roman Empire, and his desire to escape the mundane, find fulfilment in life or, in the words of Pippin's first musical number, capture "A corner of the sky".[176] During the course of this journey, Pippin experiments sexually, dabbles in religion and, at one point, decides to fight tyranny by murdering his father and taking up the reigns of the empire, only to realize that despotism is necessary to rule over a large population. Viewed in the context of the political landscape during the mid-1970s, this seems an odd choice for the Lindbergs to bring to South African audiences, though they may have been less concerned with content and text than with bringing another Broadway musical to South Africa and performing with a mixed audience in front of mixed audiences.

Pippin opened at His Majesty's Theatre in Johannesburg in June 1975. Described variously as "gimmicky and brash",[177] "fun"[178] and as two and a half hours of boredom,[179] *Pippin* received mixed reviews. Reviewer Bill Brewer described the show as "a crazy-patchwork of song, smiles, cynicism and dance" and recommended it as a "distinctly different" musical.[180] This particular reviewer also commented on the diversity of the cast, noting that: "The story of Pippin is mimed, danced and sung by the conventional gimmick of a peregrinating troupe of players, all shapes and sizes and sexes, and hued from shining ebony through bistre and cafe-au-lait to deadly white."[181] In a decade where South Africans were experiencing significant intellectual isolation from the rest of the world, one reviewer from the *Volksblad* ironically called the ideas in Pippin old-fashioned,[182] while a reviewer from the *Transvaler* noted sceptically that he would like to see the day that this musical incites the youth of South Africa, stating: "Miskien vind ons jeug nes die jeugdiges in Pippin dat hoewel hulle die wêreldmag wil verander, hulle nie regtig die antwoorde op al

175 *"Pippin" cast salaries*, financial document, 1975, Des and Dawn Lindberg Archive.
176 M Venables, "A different kind of musical", *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 June 1975.
177 "Punchy 'Pippin' is overpaced", *Sunday Express,* 15 June 1975.
178 Venables, "A different kind of musical", *Rand Daily Mail*.
179 "Pippin is nie soos mens die Lindbergs ken", *Rapport*, 15 June 1975.
180 B Brewer, "Pip of a piece is this pippin", *Sunday Times,* 15 June 1975.
181 Brewer, "Pip of a piece is this pippin", *Sunday Times*.
182 "Sterre puik, dog die fout lê by stuk", *Volksblad*, 12 June 1975.

die wêreldprobleme het nie."[183] There seemed to be consensus that *Pippin* was unusual, with one reviewer expressing hope that it was not "too different from Johannesburg's notoriously conservative taste in this particular field to prevent it getting the reception it deserves."[184]

In His Majesty's Theatre, *Pippin* had played to segregated audiences, and although the majority of performances were held for white patrons, separate performances were done for coloureds and Indians. The advertising for the coloured and Indian gala premiere reflects the extent to which racial segregation permeated the thinking of South Africans. Instead of top billing being given to the established white professionals in the cast, who played actual characters in *Pippin*, such as Bess Finney (Pippin's grandmother) and Robin Dolton (Charlemagne), the non-white members of the company are featured alongside leads Sammy Brown and Hal Watters, the latter being the only foreigner in *Pippin*.[185] Although a coloured and Indian gala premiere took place at the theatre, permission for black audience members to see *Pippin* was not granted by the government.[186]

Upon attempting to take the production elsewhere, the Lindbergs ran into further race-related difficulties. Shortly after the opening in His Majesty's Theatre in Johannesburg, the Nico Malan Theatre in Cape Town informed the Lindbergs that staging *Pippin* would not conform to the stipulations under which they received their yearly subsidy from the government.[187] Apart from this, the theatre was also fully booked for the next four years. Des Lindberg remembers that the unfairness of this decision had been highlighted by the knowledge that one of Taliep's brothers had been with a company that had laid the carpets in the Nico Malan Theatre.[188] Although the Nico Malan had famously opened its doors to audience members of all races earlier that year, it was still not permitted to accommodate racially mixed casts on stage, prompting Dawn Lindberg to reflect that this gesture was "futile and transparent window-dressing for the United Nations."[189] She labelled this as a setback for South African

[183] "Maybe our youth, like the youth in Pippin, will find that, although they would like to change the world order, they don't really have all the answers to the world's problems." "Hul sit g'n pit in dié Pippin", *Transvaler*, 12 June 1975.
[184] Venables, "A different kind of musical", *Rand Daily Mail.*
[185] "*Pippin* coloured and Indian gala premiere at His Majesty's Theatre in Johannesburg", poster advertisement, 24 June 1975, Des and Dawn Lindberg Archive.
[186] M Lee, "Nico Malan bans mixed cast musical", *Rand Daily Mail*, 25 June 1975.
[187] "Nico Malan bans mixed cast musical", *Rand Daily Mail.*
[188] Interview with Des and Dawn Lindberg, 28 November 2011.
[189] R Christie, "'Pippin' row: So sad, says Dawn", *The Star Tonight*, 26 June 1975.

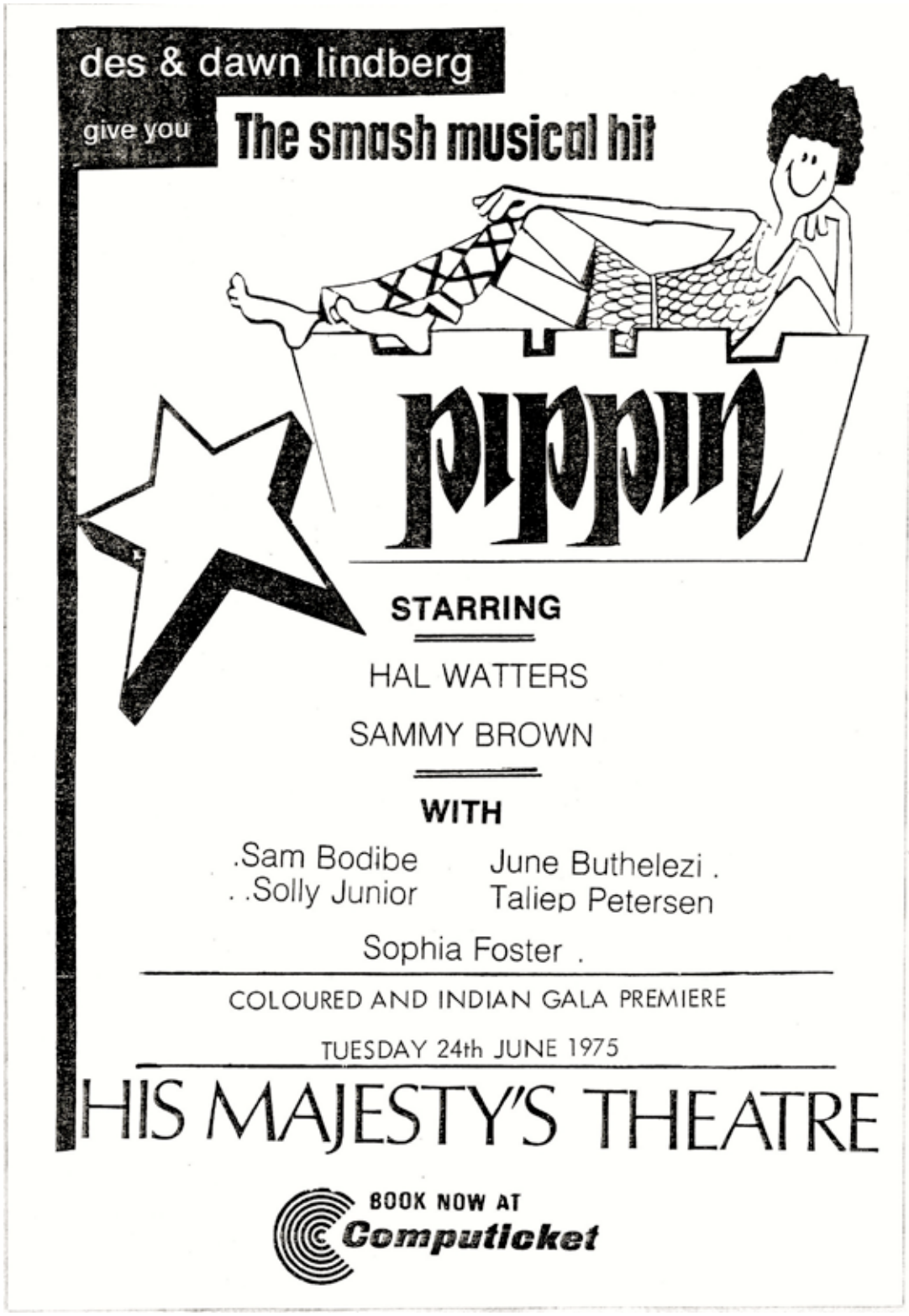

Figure 27: A poster advertising the "Coloured and Indian gala premiere" of Des and Dawn Lindberg's *Pippin*, 1975.
SOURCE: Des and Dawn Lindberg Archive

theatre, especially in the eyes of the international community: "Des and I have made three trips abroad to convince authors, playwrights and composers that progress is possible. Can we blame them now for disbelieving us?"[190]

The news from the Nico Malan was met with anger from theatre-goers, fellow artists such as poet Adam Small, and various politicians, amongst them the Reform Party's Brian Bamford who stated: "Instead of taking a courageous decision in the first place, the Nationalists are always looking over their shoulder at their right wing. Just when there's a breakthrough – this."[191]

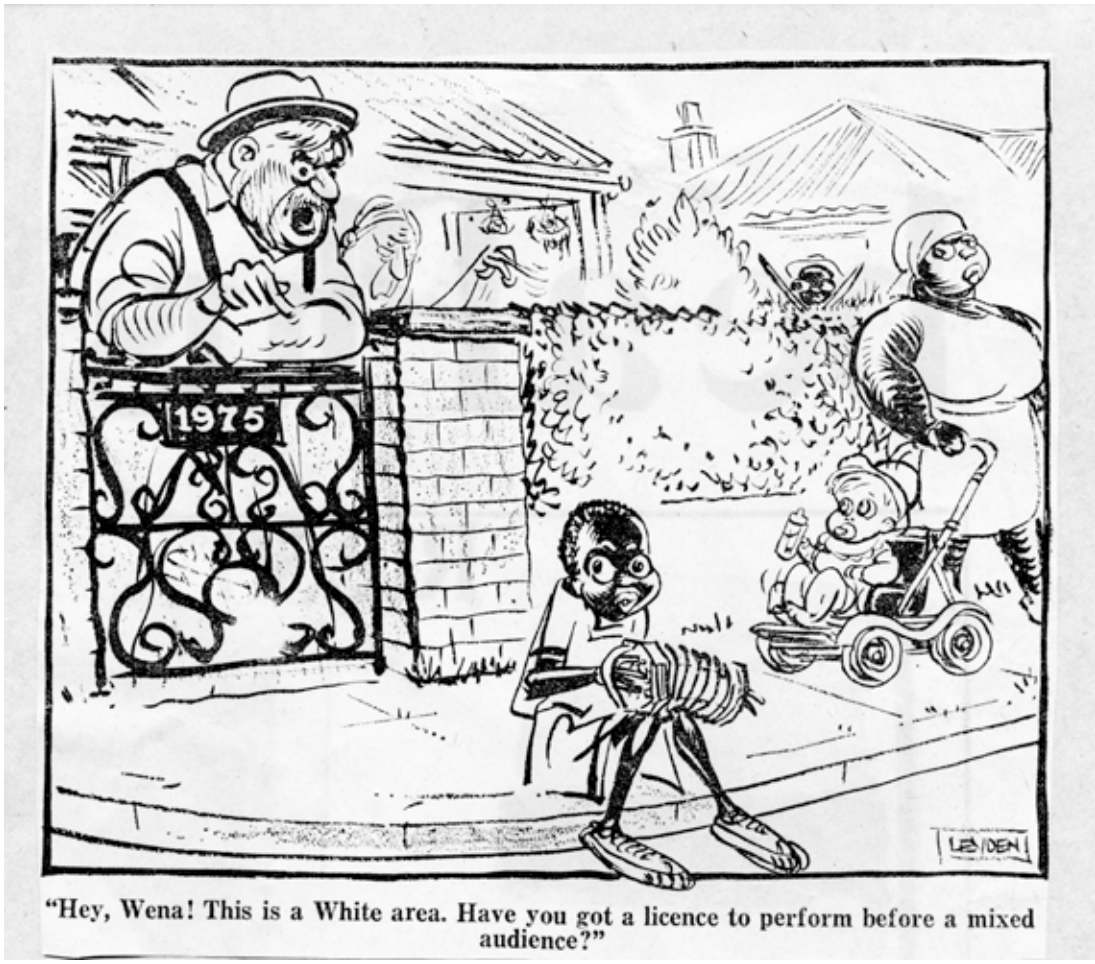

Figure 28: A cartoon by Leyden depicting the absurdity of legislation prohibiting artists from performing to racially mixed audiences.
SOURCE: *Natal Daily News,* 28 October 1975

[190] Christie, "'Pippin' row: So sad, says Dawn", *The Star Tonight*.
[191] "Bar on 'Pippin' by 7 theatres", *The Star*, 25 June 1975.

The Nico Malan was not the only theatre closed to *Pippin*. In June 1965, seven of the eleven major theatres in South Africa, the Nico Malan (Cape Town), the Alhambra (Durban), the Opera House (Port Elizabeth), the Civic (Bloemfontein), the Oppenheimer (Welkom), the Civic (Klerksdorp), and the Aula (Pretoria) – all government-funded theatres – notified the Lindbergs that they could not accommodate them.[192] The government's preoccupation with racial segregation in those years was summed up by a maxim attributed to the Lindbergs: "Mention the word multiracial and everyone starts talking about toilets."[193] Nationwide, there were now only four remaining theatres that could accommodate *Pippin*, making a national tour financially unfeasible. The Lindbergs called off the tour. A possible Rhodesian tour was also cancelled due to the severe 4-18 age restriction placed on the production, the proviso that the production could be banned at short notice, and the fact that the Rhodesian government would not allow the export of any profits.[194] The Lindbergs closed *Pippin* after its three-month Johannesburg run. Not having played to a single black audience member, this rendered the Lindbergs unable to meet their commitments to the American copyright holders.[195]

Figure 29: The full cast of Des and Dawn Lindberg's production of *Pippin*, 1975. Taliep is kneeling third from the left.
SOURCE: Des and Dawn Lindberg Archive

192 S Duval, "Mixed cast, so 'Pippin' tour is off", *Rand Daily Mail*, 12 July 1975.
193 "Chain reaction", *Natal Witness*, 25 June 1976.
194 Duval, "Mixed cast, so 'Pippin' tour is off", *Rand Daily Mail.*
195 Duval, "Mixed cast, so 'Pippin' tour is off", *Rand Daily Mail.*

By August 1974, Taliep was on tour with the Lindbergs in Rhodesia with a new show entitled *Sing out '75*. According to the *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep also appeared on a television show in Salisbury during that tour, allegedly because his single, "Sweet sunshine", was on the hit parade.[196] In Rhodesia, the Lindbergs learned that one of the theatres that had refused *Pippin* had recently given permission for the staging of *Presto*, a musical that would likewise have a multiracial cast – something the couple regarded as a triumph for South African theatre.[197] In an interview with Bernard Jongbloed that appeared shortly after *Sing out '75*, Taliep expressed his disappointment with the fate of *Pippin*, and in the process, betrayed a lack of knowledge about South African theatre history:

> But history has been made. I have been part of the cast of South Africa's first multi-racial show and I want to tell it to all my fans that I have done it especially for them. My triumph is also theirs and one day I'll be back permanently to produce our own Cape shows.[198]

In subsequent years, Taliep would tour with the Lindbergs numerous times. According to Des Lindberg, Taliep was already very good at arranging music in those years, and he frequently arranged songs on his guitar that the Lindbergs wanted to sing, acting as a sort of musical director and teaching them their singing parts. Des Lindberg refers to Taliep's involvement in the Cape Malay choirs in this regard: "And what's more, he understood people who were less confident of just reading music."[199] However, Taliep did not only receive positive reviews for his participation in *Sing out '75*. Two different versions of a newspaper review, "Des and Dawn back – with all their familiar charm",[200] emerged from archival research for this chapter, a shorter one from the Taliep Petersen Archive, and a longer one from the Des and Dawn Lindberg Archive. In the *Early years scrapbook*, a part of this newspaper article had been cut out, whereas the review continues in the clipping found in the Des and Dawn Lindberg Archive.

Whether Taliep received the shorter review from a friend or family member, or whether he modified it himself, this startling omission begged the question of why it is that the *Early years scrapbook* is full of compliments and positive reviews about the young performer. Was Taliep concerned with collecting only the positive reviews and complimentary articles about himself for his later perusal or for the benefit of his children? Did he frequently alter articles to this end? On the other hand, it is possible that this review was an exception, being particularly disturbing

196 Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*. Taliep Petersen Archive.
197 C Stoneman, "Split in stage apartheid", *Rhodesian Herald*, n.d., Des and Dawn Lindberg Archive.
198 Jongbloed, "Taliep Petersen advises Cape talent – Grass is greener in the city of gold", *Early years scrapbook*.
199 Interview with Des and Dawn Lindberg, 28 November 2011.
200 C Stoneman, "Des and Dawn back – with all their familiar charm", *Rhodesian Herald*, 8 August 1975.

to Taliep because of Charles Stoneman's comments about his District Six song. Stoneman seems to object to being confronted by the effect of forced removals, stating that, although Taliep expected the audience to share his troubles, they were in search of escapist entertainment on their night out. Could it be that the clipping was "censored" by Taliep because of the reviewer's unwillingness to show compassion for a subject very close to his heart? Or due to the rejection of one of Taliep's original compositions, something potentially damaging to an artist who had become so well-known singing cover versions of other people's music? Taliep's tendency not to date or acknowledge the sources of newspaper articles indicates an indifference to archiving his legacy in a historically precise way. But then, he did collect and preserve these items, which suggests that his intervention is an early indication that he started curating his legacy in the pages of the *Early years scrapbook*.

Des and Dawn back—with all their familiar charm

Sing Out 75—7 Arts, Avondale.

DES AND DAWN are old friends—young old friends from South Africa—and there will be few Salisbury showgoers who do not know what to expect of them.

And last night I imagine that few were disappointed in them. They have lost none of their charm and sincerity, and in the second half proved that they are the same attractive, enjoyable entertainers Rhodesians have got to know over the years.

Of course, the accent is on folk music and I think we wanted to hear their old songs. That we did. In fact, there was little in the way of new musical material, and I would have liked more.

However, this engaging couple richly entertained us with humorous topical patter, Des topping everything with a satirical bilingual political speech.

There were rusty moments, although the likeable Lindbergs have the knack of striking up an immediate rapport, with a sense of fun that is so contagious it seems to matter little if they forget a word or fluff a line.

They got the first half off to a lively start, introducing Taliep Petersen, who was then left to fend for himself.

This slim young man from Cape Town quietly and in a clear plaintive tenor won his audience by singing a few fine songs beautifully.

And his moving rendering of Bridge Over Troubled Waters had the audience in his hand and well on his side.

Charles Stoneman.

Des and Dawn back—with all their familiar charm

Sing Out 75—7 Arts, Avondale.

DES AND DAWN are old friends—young old friends from South Africa—and there will be few Salisbury showgoers who do not know what to expect of them.

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They got the first half off to a lively start, introducing Taliep Petersen, who was then left to fend for himself.

This slim young man from Cape Town quietly and in a clear plaintive tenor won his audience by singing a few fine songs beautifully.

And his moving rendering of Bridge Over Troubled Waters had the audience in his hand and well on his side.

Then he blew it. He told jokes rather badly—old jokes at that — and then with poems and a song about District Six produced a rather heavy chip, the weight of which we were asked to share. But his audience, I fear, wanted to forget or laugh at their troubles, not to be reminded of them.

In any event, Taliep Petersen does not yet possess the ability to switch moods and pace, which is so essential for anyone attempting single-handed to hold an audience for a solid hour, as he was called upon to do.

Which was sad, because last night's show could have done with a 15-minute prune.

These matters attended to though, this will prove a most enjoyable show, specially for those who like their music folksy.

Charles Stoneman.

8/8/75.

Rhodesian Herald

Figure 30: The modified review of *Sing out '75*, as found in the *Early years scrapbook.*
SOURCE: C Stoneman, "Des and Dawn back – with all their familiar charm", *Rhodesian Herald*, 8 August 1975. Review contained in the Taliep Petersen Archive.

Figure 31: The unmodified review of *Sing out '75*, as found in the Des and Dawn Lindberg Archive.
SOURCE: C Stoneman, "Des and Dawn back – with all their familiar charm", *Rhodesian Herald*, 8 August 1975. Review contained in the Des and Dawn Lindberg Archive.

The next event to play out in this scrapbook is the 1975 Afro-variety show, *Reach for the stars*. At the young age of twenty-five, Taliep was the top-billed performer for this show, receiving more prominence in advertising than singer Sophia Foster, drag artist Terry Fortune, or Al Hendricks, who acted as the show's

compere.[201] Artists were backed by a multi-racial band conducted by Sammy Hartman that consisted of Monty Weber on drums, Eldred Smuts on lead guitar, and saxophonists Mike Makhalameli and Winston Mankunku Ngozi.[202] Other performers in *Reach for the stars* included "three shapely dancers", a trio of folksingers called the Sons of Adam, the fifteen-year old Jacobs twins, David Claasen the whistler and finally, Little Marnie, "who can balance any object of any weight, including metal ladders, on his chin while dancing to music."[203] After performances in various venues in the Western Cape, this production went on tour. During the Garden Route tour, performers played to segregated audiences, but generally held performances for both coloured and white audiences in each town.[204] *Reach for the stars* also toured to Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth, where it played at various venues including the Centenary Great Hall, New Brighton, and the Reno Cinema in the coloured location of Korsten.[205] Newspaper articles about the Port Elizabeth performances in the *Early years scrapbook* describe Taliep in glowing terms: "Taliep Petersen, the star of the show, is a sensitive artist with a lot of warmth".[206] Another reviewer, Jimmy Matyu, wrote: "The star of the show is none other than the 25-year-old recording artist, Taliep Petersen. The crowd loved him and encored his repertoire which dated from the fifties and moved to modern times."[207]

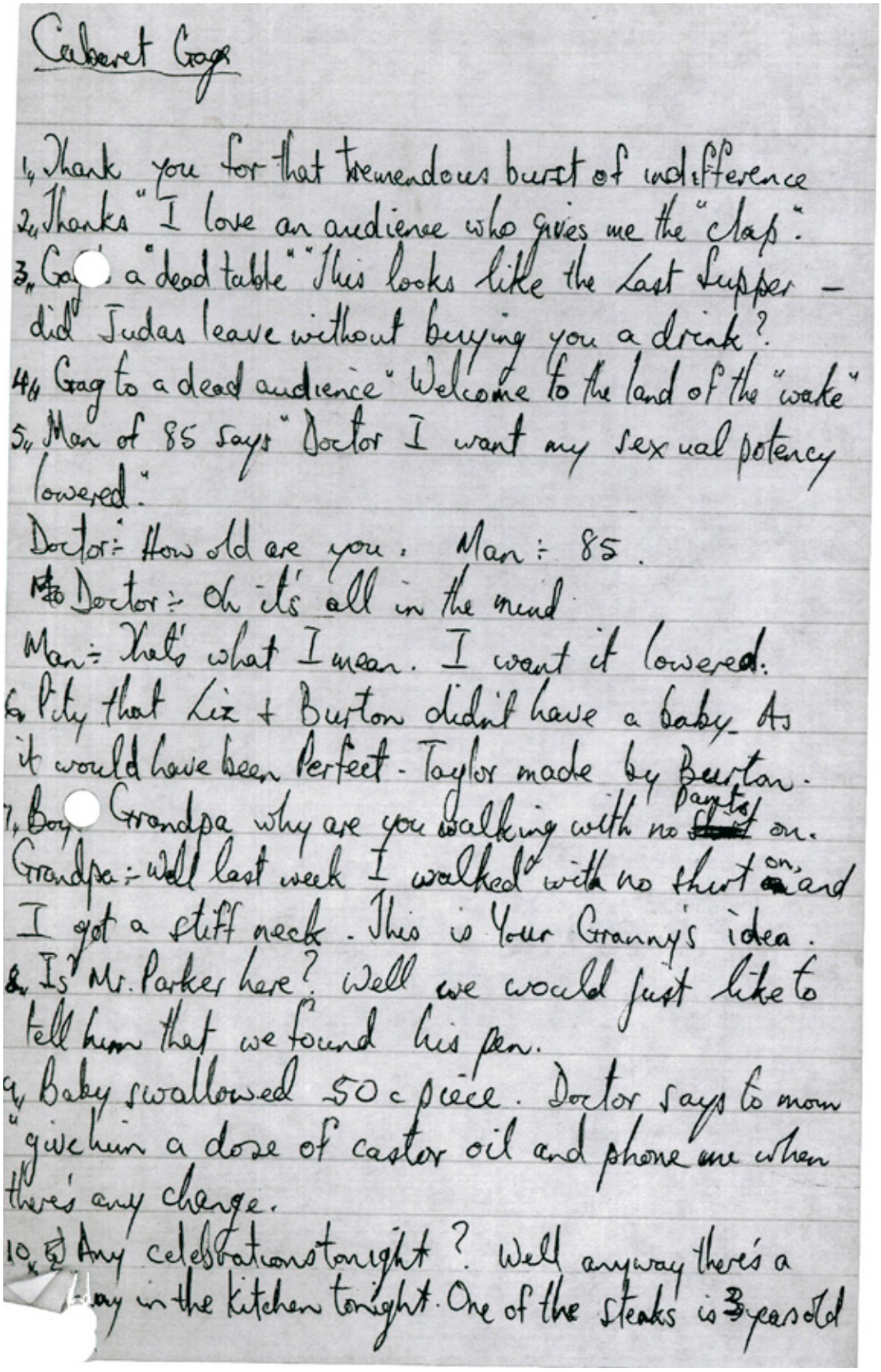
Taliep again performed with the Lindbergs in December 1975 in a show called *Sing out '76*. As with the previous *Sing out* show, he was praised for his rendition of "Bridge over troubled waters". This year, however, the show included a number of other entertainers, including childhood singing sensation Diane du Pont and a Spanish dance company.[208] With Taliep's inclusion in this line-up, the Lindbergs were again performing in South Africa with a racially mixed cast. According to Des Lindberg, when *Sing out '76* reached the Port Elizabeth Opera House, the manager looked at their cast and said: "No, you've got a coloured person in the show," to which Des Lindberg responded that they have always had a coloured person in the show, that they were living together in a house in Summerstrand and eating Halaal food together.[209] When the Opera House refused to allow the performance to take place, Des Lindberg phoned the Minister of Community

[201] "Star of 'Hair' to appear here", *South Western Herald*, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[202] M Badela "'Reach for the starts' delights", *Evening Post,* 21 October 1975.
[203] Badela "'Reach for the starts' delights", *Evening Post*.
[204] "Star of 'Hair' to appear here", *South Western Herald*.
[205] Badela "'Reach for the starts' delights", *Evening Post*; J Matyu, "'Stars is a glittering performance", *Weekend World*, 16–18 October 1975.
[206] Badela "'Reach for the starts' delights", *Evening Post*.
[207] Matyu, "'Stars is a glittering performance", *Weekend World*.
[208] P Lange, "This sing-out is a sell-out", *Eastern Cape Herald*, 11 December 1975.
[209] Interview with Des and Dawn Lindberg, 28 November 2011.

Development, a man called Marais Steyn, and threatened to perform *Sing out '76* on the pavement outside the Opera House for the press. The end-result was that they were allowed to perform in Port Elizabeth and on the rest of the tour without further intimidation. Des Lindberg remembers: "And they gave in and we thought we'd scored a huge victory. Because there we were, we'd been told we couldn't, we weren't allowed to do it."[210]

The *Autobiographical chronology* alleges that Taliep also took part in the Lindbergs' production of *The black mikado* (an adaptation of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The mikado* by Janos Bajtala, George Larnyoh and Eddie Quansah) that premiered the following year.[211] There are no newspaper clippings in the *Early years scrapbook* or anywhere else in the Taliep Petersen Archive detailing his participation and, according to Dawn Lindberg, Taliep did not in fact take part in *The black mikado*.[212] It would appear that Taliep spent most of 1976 focusing on his career as a solo performer by doing cabaret at a number of venues, including the cabaret circuit in Rhodesia and Swaziland. That year, he also released a seven-inch single entitled *Hold on*.[213] By his own admission, this record "did not take off."[214] In an article in the *Early years scrapbook* entitled "Taliep's a man with a mission", the journalist describes twenty six year-old Taliep as more militant than before as a result of increased self-confidence. Taliep is also quoted as saying, "There are many singers who are prepared to say Ja Baas in order to get the breaks, but not for me."[215] During 1976, he also performed a number of times at a nightclub called the Dolphin Room in the Alabama Hotel, Port Elizabeth, where he was backed by a band called Maiden Voyage.[216] On one of these occasions, he was joined by Sophia Foster and Terry Fortune to do cabaret for a school function in the Dolphin Room. One of the guitarists for Maiden Voyage was sixteen year-old Paul Petersen.[217]

[210] Interview with Des and Dawn Lindberg, 28 November 2011.
[211] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[212] This West-End musical premiered in Soweto in 1976 shortly before the Soweto uprisings and starred Des Lindberg, Sammy Brown, Thandi Klaasen, Ben Satch Masinga, Barrie Shah, Leslie Mongezi, Patrick Ndlovu, Sue Keil, Felicia Marion, Duke Makasi, Sipho Gumede and the band Spirits Rejoice. Electronic communication with Dawn Lindberg, 5 March 2013; D Lindberg & D Lindberg, "Track record: Their productions", n.d., accessed on 5 March 2013, http://www.desdawn.co.za/theatre.htm.
[213] "Hold on", *Evening Post*, 8 October 1976.
[214] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[215] "Taliep's a man with a mission", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[216] "Dolphin room presents Taliep Petersen in cabaret with Maiden Voyage at the Alibama Hotel", pamphlet advertisement, 23 December 1976, *Early years scrapbook,* Taliep Petersen Archive.
[217] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.



Cabaret Gags

1. Thank you for that tremendous burst of indifference
2. Thanks "I love an audience who gives me the "clap".
3. Gag a "dead table" "This looks like the Last Supper – did Judas leave without buying you a drink?
4. Gag to a dead audience" Welcome to the land of the "wake"
5. Man of 85 says "Doctor I want my sexual potency lowered."
Doctor:- How old are you. Man:- 85.
Doctor:- Oh it's all in the mind
Man:- That's what I mean. I want it lowered.
6. Pity that Liz + Burton didn't have a baby As it would have been Perfect - Taylor made by Burton.
7. Boy: Grandpa why are you walking with no pants on.
Grandpa:- Well last week I walked with no shirt on and I got a stiff neck. This is Your Granny's idea.
8. Is Mr. Parker here? Well we would just like to tell him that we found his pen.
9. Baby swallowed 50c piece. Doctor says to mom "give him a dose of castor oil and phone me when there's any change.
10. Any celebrations tonight? Well anyway there's a [illegible]ay in the kitchen tonight. One of the steaks is 3 years old

Figure 32: A list of "Cabaret gags" found in the archive in Taliep's handwriting suggests the sort of jokes that he told while performing.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

According to Paul Petersen, Taliep's cabaret sets were roughly forty five minutes long and essentially involved entertaining restaurant guests by singing and making jokes.[218] In accordance with what cabaret demanded from a solo artist, Taliep primarily performed covers of popular music, songs by artists like Bread, the Bee Gees and the Beatles. Taliep also sang romantic ballads, something that he was very good at. Paul Petersen recalls that cabaret artists had to remain popular to secure bookings at the venues available to them, not only on the hotel circuit in South Africa's neighbouring states, but also venues such as the Sherwood Lounge and the Kensington Hotel in Cape Town. Although Taliep had to perform mainly covers to make a living, Paul Petersen remembers that, at the time, "Taliep was also very much into writing songs."[219] Sometime after their encounter at the Dolphin Room, Taliep and Paul Petersen made contact again in Cape Town and decided to meet each other for regular song writing sessions. For a period of time from 1976 to 1977, every morning would involve Taliep driving in his black Volkswagen Beetle to pick Paul Petersen up from his house in upper Cambridge Street and take him to the house in Greef Street, Salt River. Here, fed generously by Taliep's grandmother Fatiema, they would write songs together. This was the first of many collaborations in Taliep's life. Today, Paul Petersen cannot locate a single song from those years, and is uncertain whether Taliep ever used them or not.

Through Taliep as intermediary, Paul Petersen met a number of other musicians, including the members of The Playboys who were still backing Taliep during lunchtime performances to female factory workers. Paul Petersen remembers: "So we would come and set up all our stuff and then we'll play for all the *meide*, as we used to say. They would go crazy, I mean, it was hilarious, during their lunchtime, and we would play for half an hour, not longer, it wasn't really longer than that, perhaps 40 minutes."[220] Taliep and Paul Petersen eventually became very close, with the younger Petersen even accompanying the elder Petersen on dates with his then-girlfriend. Paul Petersen describes the situation as follows:

> Years later, obviously, I would think to myself: she must've been so pissed, 'cause everywhere they went, I, there I was, you know? It's the weirdest thing. 'Cause then he would drop me off at night, and then, God alone knows where they would go to, you know what I mean, taking her home or going somewhere else, and I figured, he probably nine out of ten times took her home because it used to be quite late, you know?"[221]

[218] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[219] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[220] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[221] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.

One day, Taliep got a phone call from Lucky Michaels, the owner of the Pelican Nightclub in Orlando West (according to Coplan, the only established nightclub in Soweto in the late 1970s).[222] Michaels booked Taliep to come up to Johannesburg for a month to perform in the Pelican's weekly cabaret slot on Sundays.[223] As Paul Petersen had no fixed employment at that stage, he accompanied Taliep on the train trip to Johannesburg. Paul Petersen had no money and, according to him, Taliep "had a few pennies, you know, but close to nothing."[224] The two of them ended up squatting in drag artist Terry Fortune's hotel room in Maxines, Joubert Park, "a real scruffy shithole" that doubled as a brothel.[225] There, Terry would, with financial contributions from Taliep, cook meals for them on a disposable gas stove. Eventually they were discovered, and all of them kicked out of the hotel.

In an undated article found in the *Early years scrapbook* entitled "'Pelican' is alive and well", the reporter asserts that, despite the sudden emergence of a number of clubs in Johannesburg, the Pelican was still thriving and continuing in its tradition of premiering artists, including "charming Capetonian" Taliep Petersen.[226] After a number of solo cabaret performances in the Pelican, Taliep also performed at other clubs such as the Sharpeville Night Club.[227] Eventually, though, he and Fortune decided to team up as a "double act", performing first in Johannesburg before taking their act to Cape Town, and further afield to venues such as the Royal Swazi Spa in Swaziland. Reporting on their upcoming gig at the Club New York City, Martin Thabete wrote that Taliep, joined by Fortune ("South Africa's answer to Ella Fitzgerald and Dinah Washington"), will be doing "what he does best – blowing the tunes that have taken him right to the top of the world of entertainment."[228] Indeed, their performance at Club New York City, during which they both made their stage entrance dressed as women, was very well received. One reporter wrote that Taliep "brought a celestial atmosphere into the whole club" with his rendition of "I can see clearly now".[229]

[222] Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 235.
[223] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[224] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[225] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[226] "Pelican is alive and well", *The Star*, newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[227] E Shuenyane, "It's a swinging scene for Sharpeville cats", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[228] "Funky Taliep back in town", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[229] Although the journalist credits performance of this song to Terry Fortune, Taliep has shown it to be an incorrect attribution by crossing out Fortune's name and writing down his own on the newspaper article as found in the Taliep Petersen Archive. "Taliep and Terry do their talented thing", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

During this time in Johannesburg, Taliep introduced Paul Petersen to Lionel Petersen, who was playing with a band called "Drive" in the Lover's Fantasy nightclub. As Drive had recently lost a number of their members in a road accident, Taliep suggested to Lionel Petersen, in Paul Petersen's words: "Hey, I've got this laaitie [youngster] here. Let him play for you, man. He can play."[230] After becoming a member of Drive, Paul Petersen also got to know Russell Herman and the other members of Spirits Rejoice. However, Paul Petersen remembers: "The problem with Drive was that, they weren't very driven."[231] So, eventually, after Taliep had already returned to Cape Town, Paul Petersen left Drive for Spirits Rejoice after the departure of Russell Herman had opened up a position for a guitarist.[232] This Johannesburg-based band was one of the few groups that, according to Coplan, "gave expressive voice to some of the best young talents in Afro-funk jazz" in the years leading up to 1980.[233]

According to Dawn Lindberg, theatres were finally opened to audience members of all races in 1977.[234] However, Mannie Manim, co-founder of Johannesburg's Market Theatre, states that, far from creating an open space for racial mixing, the government merely introduced a permit system whereby multi-racial audiences were allowed. Manim also notes that not having a permit became a "badge of honour" to those working outside government approval because it indicated that one was rejecting the system.[235] Some playwrights, for example Matsemela Manaka, would only allow their work to be performed in theatres that did not have permits, such as the Market. Though the permit allowed multiracial audiences, performing with a multiracial cast was a different situation and still not allowed, even with a permit. As Manim points out, performance constituted working and "occupying the space".[236]

Manim recalls that a number of years after the Market Theatre was founded in 1976, he received a visit from two policemen, "a good cop and a bad cop", who questioned him for an entire day and left with a number of company documents.[237] This visit was occasioned because the theatre had released a poster of a racially mixed cast for an upcoming production, something they had never done before despite having quietly staged racially mixed productions since the theatre's founding. As a result of a national law and a City Council bylaw identified by "the good cop", the Market Theatre was legally allowed to continue its work. Not only

[230] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[231] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[232] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[233] Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 193.
[234] Interview with Des and Dawn Lindberg, 2012.
[235] Interview with Mannie Manim, 8 March 2013
[236] Interview with Mannie Manim, 8 March 2013.
[237] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Mannie Manim, 8 March 2013.

Figure 33: Taliep performing at the Pelican Club in Johannesburg, 1977.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

was the structure housing the theatre located in an area zoned "light industrial" by virtue of previously having been the Indian food market, the structure had also been built as early as 1913. Since its external facade had not been altered, under the Group Areas Act, the building enjoyed particular exemptions from apartheid laws. According to Fugard, apartheid legislation governing the interaction of different races was notoriously Kafkaesque and hard to define: "Everyone had a different experience, depending on who you knew, and what you were trying to do. You say you find conflicting information in all your sources? Well, that's exactly what the apartheid government wanted to achieve."[238]

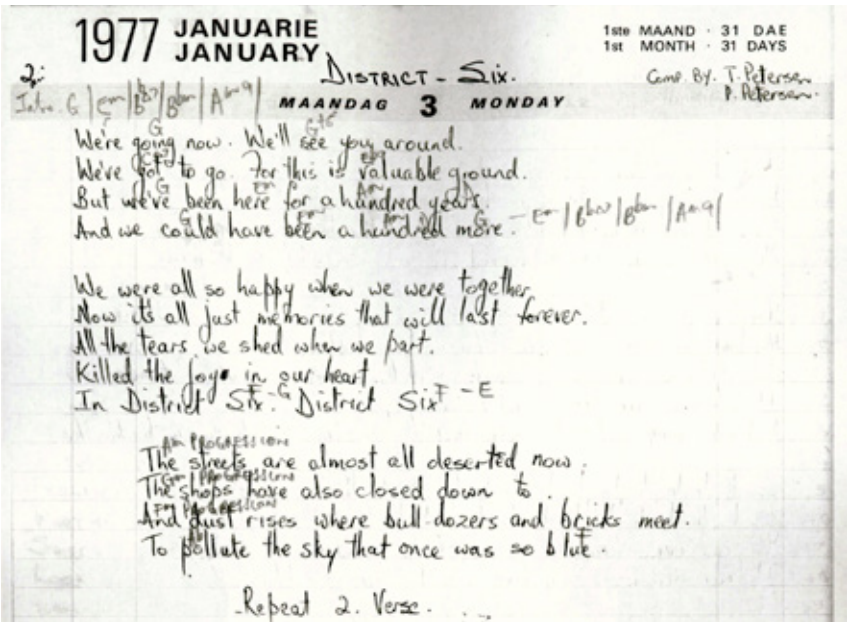
During the following years, Taliep would again perform in multiracial productions with the Lindbergs. The first occasion was in *Folk rag '77* that took place in the Jameson Hall at the University of Cape Town on 13 and 14 May 1977, and featured the Lindbergs, Keith Blundell, Taliep Petersen and David Kramer. In a review entitled "Taliep charming", Gerry Kirkham commends Taliep for his intonation, vocal tone, and guitar technique, noting in reference to his rendition of "If you go away", that he is more of a balladeer than a folk singer.[239] Kirkham also writes: "The only performer who, I gathered, is not a fully professional entertainer was a very personable young man named David Kramer who, I believe, is engaged in some work at the university. All his numbers were of his own composition and pleasant they were."[240] According to Des Lindberg, he and Dawn Lindberg had heard of Kramer, although they had not known that he was booked for the same show. Des Lindberg explains that "he was topping the bill because he was so popular."[241] Backstage at *Folk rag '77* the Lindbergs introduced Taliep Petersen to David Kramer, a meeting that would one day result in the most fruitful collaboration of Taliep's career.

On 1 September 1977, Taliep also performed in *Des and Dawn in concert* held at the Baxter Theatre Concert Hall, Cape Town. During this occasion, Taliep became the first coloured entertainer to appear in the new Baxter Theatre.[242] In an interview celebrating this achievement, Raymond Hill writes that Taliep, "who is fast becoming an entertainment jack-of-all trades has been "bitten by the 'folk bug'" and now "feels his forté for the future should be folksinging".[243] According to this interview, Taliep had a cold and was unable to sing his latest composition, a "folk song" that Taliep called a "tribute" to District Six. This song, the text of

238 Interview with Athol Fugard, 8 March 2013.
239 G Kirkham, "Taliep charming", *Cape Argus Tonight*, 1977, *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
240 Kirkham, "Taliep charming", *Cape Argus Tonight*.
241 Interview with Des and Dawn Lindberg, 28 November 2011.
242 Hill, "Taliep has scored a 'first'", *Early years scrapbook*.
243 Hill, "Taliep has scored a 'first'", *Early years scrapbook*.

which is reproduced in the newspaper clipping, had reportedly been written a few months previously and, as Hill states: "The lyrics took Talipe [*sic*] four days and he spent a whole afternoon composing the tune."[244] Even though the article indicated this to be a recent composition, it is possible that this was the same song that Taliep performed at *Sing out '75* two years previously.

The Taliep Petersen Archive contains a version of this song in the form of handwritten lyrics and chord symbols in a 1977 South African Diary published by Galvin & Sales. As is indicated by the label in Taliep's handwriting pasted on the cover of this book, it consists solely of "Taliep original songs", and was not in fact ever used as a diary. I will refer to this source as the *Taliep Petersen original songs (1977 diary)*.[245] It is impossible to establish from this source when these songs were written down. However, the *Taliep Petersen original songs (1977 diary)* contains a table of contents, and the lyrics, written in a consistent handwriting, do not reflect any alterations, perhaps suggesting that these songs were copied from elsewhere in a bid systematically to compile a collection of Taliep's songs. The handwritten lyric of "District-Six" credits T. Petersen and P. Petersen for its composition, indicating that this is one of the songs from the days when Taliep and Paul Petersen were writing songs together in what was possibly Taliep's first collaborative effort at song writing.[246]


1977 JANUARIE JANUARY
1ste MAAND · 31 DAE
1st MONTH · 31 DAYS
District - Six.
Comp. By. T. Petersen
P. Petersen.
MAANDAG 3 MONDAY

We're going now. We'll see you around.
We've got to go. For this is valuable ground.
But we've been here for a hundred years.
And we could have been a hundred more.

We were all so happy when we were together
Now its all just memories that will last forever.
All the tears we shed when we part.
Killed the joye in our heart
In District Six. District Six

The streets are almost all deserted now.
The shops have also closed down to.
And dust rises where bull dozers and bricks meet.
To pollute the sky that once was so blue.

Repeat 2. Verse.

Figure 34: The lyrics and chords of "District-Six", written by Taliep and Paul Petersen.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

[244] Hill, "Taliep has scored a 'first'", *Early years scrapbook*.
[245] T Petersen, *Taliep Petersen original songs (1977 diary)*, book containing handwritten lyrics and chords, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[246] P Petersen & T Petersen, "District-Six", song lyrics and chords, n.d., *Taliep Petersen original songs (1977 diary)*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

From 31 January to 4 February 1978, Taliep performed in a show entitled *South Africa in concert – Part II*, topping the bill with Don Tshomela. Other artists featured in this show were Solly Junior, Franky Cord, Maxine de Bruyn, Roy Gabriels and Carol Sands, backed by an orchestra under the direction of Zane Cronje.[247] In publicity photographs taken by Richard Bell, Taliep and Tshomela appeared alongside producer Lewann Massel and co-producer Dorothy Mundel, all of them wearing T-shirts sporting the old South African flag.[248] This flag, nicknamed the "Oranje, blanje, blou", was adopted in the 1920s by the administration of General Hertzog and has traditionally had a strong association with Afrikaner nationalism. In an era when economic sanctions and boycotts against apartheid showed no signs of abating and internal pressure was rising in the wake of the Soweto uprising of 1976, the use of the flag in a photograph of two blonde women alongside a coloured and a black man respectively, was a serious political statement. Taliep's willingness to pose for this photograph could be interpreted in different ways. Most obviously, it could be read as at least a partial identification with the government of the day. This does not make sense in the light of earlier statements that Taliep supported Black Consciousness in an unambiguous anti-apartheid stance. The photograph could also reflect Taliep's desire to contribute constructively towards a (government-motivated) argument for peaceful co-existence and multi-racialism. In this sense, being photographed wearing an Afrikaner nationalist symbol with his arm around a white woman showed precisely the reality that he was striving towards. Most uncomfortably, the pose could indicate that Taliep had reneged on the statement he made two years previously: "There are many singers who are prepared to say Ja Baas in order to get the breaks, but not for me."[249] Posing with the apartheid flag was a necessary compromise, and one that Taliep was prepared to make.

[247] "Only a ghost of Concert Part 1", *Cape Argus*, 2 February 1978.
[248] R Bell, "South Africa in concert – Part II", newspaper photograph of unknown origin , 1978, *Early years scrapbook,* Taliep Petersen Archive.
[249] "Taliep's a man with a mission", *Early years scrapbook.*

Figure 35: "South Africa in concert – Part II" publicity photograph taken by Richard Bell and featuring (from left to right) Taliep, Lewann Massel, Don Tshomela and Dorothy Mundel, 1978.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

Discussing the implications of this photograph, Fugard suggests one more possible interpretation. With the possibility of an overseas tour in the future, the producers might have been hoping that a photograph such as this would make the government amenable to their application for passports.[250] Despite the apartheid government's policies to inhibit contact between the races, in the years approaching the 1980s they might in fact have welcomed images that sent out a message that South Africa's races were happy and productive. Indeed, part of the caption of the photograph reads: "They are waiting for the results of negotiations for Las Vegas contracts."[251] Nothing came of a proposed American tour, and indeed, three months after the production, the artists had still not been paid. Taliep was furious: "This woman [Massel] must think entertaining is a weekend job or a pastime for us. It is my living and she should have paid us right after the show."[252] Even before this production took place, Taliep had had his sights set on traveling abroad. A newspaper article of unknown origin detailing Taliep's upcoming performance in *South Africa in concert – Part II*, mentions the possibility of Taliep joining Fortune on his trip to Rio. Implying a curious sense of

[250] Interview with Athol Fugard, 8 March 2013.
[251] Bell, "South Africa in concert – Part two", *Early years scrapbook*.
[252] "Stars still wait for pay", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

geography, the article quotes him as follows: "The first thing I want to do is start studying classical guitar in London".[253]

Later that year, Taliep and Fortune toured as a supporting act with the black American soul trio, The Hues Corporation, consisting of H Ann Kelley, Carl Russel and St Clair Lee, brought to South Africa by the Quibell Brothers. During their performances in a number of South African cities (including Durban, Cape Town, East London and Johannesburg) they were variously supported by the Rockets, Vivienne Kingsley, Margaret Singana, Dave Bestman, and the Murray Campbell Brass.[254] In a review of the Johannesburg show, performed to a racially mixed audience in the Colosseum Theatre, Raeford Daniel writes about Taliep and Fortune's performance: "The unlikely combination is a surefire winner, particularly in such numbers as 'Too much, too little too late' in which, surprise surprise, Terry does the Mathis part and Taliep that of Denise Williams."[255] Another review that appeared in *The Springs African Reporter* on 22 September 1978 focuses its attention primarily on this duo, referring to them as "the most baffling and professional act in that colourful Quibell Brothers show".[256]

In mid-January 1979, Taliep and Fortune went to Europe together. Travel in and out of South Africa was difficult and in many cases not possible for South African musicians unless, in the words of Coplan, "it was something that the regime approved of."[257] Unlike many other musicians whose only option to travel was a one-way exit permit, Taliep was allowed to exit and re-enter the country after his visit to Europe. This would have been very difficult if the government had regarded him as a threat. Manim, however, warns that the issue of travel during apartheid was not quite as clear-cut as this, citing the example of Fugard plays that continued to be allowed out of the country.[258] Although the playwright had his passport confiscated in 1967, the restrictions on his own travel were eased in the early 1970s, and a number of his plays toured abroad during this decade.[259] Manim recalls that, when their production of *A lesson from aloes* was invited to London in the late 1970s, they needed considerable funding to get them there. The production team then came across a willing funder who, despite his support of the apartheid government, was a fan of one of the cast members, Afrikaans actor Marius Weyers, and by extension, of the production itself. Making certain that the funder gave him the cheque before he saw the

[253] "Taliep back in town: Just long enough to catch his breath", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[254] T Partridge, "Hues show is superslick", *Cape Times*, 7 October 1978.
[255] R Daniel, "Presence and polish", *Show Mail*, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[256] "Terry and Taliep bring the house down", *The Springs African Reporter*, 22 September 1978.
[257] Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 249.
[258] Interview with Mannie Manim, 8 March 2013.
[259] Interview with Athol Fugard, 8 March 2013.

performance, and that it had been deposited before the curtain came down that night, Manim approached him after the performance, expecting the worst. He needn't have feared – he was told that the funder did not agree with anything in the play, but that "Marius must go to London".[260] Fugard identifies this funder as having been Louis Luyt, a powerful Afrikaner businessman and one-time Rugby administrator.[261] Perhaps, in an environment where South African sporting teams were increasingly barred from participating abroad, government supporters sometimes felt pride in the international achievements of cultural groups, even though they did not necessarily support their agenda.

In an interview that appeared in the *Cape Herald* shortly before their departure, Taliep describes their planned trip from mid-January to April as follows: "We are going on a long holiday, but if we are given even half a chance to show them what we can do, we'll be in like flint".[262] In London, Taliep attended performances by artists such as Earth, Wind and Fire, The Osmonds, The Jacksons, Billy Joel, John McCloughlin, Herbie Hancock, Joan Armatrading, as well as a number of musicals, including *Evita*.[263] According to the *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep also visited Paris, Barcelona, Madrid, Innsbruck, Zurich, Venice and Rome during this visit.[264] A newspaper article that appeared in the *Cape Herald* shortly after his return to South Africa reports that Taliep contacted one of the guitar-playing Allie brothers, Yusuf Allie, a friend of his who was based in London as a guitarist with Nana Mouskouri's band.[265] This meeting proved to be very fortuitous. Allie offered him one of his compositions entitled "You are the days of my life", a song that would be released on Taliep's new seven-inch single together with "You and I should be together", composed jointly by Taliep and Zane Cronje. While his singing partner, Fortune, stayed behind in London to explore his options, Taliep returned to Cape Town after having received a number of offers that he did not consider worth pursuing.[266] Taliep had high hopes for this single, stating in another *Cape Herald* interview, "I honestly feel very good about this one" and prompting the journalist to conclude:

> It does look as if Taliep might be right about his single. Previous recordings he has done didn't get very far – but this time he has the support of Radio Five, which has been playing his release regularly, and other radio stations.[267]

[260] Interview with Mannie Manim, 8 March 2013.
[261] Interview with Athol Fugard, 8 March 2013.
[262] "Terry, Taliep leave for the bright lights", *Cape Herald*, January 1979, *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[263] Hipcat, "Taliep freaks out in London", *Cape Herald*, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[264] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[265] Hipcat, "Taliep freaks out in London", *Cape Herald.*
[266] Hipcat, "Taliep freaks out in London", *Cape Herald.*
[267] "Happy Days for Taliep", *Cape Herald*, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

According to the *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep also "did a B.B.C. TV appearance" in London, though no further details are given.[268] A newspaper article from the early 1980s by Sunny Clothier qualifies this statement: while visiting Yusuf Allie in London, Taliep stood in for one of the other guitarists in Nana Mouskouri's band that had taken ill. According to Taliep, Mouskouri's musical director was so taken with his playing that he was employed in the band that accompanied the artist during her weekly shows on BBC television. Taliep states: "This job provided me with sufficient cash to afford an intensive course in the classical guitar with the English virtuoso Johnny Williams."[269] Taliep's encounter with John Williams, perhaps more likely the UK-based Australian classical guitarist than the American composer, is confirmed in another newspaper source dating from 1979.[270] However, given the trip's overall length of three months, the duration of this course on the London leg of the tour may not have been all that great. Although, judging from Clothier's article, Taliep's BBC experience included multiple appearances, this is unlikely: Taliep would arguably have made more of this fact in his popular life story had he performed regularly on television with Nana Mouskouri.

Taliep's own description of this trip in the *Autobiographical chronology* makes no mention of John Williams; instead, he states that after he visited a number of European cities, he "went back to London and stayed with Yussi Allie (Guitarist for Nana Mouskouri) and studied a bit of Classical guitar."[271] Over time, this "bit of Classical guitar" was to reach near-mythical proportions in Taliep's life story. According to many interviewees consulted for this thesis, Taliep studied classical guitar in London at some stage, where he learnt to read music notation and did courses in instrumental arrangement.[272] Indeed, Mogamat Ladien related how Taliep returned to South Africa in the middle of his studies to lend his support while his father had a stomach ulcer removed, before going back to continue his studies.[273] Numerous newspaper sources and biographical sketches of Taliep make reference to this trip and especially its educational element, such as an advertisement for *Carnival a la District Six* in Swaziland that introduces co-producers Dave Bestman and "Taliep Petersen who has just returned from Europe and the UK where he studied classical guitar."[274]

[268] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[269] S Clothier, "One good thing led to another for Taliep who swopped figures for the guitar and grease-paint", newspaper article of unknown origin, 8 April 1981, *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[270] R Christie, "Coons go to Swaziland", *The Star Tonight!*, 8 June 1979
[271] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[272] See Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012; see also Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011; see also Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012; see also Interview with Abdullah Maged, 4 August 2011; see also Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.
[273] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
[274] "It's Carnival time again!", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

In the *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep concludes his description of his travels with the following: "After a few months I could not absorb anymore of the wonderful experiences I was being inspired with, and decided to come back home and decide on which direction I was heading."[275] He also relates that, upon arriving in South Africa, he was invited by Bestman to share his apartment in Berea, Johannesburg, where he initially managed to survive financially by writing jingles for various companies. Inspired by the musicals he had seen in the West End, Taliep decided against pursuing his career as a cabaret artist, and began writing his first musical, *Carnival a la District Six*.[276] Taliep's decision to return from Europe and move to Johannesburg may have been motivated by another important occurrence. On 15 April 1979, Taliep's twenty-ninth birthday, his first child was born, a little girl named Natasha Foster. Taliep had met her mother, Lesley Foster, a coloured Christian woman working as a bank clerk, while he was performing in Johannesburg.[277] According to Taliep's younger sister Ma'atoema, the two of them had been involved in a long-distance relationship when Natasha Foster was born and, as Taliep was concentrating on following his career, marriage was not yet an option for him.[278] Natasha Foster was to grow up with her mother in Johannesburg, and years later, would develop a good relationship with Taliep's other children.[279]

Figure 36: Taliep and his daughter Natasha Foster in Strand, early 1980s.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

[275] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[276] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[277] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.
[278] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.
[279] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.

In a handwritten document found in the Taliep Petersen Archive entitled *Autobiography RE: "Carnival a la District 6"*, Taliep sketches the background to this production as follows:

> At the beginning of Jan. 79' I (Taliep Petersen) went to London. During my stay there did I see Ipi 'n Tombi[280] [*sic*] and Mzumba running on the West End. Also running was Evita and Bubbling Brown Sugar. I then realised that all these shows had one thing in common – WAY OF LIFE. In May I returned to S.A. and stayed with Dave Bestman in Jhb. One evening I told him about these shows, and he inspired me to write a show on our way of life, and that he would assist me to the full. I started writing the script and composed some songs with Dave sanctioning my ideas. After my 5th attempt was Dave totally satisfied, and we had a script to sell. After days of fruitless appointments and meetings with various promoters and business-men was the script scooped up by HOLIDAY INN resulting in the show running for 4 months under the choreography direction of Neil Mckay (Ipi 'n Tombi [*sic*] fame) at the Royal Swazi Spa.[281]

Taliep must have returned to South Africa in April rather than in May, for on 11 May 1979, Taliep and Bestman had already signed a declaration that they had received R2350 from the Royal Swazi Spa "for the purchase of stage costumes, make up and transport from Cape Town to Swaziland" for the upcoming production of *Carnival a la District Six*.[282] What is interesting about *Autobiography RE: "Carnival a la District 6"* is Taliep's assertion that he wrote the script and composed the songs with Bestman "sanctioning" his ideas. From this it would appear that Taliep conceived the entire production and did not trust himself as a writer, feeling more comfortable with Bestman there to validate his work. Links, who was also bass guitarist in the *Carnival a la District Six* band, states that Taliep and Bestman (who regarded himself primarily as a comedian) were jointly responsible for the creative process.[283] Attempting to give the precise division of creative input, a newspaper article in the *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook* indicates that Taliep was responsible for writing the music, and the two men were jointly responsible for writing song lyrics and all the "narration".[284]

[280] This production has been produced as *Ipi tombi* and *Ipi n'tombi*. As Taliep's own spelling of this production seems to indicate the latter, the production will be referred to as *Ipi n'tombi* throughout this dissertation, irrespective of its use in cited sources.
[281] T Petersen, *Autobiography RE: "Carnival a la District 6"*, handwritten document, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[282] D Bestman & T Petersen, "*Carnival a la District Six" funding agreement with Royal Swazi Spa*, legal contract, 11 May 1979, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[283] Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013.
[284] "Carnival á la District 6", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d.,*"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

The official programme for *Carnival a la District Six* contains a slightly different description, indicating that it was "divised [*sic*] and directed by Dave Bestman and Taliep Petersen" with "original music and lyrics by Taliep Petersen."[285] However, Bestman's description of the division of labour would seem to correlate with *Autobiography RE: "Carnival a la District 6"*. According to him, he was only involved as co-director as Taliep composed both the music of *Carnival a la District Six* and wrote all the text. [286]

Although having been given funding by the hotel group to get their production on stage, Taliep and Bestman were the producers of this show,[287] and would be responsible for paying all the performers, something that they did without fail.[288] Having successfully obtained funding and a first venue, Taliep and Bestman then went in search of performers, including a female singer for *Carnival a la District Six*. Encouraged by a man called Nassiem who had a coon troupe called The Beach Boys, Taliep and Bestman went to the Panorama Bioscope in Cape Town to listen to a seventeen year-old singer, Valma Anders.[289] When they arrived at the venue, however, she had already sung for the evening. Upon being asked to sing again, she first declined, then very reluctantly agreed, standing behind the amplifier as she did so. That night, Taliep asked her if she wanted to join the show and come to Swaziland. Anders told them that she needed to speak to her mother and grandmother first, as she remembers today, "I wasn't street smart. I was very much mommy's little girl."[290] Born in the Bo Kaap and having attended Catholic schools, first in District Six and then in Belgravia, Valma was then living with her grandmother and mother in Athlone. After a meeting held in her indisposed grandmother's bedroom, during which Taliep and Bestman were present, Anders's family asked their questions, and finally gave their blessing. Having only recently finished high school, Anders had never been away from her mother before. She joined the production and "vaulted to stardom", becoming one of the highest reviewed performers in *Carnival a la District Six*.[291] Over the next few years, Taliep and Madeegha Anders, as she was known after her reversion to Islam in the early 1980s, would begin a relationship, eventually leading to their marriage in 1987.

[285] *The Quibell Brothers present "Carnival a la District Six"*, programme, Three Arts Theatre, Cape Town, 1979.
[286] Interview with Dave Bestman, 14 June 2013.
[287] "It's Carnival time again!", *Early years scrapbook*.
[288] Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2012.
[289] The remainder of the information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
[290] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
[291] R du Preez, "How Valma vaulted to stardom", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive; S Vollenhoven, "All the elements of an enjoyable musical show", *Cape Argus*, 15 May 1981.

In an interview conducted with Taliep before the start of rehearsals for *Carnival a la District Six* in June 1979, the interviewer, Roy Christie, mentions that during Taliep's recent trip to Europe he saw a number of musicals, including *Bubbling black sugar* and *Ipi n'tombi*. In Taliep's words, the latter "celebrate[d] black ethnicity."[292] According to Christie, Taliep and Bestman hoped that *Carnival a la District Six* would "do for the coloured community what 'Ipi Tombi' did for blacks".[293] Speaking about their own project, Taliep noted: "This is the coloured response to the 'Roots' syndrome. Everyone is fascinated by his origins, by his ethnic specialities, the influences which colour his attitude to the world."[294] Coplan describes *Ipi n'tombi*, a 1974 production by Bertha Egnos, as "an inauthentic burlesque of African urban and rural life which portrayed Africans as happy children better suited to the pastoral joys of the homelands than to the corrupting evils of the city."[295] According to him, the show's producers were aware of the musical's potential to improve South Africa's international image. In support of this, Coplan cites from the original programme: "When it goes overseas *Ipi Tombi* may well become South Africa's most valuable export, and the cast our most exciting ambassadors. The commodity it sells is happiness, which surely must compare favourably with the export of our gold and our diamonds."[296]

Although Taliep saw *Ipi n'tombi* in London, he appears to have been unaware of its ideologically compromised position and black responses to this position, or even of the fact that public protests ended *Ipi n'tombi's* short Broadway run a few years earlier. Either way, as reported by René du Preez, Taliep identified strongly with the production and after the West End performance, approached its choreographer, Neil Mckay. During the ensuing conversation, Taliep expressed his desire to do a show similar to *Ipi n'tombi,* but with a Cape Town theme, hence *Carnival a la District Six*.[297] What did *Ipi n'tombi* do for the black population of South Africa? According to Fugard: "*Ipi n'tombi* continued the work of government ideology. Relying on portrayals of happy natives, it was an absolute violation of the reality of both urban and rural Africans during apartheid."[298] However, Manim is of the opinion that despite its problematic portrayal of black individuals, *Ipi n'tombi* gave artists much-needed opportunities to perform, and in some cases, enter the world of stage performance. Well-known South African actor Thembi Mtshali-Jones is an example. She had her first stage experience after she auditioned for *Ipi n'tombi* while working as a domestic servant.[299]

[292] Christie, "Coons go to Swaziland", *The Star Tonight!*.
[293] Christie, "Coons go to Swaziland", *The Star Tonight!*.
[294] Christie, "Coons go to Swaziland", *The Star Tonight!*.
[295] Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 280.
[296] Coplan, *In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, pp. 280–281.
[297] R du Preez, "Taliep's show set for success", *Sunday Times Extra*, 16 December 1979.
[298] Interview with Athol Fugard, 8 March 2013.
[299] Interview with Mannie Manim, 8 March 2013.

Answering to both these points of view, *Carnival a la District Six* did in fact mirror *Ipi n'tombi*, and did "for the coloured population what 'Ipi Tombi' did for blacks".[300] Certainly, *Carnival a la District Six* gave Taliep, Bestman and their cast of performers (including Anders, Hector, Cyril Valentine, David Claasen, Salie Davids and juvenile singer Suleiman Vardien, as well as the backing band), a means to get onto the stage and be seen by a large audience. It would also appear that, certainly in its earliest manifestations, *Carnival a la District Six* focused on portraying the happy tradition of the Cape Coon Carnival, without significant focus on the harsh reality facing many of its participants, nor on the forced removals of District Six.

Carnival a la District Six opened at the Royal Swazi Spa, near Mbabane in Swaziland, where it had a four-month run. This five-star hotel was a popular performing venue during apartheid for South African acts and international artists such as Tom Jones and Cliff Richard.[301] Performances took place in Lester's, a theatre that doubled as a cinema during the day and showed films such as *The stud*, at the time considered light pornography.[302] At the same time as *Carnival a la District Six* played at Lester's, a group consisting of the band members joined by Taliep, Bestman and Anders, performed at the restaurant in the Lugogo Holiday Inn.[303] They called themselves Chiquitita and after having played from 20:00 until 22:15 in the evenings, they had to rush back to the Royal Swazi Spa to be back in time for the performance at Lester's that started at 23:00. At these gigs, they would play covers of contemporary hits as well as older favourites. Anders recalls that they played songs such as "The girl from Ipanema", "Misty", Autumn leaves" and "I know I'll never love this way again".[304] These were songs that she had not known before meeting Taliep, and there was not much margin for error. Anders recalls an occasion when, as lead singer, she began to sing off-pitch. On this occasion, Taliep lashed out and hit her against the head, according to Anders, acting completely on impulse. Although she began to cry, their audience did not notice – Chiquitita played to restaurant patrons while they ate. Taliep was a perfectionist, who especially in those years was very strict with his fellow-musicians and had difficulty understanding that not everyone had his musical abilities.[305] Anders notes that as time wore on, Taliep became more humble and eventually learnt a different approach to situations where he felt impatient with others.[306]

[300] Christie, "Coons go to Swaziland", *The Star Tonight!*.
[301] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.
[302] B Hough, "Opskud met die klopse", *Beeld*, 17 July 1979.
[303] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
[304] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
[305] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
[306] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.

According to Anders, she learnt a lot during this time, not only about music, but also about the culture of District Six. For a performer such as herself who never fully experienced life in this suburb, *Carnival a la District Six* afforded her the opportunity to learn from Taliep, Bestman and the other performers. In her words: "It was a major learning curve because I got to learn about the Star Bioscope, I got to learn about the National Bioscope, I got to learn about ... I got to learn about everything in District Six, the lifestyle, the characters."[307] Anders describes this production as a drama with spoken dialogue interspersed with songs, not so much a musical as "a variety show with a twist".[308] A portion of the production was a "show within a show", a staging of a variety show in the Star Bioscope during which the dancers of *Carnival a la District Six*, when they were not dancing, played the audience.[309] Anders also recalls that the costumes for this production were inspired by the Cape Coon Carnival in that they incorporated satin tailcoats. However, she also associates these costumes with something you might see in Rio, in the use of, for instance, feather headdresses and little bikinis for the women.[310]

Figure 37: The full cast of *Carnival a la District Six,* circa 1979.
SOURCE Howard Links Archive

[307] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
[308] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
[309] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
[310] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.

According to bass guitarist Links, *Carnival a la District Six* dealt with life in District Six before the forced removals. It had an original script and contained both covers and original songs, two of which Links can remember were called "Rondekoeke" (Round cakes) and Taliep's single, "You are the days of my life".[311] *Carnival a la District Six* was written in English, with the occasional use of Cape Afrikaans slang.[312] Reflecting praxis at the Cape Coon Carnival and the Malay choir competitions, a number of the songs covered in *Carnival a la District Six*, such as "Love is in the air", were given a new text to fit with the production.[313] Terry Hector, who performed as a singer in *Carnival a la District* Six, remembers that the show also included solo ballads and Afrikaans *ghoemaliedjies*, such as "Daar kom die Alibama." (There comes the Alibama)[314] He recalls that Taliep did not only include his own songs, but gave the performers an opportunity to contribute as well, resulting in the inclusion of one of Hector's own songs. Hector locates the emphasis of this show on showcasing the talent of its individual performers and remembers that *Carnival a la District Six* contained fragments of numerous other touring shows that the performers had previously been with, including *Golden city dixies* and *African follies*.[315] Describing *Carnival a la District Six* as "the opening where we could tell stories", he states:

> The show was very raw. It was a story about District Six. Now they're taken into the klopskammer [clubroom] and the way we practiced and then, the practice, and how we prepare ourselves for the competition and then, all the stories ... Man, where I got a watch to sell, uhm, for my, because I haven't got enough money for my costume.[316]

In an interview conducted shortly before the start of rehearsals, Taliep noted that this production told the story of District Six, "where even the guys on the corner are multi-talented, where even the gangsters were multiracial."[317] Indeed, although consisting predominantly of coloured performers, this show was multiracial in that it also had some black performers, including Connie Chiume and Joyce Skefu (both of whom were with *Mzumba* in London).[318] The production attempted to portray the diverse cultural manifestations of District Six, as reviewer Leonard Khumalo described it: "They include 16 genuine Coons from Cape Town, there is a lot of dancing, singing and street hustlers, impersonators

311 Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013.
312 Christie, "Coons go to Swaziland*", The Star Tonight!*.
313 J Groenewald, "Swaziland is nou Kaaps", *Die Vaderland*, 16 July 1979.
314 Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
315 Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
316 Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
317 J Michell, "Coon show for Swazi Spa", *Rand Daily Mail*, 1 June 1979.
318 L Khumalo "It's the carnival la zest, la Cape", *Transvaal Post*, n.d., *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

and Malay choirs – all that was District Six's sound and humour."[319] However, despite the strong emphasis on the multi-racial and multi-cultural world of District Six, this production was widely hailed as the first production to present the "genuine" history of the Cape Malays on stage, having acquired a Malay emphasis ostensibly through the inclusion of the Malay choirs of District Six.[320]

When it opened in Swaziland, *Carnival a la District Six* received positive reviews that highlighted the show's portrayal of "the colour, excitement and vibrant joy of Cape Town's District Six".[321] One reviewer, Barry Hough, remarked that some of the references in *Carnival a la District Six* are satirical and informed with political protest.[322] These references were either veiled or understated, with another reviewer calling it a show "with absolutely nothing in it, or about it, to offend anyone."[323] Reviewer Jakkie Groenewald of *Die Vaderland* wrote: "Vanaf die oomblik wanneer die gordyn oopgaan, hoor jy die regte Kaapse ritmes wat so kenmerkend is van die Kleurlinge, sien jy hulle kostuums en skater jy vir hul heerlike ligte humor."[324] Rose Hitching noted: "Die belangrikste aspek van die aanbieding is die lewensvreugde, die humor wat spontaan uitborrel en die meelewing wat dit by die gehoor waarborg."[325] In its nostalgic focus on the joys of District Six and the romanticization of its populace, *Carnival a la District Six* was also a family show, as reviewer John Mitchell described it:

> We go into dingy rooms in District Six, provided for us by minimal scenery and colour slides projected on the backdrop, to watch preperations [*sic*] for the big event – tailoring, ironing, bickering – with a little coloured wit thrown in. Not too much wit, mind. As every South African knows, *nobody* swears better than the coloureds, but the show is pretty clean, despite tradition.[326]

[319] Khumalo "It's the carnival la zest, la Cape", *Transvaal Post.*
[320] D Bikitsha, "Spirit of District Six at the Spa", *Rand Daily Mail*, 6 June 1979; Khumalo "It's the carnival la zest, la Cape", *Transvaal Post*.
[321] "Sights, sounds of District Six", *Natal Mercury*, 20 July 1979.
[322] Hough, "Opskud met die klopse", *Beeld*.
[323] "Talking shop with 'Chatterbox", newspaper article of unknown origin, September 1979, *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[324] "From the moment the curtain goes up, you hear the authentic Cape rhythms that are so characteristic of the Coloureds, you see their costumes and you roar with laughter at their delightfully light humour." Groenewald, "Swaziland is nou Kaaps", *Die Vaderland.*
[325] "The most important aspect of the presentation is the zest for life, the humour that bubbles up spontaneously and the audience empathy that this guarantees." R Hitching, "Kaapse Klopse vir die 1e keer op die verhoog, *Die Transvaler*, n.d., *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[326] J Michell, "District Six in Swaziland", *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 July 1979.

Reviews of *Carnival a la District Six* were entirely different to the criticism of Taliep's performance *Sing out '75* that never made it into the *Early years scrapbook*. During that performance he had sung about the forced removals of District Six and was warned that his audience "wanted to forget or laugh at their troubles, not to be reminded of them."[327] Perhaps Taliep had this criticism in mind when he wrote the script of *Carnival a la District Six*. Ultimately, true to Taliep's claims before the premiere of *Carnival a la District Six*, this production was ideologically similar to *Ipi n'tombi*, perhaps most pointedly illustrated by the following quote from a newspaper article that appeared in the *Times of Swaziland* in 1979:

> The show is sensitively-tuned to audience type and in this respect succeeds marvelously. But, remember, painted-face value only, for despite the sneaky political jibes, "Carnival" could easily be seen as the entertainment industry's version of the homelands.[328]

In October 1979, *Carnival a la District Six* came to Cape Town, performing for a two week run in the home of the Eoan opera group, the Joseph Stone Theatre in Athlone. Thereafter, the production went back into rehearsal to prepare for a ten day December/January run in the Three Arts Theatre. It was the first show with an entirely non-white cast backed by the Quibell Brothers.[329] As in Swaziland, the production would play to a racially mixed audience, but this time because the Three Arts Theatre had a permit to do so.[330] In an interview by Peter Mitchell that appeared shortly before this second Cape Town run, Taliep is quoted as saying that *Carnival a la District Six* was intentionally set during the annual Coon Carnival, "because it's the only time you find joy and happiness there – and we wanted to avoid a serious play".[331] Echoing the criticism levied at him four years ago, Taliep states: "People don't want to be reminded of the hardships – they are living them."[332]

[327] Stoneman, "Des and Dawn back – with all their familiar charm", *Rhodesian Herald*.
[328] "District Six, with a fun face", *The Times of Swaziland*, 1979, *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[329] "Capturing the D6 character", *Cape Herald*, 29 December 1979.
[330] Telephonic communication with Terry Hector, 25 February 2013.
[331] P Mitchell, "New Year's Eve celebrations at the Three Arts", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d.,*"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[332] Mitchell, "New Year's Eve celebrations at the Three Arts", *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*.

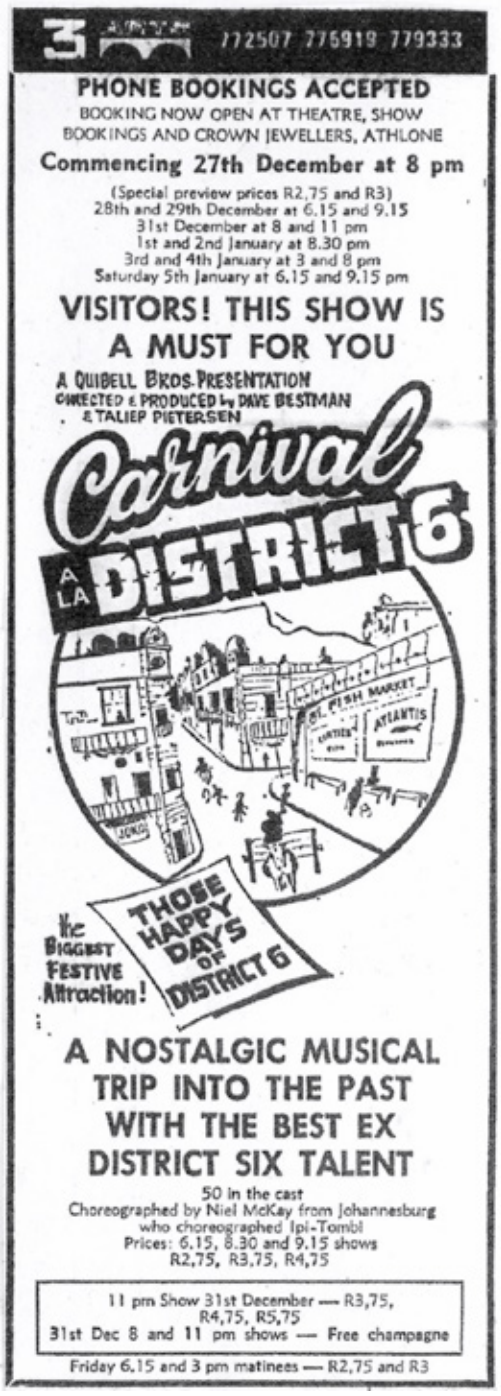


Figure 38: A newspaper advertisement for the Quibell Brothers production of *Carnival a la District Six,* 1979.
SOURCE: *Cape Herald,* 22 December 1979

The issue of forced removals would be increasingly addressed in subsequent reworkings of this production. In an interview with Tony Jackman, Taliep explained the basis for the version of *Carnival a la District Six* to be performed at the Three Arts Theatre, apparently now twice as long as the original Swaziland production: "There are two old men at the centre of the stage … One works for a demolition company He starts reminiscing for the day … then portrays it, taking the audience back, up Hanover Street, showing the life of the place, the lives of the people. It's the whole nostalgic trip."[333] Although forced removals increasingly came to the fore, the production was dominated by a nostalgic longing for a lost world, rather than on voicing active protest against the government who's actions led to its destruction. In an overwhelmingly positive review of *Carnival a la District Six*, the same journalist, Jackman, praises Taliep primarily for his musical arrangements, noting: "'Carnival' does not take intense jabs at the politics surrounding District Six. Rather, it takes an empty canvass and colours it, presenting a picture of the life of the area and of he people for whom it is – or was – home."[334]

[333] T Jackman, "Carnival will capture spirit of District Six", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[334] T Jackman, "District Six show bounces with joy and vitality", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*.

In preparation for this run, Ronnie Quibell significantly increased the budget of the production, enabling Taliep and Bestman to increase the cast to thirty members and the backing band to eight musicians.[335] According to the *Carnival a la District Six* Quibell production souvenir programme, the final male cast for this production consisted of the following performers: Bestman, Taliep, Terry Smith, Cyril Valentine, Salie Davids, Norman Linden, David Claasen, Salie Daniels and Chico Levy. The female cast, called the "Dancing girls", consisted of Valma Anders, Liz Gall, Felicia Liebenberg, Debbie Williams, Geraldine Witbooi, Joanne Ryan and Zubeiba Daniels. The two juvenile singers of the production were nine year-old Tracy Butler (sister of guitarist Jonathan Butler) and ten year-old Suleiman Vardien, also known as Baby Vardien. The backing band was made up of a number of musicians from The Playboys – Claude Fry on lead guitar, Howard Links on bass guitar and Ebrahim Petersen on drums – as well as some additional players: Daniel Morgan on keyboard, Basil "Manenberg" Coetzee on tenor saxophone and flute, A. Monde on trumpet, Willie Nettie on trombone and a man known only as Elias on alto saxophone.[336]

According to the programme, the first half of the production consisted of an "overture" played by "The Seven Steps Show Band", whereafter "the answer to Joseph Gabriels", Jimmy Momberg (not included in the cast list), and juvenile singers Tracy Butler and Baby Vardien starred alongside Bestman and backing band, The Playboys.[337] This first half was performed to the backdrop of projected slides depicting the various stages of demolition in District Six.[338] The second half consisted of seven scenes performed either by individual cast members or, in the majority of cases, by the company as a whole. The scenes were entitled variously "Memory lane: Dave and Cyril", "A trip into the Malay Quarters", "Scenes 'in die klopskammer" (the clubroom)", "Scenes on Grand Parade and District 6", "Dave Bestman entertains", "Carnival time" and "Finalé".[339] A newspaper article that appeared in the *Cape Herald* on 5 January 1980, calls *Carnival a la District Six* "the best local show for years", despite there being "hardly any storyline."[340] According to this article, the first half proceeds along the lines of a variety show bearing little relation to District Six itself, whereas the second half consists of "behind-the-scenes preparations for the tweede-nuwejaar [second New Year] carnival and the big do itself."[341]

335 Du Preez, "Taliep's show set for success", *Sunday Times Extra*.
336 *The Quibell Brothers present "Carnival a la District Six"*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
337 *The Quibell Brothers present "Carnival a la District Six"*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
338 R du Preez, "Dist 6 show: It's a rave!", *Sunday Times*, 30 December 1979.
339 *The Quibell Brothers present "Carnival a la District Six"*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
340 WL, "The best local show for years!" *Cape Herald*, 5 January 1979.
341 WL, "The best local show for years!" *Cape Herald*.

Figure 39: Some of the cast members of *Carnival a la District Six* –Tracy Butler, Howard Links, Valma Anders, Suleiman Vardien (front), Taliep and Ebrahim Petersen (back), circa 1979.
SOURCE: Howard Links Archive

The year 1979 was not entirely taken up with *Carnival a la District Six*. In this year, Taliep was nominated for a *Sarie* award for best male vocalist alongside Richard Jon Smith, André de Villiers, Neville Nash, Anton Goosen, Bobby Angel, Gene Rockwell, Lance James, Gé Korsten and Peter Lotis.[342] In the *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep writes: "During the success of 'Carnival' at the 'Three Arts', another wonderful thing happened. I won the Sari [*sic*] Award as Best male singer of the year."[343] Five years on, Taliep had seemingly forgotten his 1974 comments denouncing the Sarie awards as "a racist affair".[344] When they had time off during the years with *Carnival a la District Six*, Taliep and Anders would at times go to the house at 28 Greef Street, Salt River. There, as was the case during Taliep and Paul Petersen's collaborative songwriting days, they would receive meals from Taliep's grandmother Fatiema, or Mamma Sissie as they called her. Anders recalls that Fatiema had a very good relationship with her eldest grandson, and that Taliep, who "loved her to bits", would use any excuse to eat his grandmother's food.[345] They would get breakfast, lunch and dinner and sometimes Anders would have to try to stop her from providing any more food by saying, "Mamma, nie kos vandag nie, mamma."[346]

[342] "Win R200 with Sarie '79 – Category no 2: Male vocalist", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d.,*"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive
[343] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[344] Jongbloed, "Petersen: Sarie show hog-wash", *Sunday Times.*
[345] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
[346] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.

Taliep remained close to his grandmother Fatiema, and she was even interviewed for a *Carnival a la District Six* brochure that was on sale at the 1980 Malmesbury performances.[347] In this interview, Taliep is described as an extremely religious and disciplined young man who, in his boyhood, was different from all the other children around him. Fatiema is quoted as saying: "Hy was ook al oral, altans in die meeste plekke waar ek nog nooit voorheen was nie. Zimbabwe, Suidwes, Swaziland, Engeland ... en net nou die dag sê hy vir my sy kop staan die keer Amerika se kant toe. Hy sal ook gaan, soos ek hom ken, dié Taliep. As hy eers iets in sy kop het, kan niks en niemand hom keer nie."[348] As discussed in the previous chapter, Fatiema became a mother-figure to the five Petersen children from Mogamat Ladien's marriage to his first wife, Jawaiya. In connection with this, Tagmieda states, "We lost my mom, I mean, in that sense, in divorce, at a very early age."[349] Something of this sense of loss is reflected in a handwritten lyric found in the Taliep Petersen Archive, entitled "Home without a mother".[350]

Anders relates how Fatiema gave Taliep the piano that stood in the house at Greef street, and that it was an integral part of Taliep's life, especially as regards the composition of his songs: "That piano, oh my word, if it could speak! Oh, it would tell you many stories."[351] According to Anders, although not reflected in commercial recordings, Taliep wrote very many songs in this period of his life.[352] Indeed, his active compositional life is reflected in the many song lyrics found in books or on loose papers in the Taliep Petersen Archive. Unfortunately, melodies are not notated on these pieces of paper, and they are also frequently written down without or with only partially indicated chord symbols.

One of the songs that Anders would later recall with an eerie chill was a composition that Taliep wrote for her in 1979, called "The last to hear". It tells the story of a young woman who is the last to hear that her boyfriend is in fact in love with someone else.[353] Anders makes it clear that Taliep also taught her a lot about music, using the very same piano to refine her vocal technique and to teach her new skills including basic keyboard proficiency: "He was the one that taught me, um, because as much as I thought that I knew about music, I

[347] Melly, *Brosjure: Taliep Petersen en Dave Bestman se "Carnival a la District 6",* programme, Wesbank Gemeenskapsentrum, Malmesbury, 1980.

[348] "He has also already been everywhere, at any rate in most of the places where I have never been. Zimbabwe, South-West, Swaziland, England ... and just the other day he told me he has set his mind on going to America. He will also go, as I know him, this Taliep. Once he gets something in his head, then nothing and no-one can stop him." Melly, *Brosjure: Taliep Petersen en Dave Bestman se "Carnival a la District 6".*

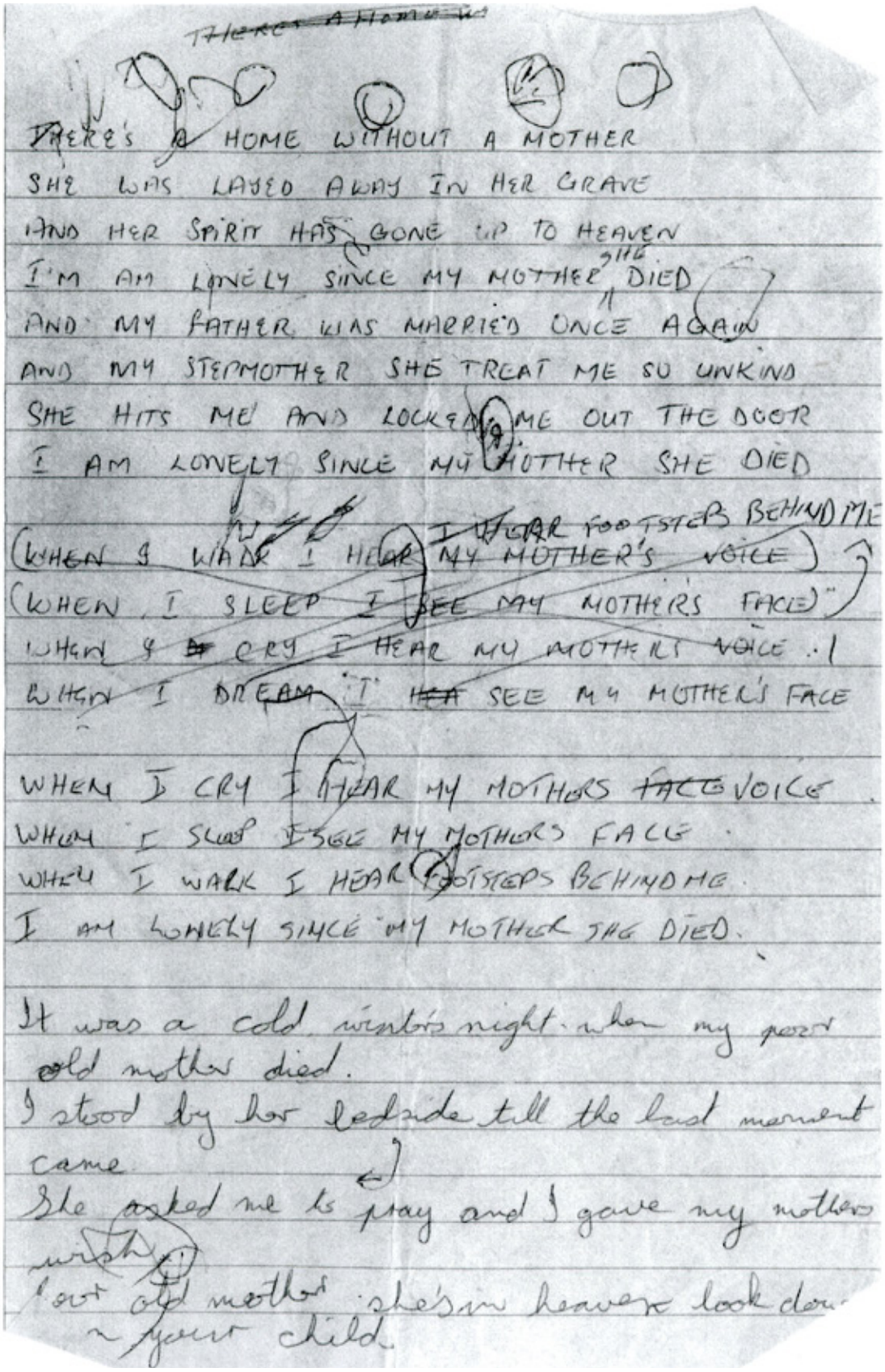
[349] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2013.

[350] T Petersen, "Home without a mother", song lyrics, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.

[351] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.

[352] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.

[353] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.



~~THERE'S A HOME~~

THERE'S A HOME WITHOUT A MOTHER
SHE WAS LAYED AWAY IN HER GRAVE
AND HER SPIRIT HAS GONE UP TO HEAVEN
I'M AM LONELY SINCE MY MOTHER SHE DIED
AND MY FATHER WAS MARRIED ONCE AGAIN
AND MY STEPMOTHER SHE TREAT ME SO UNKIND
SHE HITS ME AND LOCKED ME OUT THE DOOR
I AM LONELY SINCE MY MOTHER SHE DIED

~~(WHEN I WALK I HEAR I HEAR FOOTSTEPS BEHIND ME~~
~~(WHEN I WALK I HEAR MY MOTHER'S VOICE)~~
~~(WHEN I SLEEP I SEE MY MOTHER'S FACE)"~~
~~WHEN I CRY I HEAR MY MOTHER'S VOICE.~~
~~WHEN I DREAM I SEE MY MOTHER'S FACE~~

WHEN I CRY I HEAR MY MOTHERS ~~FACE~~ VOICE.
WHEN I SLEEP I SEE MY MOTHERS FACE.
WHEN I WALK I HEAR FOOTSTEPS BEHIND ME.
I AM LONELY SINCE MY MOTHER SHE DIED.

It was a cold winters night when my poor old mother died.
I stood by her bedside till the last moment came.
She asked me to pray and I gave my mothers wish.
Rest old mother she's in heaven look down on your child.

Figure 40: "Home without a mother", song lyrics written by Taliep.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

discovered then when I met him, I didn't actually know anything. All I could do was sing."[354] As noted previously, *Carnival a la District Six* was an important learning experience for Anders, especially as far as her musical and cultural education were concerned. This production would also teach her what it was like to be on the road for an extended period of time.

After its highly successful Cape Town run at the start of 1980, *Carnival a la District Six* toured nationally to Johannesburg (where it played in His Majesty's Theatre), as well as to the then Rhodesia and South-West Africa.[355] According to a document in the Taliep Petersen Archive entitled *Rhodesian tour figures*, members of the cast were paid between R20 and R100 per week, at least on the Rhodesian tour.[356] In the same year, the last remaining entertainment venue in District Six, the Avalon Bioscope, was burnt to the ground. As a journalist in the *Cape Herald* titled his article reporting on this event: "Before the bulldozers hit the Avalon ... Fire beats Group Areas axe".[357] This venue, one that Taliep and his contemporaries had performed in regularly as young men, had stood on the corner of Russell and Hanover Streets. Together with the already demolished Star, the British Bioscope and the National Bioscope, it had played a very important role in District Six's cultural life, and was in fact still operating while the majority of District Six's inhabitants had already been relocated to, amongst other places, the Cape Flats.[358]

On tour, *Carnival a la District Six* continued to receive positive reviews that, although frequently acknowledging the one-sidedness of its portrayal of District Six, described the show variously as "rich in humour and pathos",[359] "a smash hit",[360] and as "'n bonte vrolikheid!".[361] In an interview with the newspaper, *Rapport*, Windhoek businessman Wiks Louw explained his reasons for purchasing the performing rights of *Carnival a la District Six* for R20 000: "Ons wil hê almal moet dié gesinstuk sien en iets van die mooi dinge van die lewe geniet."[362] However, the production received critical reviews as well, though in most cases they still emphasized the fact that *Carnival a la District Six* had considerable entertainment value, whichever way you looked at it. Peter Feldman, writing in *The Star*, noted:

354 Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
355 Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
356 *Rhodesian tour figures*, financial document, 1980, Taliep Petersen Archive.
357 "Before the bulldozers hit the Avalon...Fire beats Group Areas axe", *Cape Herald*, 25 October 1980.
358 "Before the bulldozers hit the Avalon...Fire beats Group Areas axe", *Cape Herald*.
359 "Carnival has bit of everything", *Post*, 12 April 1980.
360 "A smash hit", *Windhoek Observer*, 2 August 1980.
361 "A colourful merriment!" A van der Merwe, "Wat 'n bonte vrolikheid!", *Die Vaderland*, 2 April 1980.
362 "We want everyone to see this family show and enjoy something of the pretty things in life." "S.W.A. kry Carnival vir R20 000", *Rapport*, 22 June 1980.

> 'Carnival a la District Six' is not a perfect show. There is a childish nonsense that creeps in among the glitter, the dancing is ragged at times and the band is tinny on brass. But one can easily overlook this by the sheer volume of entertainment that is levelled at the audience.[363]

During the course of 1980 and early 1981, *Carnival a la District Six* toured extensively, performing in numerous smaller cities in South Africa, including Worcester, Paarl, Somerset-West, Robertson, Lenasia, Kroonstad, Klerksdorp, Kimberley, Bloemfontein, Welkom, Durban and Port Elizabeth.[364] It was in such high demand that it also gave repeat performances in South-West Africa, as well as in Johannesburg at the Joubert Park Theatre during its Transvaal tour.[365] As a contract for *Carnival a la District Six*'s 1981 Bloemfontein performances attest to, the production netted R4500 per week.[366] As carriers of "District Six culture" into the interior, the cast of *Carnival a la District Six* occasionally encountered criticism based on people's ill-conceived assumptions of what constitutes "coloured culture". An example of this is found in an article in the Bloemfontein daily, *Die Volksblad*, by a journalist known only as B.B. She writes that this production proves that coloureds can make a success of contemporary popular music as well, but finds this lamentable: "Tog is dit jammer dat daar nie meer van die tradisionele liedjies is nie. Dit is duidelik dat die sangers self die ou Kaapse liedjies meer geniet en hul inleef in die musiek wat aan hulle so bekend is."[367] This sentiment not only betrays a lack of knowledge regarding the significant influence of American popular music in District Six, but in encouraging the so-called "traditional", contributes to the ideas of someone like I. D. du Plessis in seeking to deny modernity to the construct of coloured identity.

In spite of rumours propagated in the press during January 1981 that *Carnival a la District Six* was on its way to tour Israel, the production never left Southern Africa.[368] Instead, Taliep and Bestman closed the production after a two-year run and went into rehearsals for a new version, called *Carnival a la District Six part two*, which they would produce themselves. This version was to have a new script

[363] P Feldman, "All the fun and colour of the coons", *The Star*, 3 April 1980.
[364] "Carnival na dié dorpe", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive; "Carnival a la District Six kom terug!", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d.,*"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive; G Lillee, "Carnival look at District Six", *Daily Despatch*, 13 January 1981.
[365] FP "District Six oral tuis", *Joernaal Suid-Wes Afrika*, 8 August 1980. A le Roux, "Kaapse-jolyt kappiteit in Tvl!", *Beeld*, 30 December 1980.
[366] *Memorandum of agreement between Tony Kagee, Taliep Petersen and Dave Bestman,* legal contract, 7 January 1981, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[367] "Still, it is a pity that there aren't more traditional songs. It is clear that the singers themselves enjoy the old Cape songs more and immerse themselves in the music that is so familiar to them." BB, "Andersheid bekoor", *Die Volksblad*, n.d., *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[368] "Back by public demand! Tonorama presents Carnival District Six", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

and a different, possibly more critical approach to its subject matter, despite Taliep's call for more female performers "who can show a leg".[369] Premiered in Rhodesia on 13 April 1981, *Carnival a la District Six part two* was described favourably in reviews as a "pop musical".[370] After performances in Salisbury and Bulawayo, the production returned to Cape Town where it played in the Three Arts Theatre. According to Ted Partridge of the *Cape Times*, the first half of this production depicted a variety show staged at the Star Bioscope, while the second half addressed the issue of forced removals by sketching the invasion of District Six by officials with eviction notices. Partridge praises this show, calling it "more than just a musical", better described as "the final protest of the coloured community's loss of District Six.[371] Partridge concludes:

> Carnival District 6 Part II is an important milestone in South African theatre. It should not be dismissed as another gamatjie coon carnival show with no message, no preparation and no finesse. It is a moving episode in the lives of the people who created the character of District Six and who objected when they were booted out but could do little about it.[372]

In an interview conducted with Taliep in preparation for the Cape Town run, he states that he is trying to avoid a show with a "heavy message", opting instead for "a commercial venture with a thin plot and lots of Cape music and fun."[373] He continues: "This is a happy show, where fun can be poked at the injustices meted out to the residents of District Six."[374] Taliep also describes a scene in the second half during which "Gatiepie" is enjoying his last breakfast of scrambled eggs, before leaving District Six for the last time and moving into his Cape Flats home. In the light of Partridge's comments, the possibility certainly exists that Taliep, prior to the Cape Town opening, may have been downplaying the protest element in this musical for the benefit of censors. According to Fugard, this theory has some traction. His own experience of trying to stage protest theatre during apartheid taught him to be very circumspect during interviews, particularly as journalists were wont to seize upon statements to enlist them in their own struggle against the regime – something that could draw attention at the wrong time.[375] On the other hand, in presenting a show

[369] Hipcat, "Here we go again…" *Cape Herald*, 28 February 1981.
[370] M Lee, "Cape Carnival a first class attraction", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[371] T Partridge, "A final protest against the loss of District 6", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d.,*"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[372] Partridge, "A final protest against the loss of District 6", *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*.
[373] R du Preez, "D6 out of six! Taliep's show is no follow-up – it's all new", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[374] Du Preez, "D6 out of six! Taliep's show is no follow-up – it's all new", *Early years scrapbook*.
[375] Personal communication with Athol Fugard, 12 March 2013.

"where fun can be poked at the injustices meted out to the residents of District Six," Taliep could have been continuing in the tradition of protest couched in humour, exemplified in the *moppie* repertoire historically associated with the coloured population in Cape Town.[376]

Describing the musical language of *Carnival a la District Six part two*, journalist René du Preez was struck that penny-whistle and "skiffle music" featured prominently in this production, whereas it was completely absent from the first.[377] Taliep also mentioned that, in contrast to their previous trips to Zimbabwe, their audiences consisted of predominantly black individuals, who could identify with this music, "because it came from Africa, and was not warmed-up imported American Disco."[378] These accounts could indicate that the musical language of *Carnival a la District Six part two* was in fact more influenced by the black Johannesburg music scene than the first production, perhaps also that it contained less covers of contemporary popular American music. Yet the production still contained "copycat" covers such as Al Hendricks's versions of Al Jolson songs, alongside "traditional" Cape Malay songs such as "Rosa" and "Boemstraat" (Boom Street).[379] With its delicate balance between protest and entertainment, not all reviews took the same stance towards *Carnival a la District Six part two* as Partridge did, with Martin Lee concluding:

> The thin plot, with its special songs mark the characters and the charisma of the town within a town in Cape Town, could be built up into a genuine pop opera. But the overall result falls between the emotions obviously felt by Bestman and Peterson [*sic*] and their understandable desire to present a commercial show including many carnival highlights from the previous production.[380]

Carnival a la District Six part two was only staged at the Three Arts Theatre for four weeks during May and June of 1981.[381] And although the *Autobiographical chronology* mentions a year on the road with this follow-up production, the Three Arts run was the last time that this production was seen. Taliep "felt the urge to do something new" and, because of the country's economic situation, "decided to shelve the show".[382] Anders corroborates this, indicating that Taliep was eager

[376] See AM van der Wal, *The Cape Malay Choir Board & their moppies: Governing a culture and community, 1939-2009*, African Studies Centre, Leiden, 2009.
[377] Du Preez, "D6 out of six! Taliep's show is no follow-up – it's all new", *Early years scrapbook*.
[378] Du Preez, "D6 out of six! Taliep's show is no follow-up – it's all new", *Early years scrapbook*.
[379] L Jack, "Nuwe sukses met 'District Six'", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[380] Lee, "Cape Carnival a first class attraction", *Early years scrapbook*.
[381] "Carnival at Three Arts", *Cape Herald*, 16 May 1981.
[382] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

to move on to different ventures and leave this three-year project behind him.[383] The precise reasons for the closing of this production are not known. However, the Taliep Petersen Archive contains an undated fragment of a handwritten script entitled *Carnival part III*, with script, lyrics and music attributed solely to Taliep Petersen.[384] This find suggests that Taliep may have had plans to continue with another *Carnival a la District Six* production on his own, without crediting Bestman as he had done in the past. Indeed, this script differs entirely from an undated typed script credited to D Bestman and T Petersen entitled *District Six at New Year*, which ostensibly formed the basis for one of the versions of *Carnival a la District Six*.[385]

The nearly three-year journey of this production, from its early days in Swaziland to the performances of *Carnival a la District Six part two*, tells an important story. From the first production's nostalgia propagating the "happy coon" stereotype amenable to the apartheid government, this work grew into a production that, albeit still committed to entertain, was increasingly trying to strike out in the direction of protest theatre. This is particularly significant, seen against the backdrop of Taliep's growth as a coloured artist at times forced to compromise in order to succeed in an environment conceived along racial lines. In some ways Taliep's struggle is not unlike that of the Eoan Opera Group who, in order to continue their activities, accepted government money, losing a lot of non-white support in the process. I do not wish, hereby, to suggest that Taliep was supported directly by the government, nor that he sacrificed his political principles for the advancement of his career. However, Taliep's activities during these early years suggest that he was committed to a stage career and to the ideals of entertainment, more so than to the ideals that would accompany a militant political agenda or a focused protest against apartheid. Where he could, he sidestepped the system and where he couldn't, he worked within it. Whereas popular narratives of the struggle frequently posit non-activist performers as collaborators, I would like to suggest that Taliep's journey up to this point evinced a commitment to human potential beyond the confines of the political landscape that he was born into.

According to the *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep was contacted by Des and Dawn Lindberg three days after the final performance of *Carnival a la District Six part two*.[386] That day, they offered him a role in their Baxter Theatre production

[383] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
[384] T Petersen, *Carnival part III*, script, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[385] D Bestman & T Petersen, *District Six at New Year,* script, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[386] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

of *I'm getting my act together and taking it on the road*, starring Dawn Lindberg and Peter J. Elliott. This musical, written by Nancy Ford and Gretchen Cryer, deals with the self-examination of thirty nine year-old Heather Jones (played by Dawn Lindberg) and her attempt to rebuild her life and her musical act along feminist lines.[387] Taliep's was an emergency casting after one of the performers, Dale Stephens, had pulled out of the show. This left Taliep only five days in which to rehearse.[388] Staged with a small cast, the members of the band all played characters from Jones's past. Taliep's role was not a small: he played the band member Jake, as well as Jones's father, all of which involved playing guitar in the band and singing two solos.[389] For this he received favourable reviews, such as one by Fiona Chisholm, who wrote: "Taliep Petersen, who emerged from the Liberated Man's Band on stage to play the youthful Jake, was engaging and got one of the best hands of the evening for his impromptu song with guitar ending 'Love has got many faces, and one of them is mine.'"[390]

Contradicting the information in the *Autobiographical chronology*, an interview conducted with Taliep during the run of this production indicates that the cast of *Carnival a la District Six part two* was then engaged in studio work, recording an album of the show with Mountain Records. According to this article, the cast had also received offers for two separate television projects, one six-episode series specifically on the carnival, and another thirteen-episode series to be called *Showtime Spectacular*, with all the music to be arranged by Taliep.[391] Despite this information, there is no commercial recording of any version of *Carnival a la District Six*. Taliep does list cassette recordings of *Carnival a la District Six* in the inventory of the tapes in his possession, a document found in the Taliep Petersen Archive.[392] However, these could not be found among his audio cassettes. According to Links, he and Bestman are in possession of a recording of this production, which is at present inaccessible to him due to its reel-to-reel format.[393]

In the same interview, Taliep used the phrase "huistoe music" (homeward music) while talking about a Dollar Brand concert he had attended abroad: "So I go to this concert, and I see a poster advertising Dollar Brand. So I go to his show and expect jazz. But what do I hear? *Our* music. Cape Town music. And if Dollar could send 10000 people ... like ... mad, it means we have the stuff. It's huistoe music

[387] F Chisholm, "Dawn gives all in strong woman act", *Cape Times*, 19 June 1981.
[388] R du Preez, "Taliep steps in to save show at Baxter", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[389] T Jackman, "Taliep Petersen – homing in on 'huistoe' music", *Cape Argus*, 29 June 1981.
[390] Chisholm, "Dawn gives all in strong woman act", *Cape Times*.
[391] Jackman, "Taliep Petersen – homing in on 'huistoe' music", *Cape Argus*.
[392] T Petersen, *Tapes,* list, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[393] Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013.

now."[394] Indeed Dollar Brand, or Abdullah Ibrahim, as he would later be known, was one of the artists who emerged from District Six as a performer of his own original music rooted in a local context, incorporating from this context sounds unique to it. Taliep's statement can be read as an early indication of his desire to move away from American pop, rock and jazz in performance and to use local cultural currents traditionally associated with the environment of his youth, such as *ghoemaliedjies* and *nederlandsliedjies*. Most telling is his surprise that an internationally recognized artist such as Dollar Brand managed to succeed by playing locally influenced music, perhaps thereby betraying a sense of ingrained cultural inferiority and traces of the aspiration towards American culture that was such a part of the District Six of his youth. As Taliep once remarked to French sociologist Denis-Constant Martin regarding the culture of "copycats" in Cape Town's musical life:

> You see, that is ... what happened is that hope ... to be able to be somebody within the perimeters of the law ... And that is what transpired, you see ... So Cape coloureds, so-called coloureds, are renowned for being great clowns ... fantastic copies.[395]

The 1981 *Cape Argus* article also reports on an encounter Taliep had shortly after his recent return from Zimbabwe. Dropping off a friend one night, Taliep came face to face with the coloured location of Mitchell's Plain: "I looked at it and I thought 'this place is enormous, but it's just houses, shopping centres and a station. Where does everybody go? Is there an arts centre?'"[396] This encounter inspired him with the idea of opening a music school on the Cape Flats. In an interview with Melvin Whitebooi, published shortly before the premiere of *I'm getting my act together and taking it on the road*, Taliep is quoted as follows: "Jy weet, eendag as dinge hier verander, sal ek nie met my talente kan gaan spog nie. Die mense sal dinge soos diplomas en grade wil sien. Ek is nog jonk, maar ek gaan ook oud word, en dan wil ek met 'n paar diplomas of grade agter my naam 'n musiekskool oopmaak."[397] This anxiety over his lack of formal education is also reflected in Jackman's article, where Taliep outlines his plans to go abroad again to study to qualify in order to teach others: "I realize that at the moment I'm like a Jack of all trades and master of absolutely nothing. If a drummer or a guitarist doesn't pitch, I can play it. But where are my papers to prove that?"[398]

[394] Jackman, "Taliep Petersen – homing in on 'huistoe' music", *Cape Argus*.
[395] Taliep Petersen interviewed by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.
[396] Jackman, "Taliep Petersen – homing in on 'huistoe' music", *Cape Argus.*
[397] "You know, one day when things change here, I won't be able to boast with my talents. The people will want to see things like diplomas and degrees. I am still young, but I will also get old, and then, with a few diplomas or degrees behind my name, I want to open a music school." M Whitebooi, "Taliep Pietersen [*sic*] se sukses bring geen rus", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *"Carnival a la District Six" scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[398] Jackman, "Taliep Petersen – homing in on 'huistoe' music", *Cape Argus*.

Jackman writes in his article that "A couple of years ago Taliep studied at Fitzneld's [*sic*] School of Music in Ewell, Surrey, where he received diplomas in classical guitar and big band arranging."[399] It is not certain whether Jackman was accurately reporting on what he was told by Taliep, or whether he mistook a future dream for a past occurrence. For on 21 October 1981, some four months after the publication of this interview, Taliep received a letter from Fitznells School of Music in response to his enquiries regarding his prospects of becoming a student there.[400] The letter was not very encouraging. According to the sender, Anthony Carter, Taliep's expectations of available facilities and classes were based on outdated information presumably gleaned from past pupils Russell Hermann and Nazir Kapdi. Mentioning that their number of adult pupils had never been high, Carter warned that they offered only one daytime music class. Finally, before raising concerns about accommodation, transport and immigration, he questioned whether it would be worth Taliep's while to attempt to enrol at Fitznells: "If you are so successful as a popular entertainer I wonder whether you need to learn – unless you are dissatisfied with that way of life."[401]

Judging from Carter's comments about "adult pupils", Fitznells School of Music was not primarily a tertiary institution, but rather a music centre where pupils of various ages, though mainly school-going, would attend music classes.[402] Taliep, however, never attended this institution. According to Anders, by the time she had met Taliep in 1979, he had already returned from studying music at Fitznells.[403] Alongside references to Taliep's alleged participation in *Godspell*, and *The Black Mikado,* his supposed studies at Fitznells would continue to feature in subsequent newspaper articles and biographical sketches about him. An example of this is a 2005 article that reports as follows: "In 1979 he went to London, where he attended the Fitznell's School of Music, studying classical guitar."[404] Here, his three month trip to Europe with Fortune where he "studied a bit of classical guitar" has been conflated with his dream to attend Fitznells to give him the longed-for formal qualifications, at least in popular memory. As such, this mythologization is another example where ideals conflate with historiography, eventually becoming part of Taliep Petersen's popular life story, even ending up in David Kramer's biography.[405] As Taliep would state in an interview with Denis-Constant Martin in 1994: "I sold everything to go to university in England."[406]

399 Jackman, "Taliep Petersen – homing in on 'huistoe' music", *Cape Argus.*
400 A Carter, "Letter to Taliep Petersen", correspondence, 21 October 1981, Taliep Petersen Archive.
401 Carter, "Letter to Taliep Petersen", Taliep Petersen Archive.
402 In 1959, Anthony Carter and Vivienne Price bought an English manor house entitled Fitznells Manor. Living on the first floor, they ran the Fitznells School of Music on the ground floor until the late 1980s. For more information, see "Fitznells Manor", *Wikipedia*, n.d., accessed on 13 March 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fitznells_Manor.
403 Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.
404 J Viall, "Petersen is no-where near done", *Cape Argus*, 7 January 2005.
405 D de Villiers & M Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2011, p. 217.
406 Taliep Petersen interviewed by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.

Fitznells

Dear Mr Petersen

Thankyou for your communication regarding your wish to study at Fitznells. It would seem that you are basing your opinions of the facilities here on what in fact was available some years ago. The number of adult students has never been great and even when Russell Hermann and Nazir Kapdi were here (from whom you presumably got your views) the provision of day time courses was difficult and financially not worth while. Since then Britain has been afflicted by V.A.T. – a tax which hits small businesses which by "drawing in our horns" we have managed to avoid. At the moment we are down to one day-time music class. Our guitar teacher has only one vacancy: he ought to be able to fit you in. I am not clear what you mean by arranging but presumably this means writing parts for your accompaniments for various instruments.

I presume that you have made enquiries about the chances of your being allowed into Britain. Another reason for the fewer students has been changes in British immigration qualifications. It used to be necessary to have a minimum of fifteen hours tuition per week and I cannot see how we can provide this. I do not know anything about visas. There would be little point in your travelling to Britain to find that you were not allowed to stay. Obviously the London College of Music Great Marlborough St. London W1. or Trinity College of Music Mandeville Place W1M 6AQ have sufficient reputation and a large enough clientele of foreign students to satisfy the authorities, making classes of worthwhile size.

Your intentions regarding "putting something back into the people" seem very laudable and I wonder to what extent those are connected with apartheid about which we hear quite a bit in this country.

A further problem has always been accommodation – all the students we have had have had difficulties. This area is not good for rooms to let. Travelling is expensive, too outside the inner area of London.

If you are so successful as a popular entertainer I wonder whether you need to learn – unless you are dissatisfied with that way of life.

Perhaps your relative who lives locally can help in fixing you accommodation or trying to find out about the problems of immigration. He could contact us.

Yours sincerely Anthony Carter

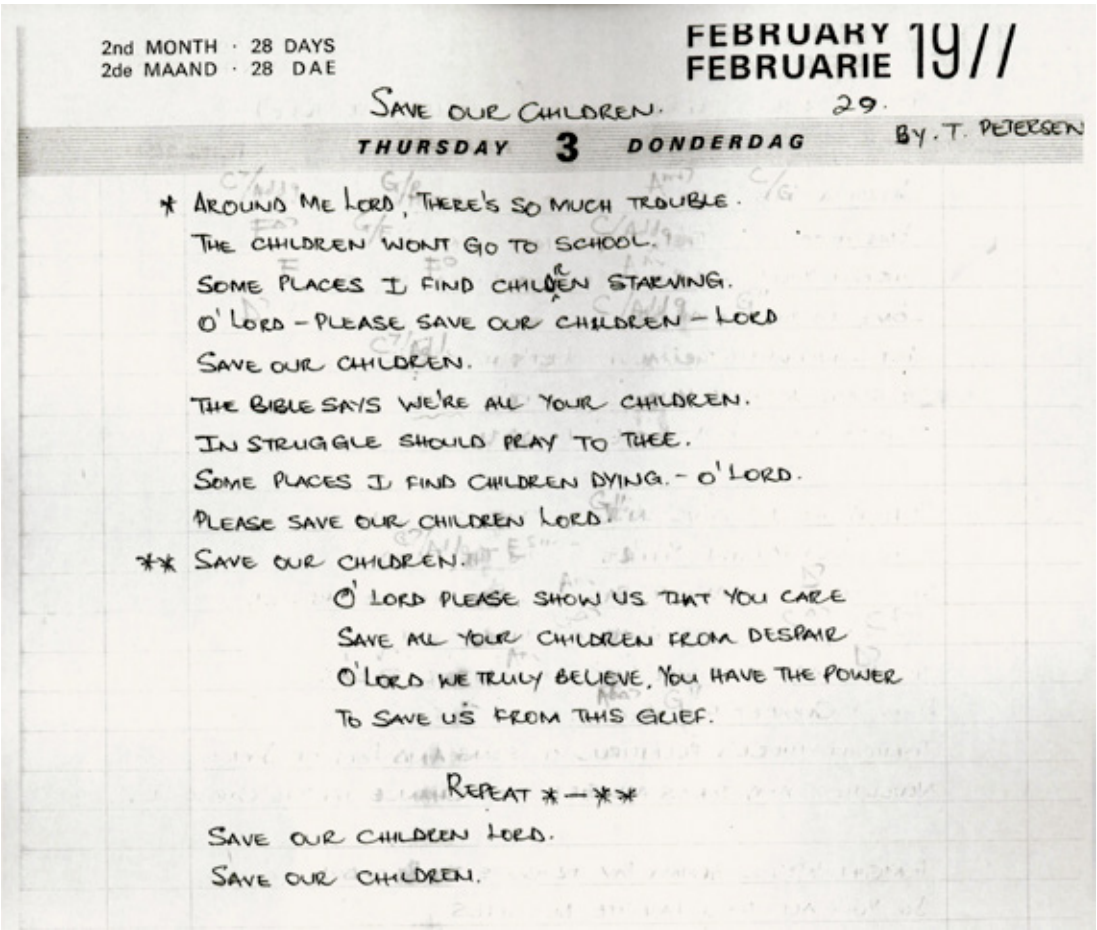
Figure 41: A letter from Anthony Carter to Taliep regarding the possibility of music study at Fitznells School of Music, 21 October 1981.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

In July 1981, shortly after *I'm getting my act together and taking it on the road*, Taliep performed with Des and Dawn Lindberg at the opening concert of South Africa's first National Guitar Festival.[407] Entitled *Youth in harmony*, this concert was held at the Cape Town Civic Centre. Taliep sang two items, entitled "Medley" and "What I did for love", the latter taken from the musical, *A chorus line*.[408] An article by Harold Staefel on this event shows the continued presence of ingrained racialized thinking in public discourse. The journalist recalls a comment made to him by African music collector Hugh Tracey on the use of the guitar by black players, namely, "The African pays five pounds for his cheap instrument but uses only two pounds worth of it."[409] Staefel continues in this line of thinking by noting that the present festival should help solve this "problem" by showing participants "how to get full value for their money."[410] Sponsored by the pharmaceutical company, Adcock-Ingram, the festival also incorporated an eisteddfod. Having entered the composition competition with his own song sung by Anders, "Save our children", Taliep won the popular music category alongside David Kosviner, who had won the art music category with "Night sound, dance, arrival".[411] According to Anders, she had been the only coloured performer in this category, and also the only entrant not playing a musical instrument. She also remembers how supportive Taliep had been of her, saying, "Don't let them intimidate you. You can! Believe in yourself."[412]

"Save our children", one of Taliep's most successful original songs, is contained in the *Taliep Petersen original songs (1977 diary)*.[413] Its text is in the form of a prayer for suffering children and contains references to "Lord" and "Bible", thereby suggesting a Christian context. According to Anders, Taliep was displaying remarkable foresight when he composed this song, since drug abuse and violence amongst children have increased since the late 1970s and these problems are more widely recognized today than at the time of its composition.[414] Anders, herself a Muslim, recognizes nothing strange in the references that seem to suggest a Christian context for the song; according to her, the "bible" refers to any religious book and its usage here serves to make the song more universal. The lyrics of "Save our children" can also be understood as an outcome of the tolerant relationship between the Christian and the Muslim coloured communities of Cape Town, something that is reflected in the frequent

[407] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[408] H Staefel, "Host of S.A. guitar talent", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[409] Staefel, "Host of S.A. guitar talent", *Early years scrapbook*.
[410] Staefel, "Host of S.A. guitar talent", *Early years scrapbook*.
[411] H Staefel, "Guitar festival winners," *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 July 1981.
[412] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
[413] T Petersen, "Save our Children", song lyrics and chords, n.d., *Taliep Petersen original songs (1977 diary)*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[414] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.

intermarriages between members of different religions and the subsequent conversions or reversions to another faith.[415] Although a devout Muslim, Taliep was clearly very tolerant towards Christian themes, no doubt the result of the Christian education he received at George Golding Primary School. This is clearly illustrated by the contents of a little plastic bag containing two tapes in a box of audio tapes in the archive. The first tape, distributed by the Islamic Information Foundation in Canada, forms part of a series entitled "Social system of Islam", from J. Badawi's "Islamic teachings" and is called *The position of women in ancient civilization*.[416] The second audio tape is a recording of South African gospel singer Min Shaw called *I'd rather have Jesus*.[417]



2nd MONTH · 28 DAYS
2de MAAND · 28 DAE

FEBRUARY
FEBRUARIE 1977

SAVE OUR CHILDREN. 29.

THURSDAY 3 DONDERDAG

BY. T. PETERSEN

* AROUND ME LORD, THERE'S SO MUCH TROUBLE.
THE CHILDREN WONT GO TO SCHOOL.
SOME PLACES I FIND CHILDREN STARVING.
O' LORD – PLEASE SAVE OUR CHILDREN – LORD
SAVE OUR CHILDREN.
THE BIBLE SAYS WE'RE ALL YOUR CHILDREN.
IN STRUGGLE SHOULD PRAY TO THEE.
SOME PLACES I FIND CHILDREN DYING. – O' LORD.
PLEASE SAVE OUR CHILDREN LORD.
** SAVE OUR CHILDREN.
O' LORD PLEASE SHOW US THAT YOU CARE
SAVE ALL YOUR CHILDREN FROM DESPAIR
O' LORD WE TRULY BELIEVE, YOU HAVE THE POWER
TO SAVE US FROM THIS GRIEF.

REPEAT * – **

SAVE OUR CHILDREN LORD.
SAVE OUR CHILDREN.

Figure 42: The lyrics and chords of "Save our children", written by Taliep.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

415 Interview with Paul Hanmer, 22 June 2012.
416 J Badawi, *The position of women in ancient civilization,* audio cassette, Islamic Information Foundation, Halifax, 1982.
417 M Shaw, *I'd rather have Jesus,* audio cassette, EMI Brigadiers, 1973.

According to the *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep was cast in a television show called *Harry's kid* shortly after the guitar festival.[418] No other information about this show could be found in the Taliep Petersen Archive. However, by November 1981 Taliep had already begun another project. The *Autobiographical chronology* follows up this entry with the following: "Then I returned to Cape Town and got a call from Southern Sun's Heather von Ruben who asked me to arrange a Dixieland band plus cabaret for the opening of 'Club Orleans' at the Elizabeth Hotel."[419] Heather von Ruben was the Entertainment Manager for the Southern Sun hotel group, and at some point during the 1970s or 1980s, was in a long-distance romantic relationship with Taliep, despite the ever present threat of discovery under the Immorality Amendment Act when they did manage to be together.[420] Taliep's eldest sister, Tagmieda related that she would subject all of Taliep's girlfriends to strict scrutiny. Von Ruben was no exception to this, but Tagmieda would eventually also develop a significant relationship with her, remaining friends long after Taliep had married Anders.[421]

In the mid-1970s Tagmieda had married a man called Noor Johnson and the two had bought their first home in Sirius Road, Surrey Estate.[422] According to her, Taliep increasingly moved between the house in Greef Street, Salt River, and her house, eventually living mainly with her and her husband. Although Taliep gradually moved out of Mogamat Ladien's house, he retained a very close relationship with his father. Because Taliep always used to complain about the exorbitant prices charged by recording studios, Tagmieda and her husband would also eventually give Taliep the servant's quarters in their house, in which to build his own studio. Taliep lived with Tagmieda and her husband for over thirteen years before finally moving out in the late 1980s. Tagmieda remembers how nervous she would be when Taliep and Heather were both sleeping under her roof: "Because, look, it's apartheid. Here I've got this white, blond woman in my house. She's sleeping in the one room, Taliep in the next and Noor and myself in the other room. So, ja, so we're just waiting for the doorbell to ring, or a fierce knock on the door."[423] According to von Ruben, she and Taliep never encountered any problems with the police due to their relationship. However, Taliep was far more conscious of this threat than she was, as von Ruben recalls, "I had not been brought up to discriminate according to someone's colour so I thought it was a stupid law and I had the arrogance of youth that made me believe that because it was stupid I did not have to worry about it."[424]

[418] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[419] Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[420] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012; Questionnaire completed by Heather von Ruben, 28 May 2012.
[421] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[422] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[423] Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.
[424] Questionnaire completed by Heather von Ruben, 28 May 2012.

The result of von Ruben's request was the creation of The Club Orleans Dixie Band, formed from a handful of ex-*Carnival* members joined by a number of experienced instrumentalists and vocalists. The band consisted of members Taliep, Anders, Bestman, Cyril Valentine, Chris Mathys, Pat Stevens, Errol Dyers, Robbie Jansen and Paul Petersen, now an ex-member of Spirits Rejoice as well as a band called Dr. Rhythm.[425] After playing at the opening of the Elizabeth Hotel in Port Elizabeth, The Club Orleans Dixie Band was booked for a number of performances in Southern Sun hotels along the Natal Coast. According to an article that appeared in the *Natal Mercury*, the band would be presenting "mardi gras evenings", consisting of "Dixieland music" and "jazz evenings" consisting of "rhythm and blues and typical Glen Miller big band sound."[426] As suggested by the above, the activities and name of The Club Orleans Dixie Band were intended to communicate "Americanness". The band, according to a review that appeared in the *Natal Mercury* on 3 December 1981, incorporated "District Six humour" and "copycat" imitations of Louis Armstrong alongside "superb blues in the true tradition of the South."[427] The Club Orleans Dixieland band would tour for ten weeks before returning to the Cape early in 1982.[428] At the beginning of what some have called "the darkest decade of apartheid,"[429] Taliep would recruit members to form a new band called Sapphyre. This band, discussed in the next chapter, would be hired by the Southern Sun hotel group to play "commercial and familiar" music for its clientele.[430]

Figure 43: The members of the New Orleans Dixie Band– Pat Stevens, Cyril Valentine, Madeegha Anders, Taliep (front), Dave Bestman, Chris Mathys, Errol Dyers and Paul Petersen (back), 1981.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

425 "Hear that Dixie sound", *Natal Mercury*, 27 November 1981.
426 "Hear that Dixie sound", *Natal Mercury*.
427 "Breath of fresh air from Dixie", *Natal Mercury*, 3 December 1981.
428 "Catch Taliep if your [*sic*] can!", *Cape Herald*, 6 February 1982.
429 Personal communication with Athol Fugard, 12 March 2013.
430 Questionnaire completed by Heather von Ruben, 28 May 2012.

Following in the wake of *Carnival a la District Six* and his comments about "huistoe" music, Taliep thus leaned once more towards American influences. This time, however, it was in response to a commissioned gig that required just that kind of music. With a name like Club Orleans, the Hotel Elizabeth was presenting its jazz club as an "authentic" American jazz club, in itself a reflection of South Africa's enthralment with American culture. However, it is questionable to label a renewed engagement with American influences as an "inauthentic" manifestation of Taliep's cultural context. As has emerged from the previous chapter, popular American music was as much a part of District Six as *moppies* and *nederlandsliedjies*, genres idealized by individuals with a stake in developing coloured identity along particular lines, such as I. D. du Plessis. However, judging from his comments about Dollar Brand, Taliep also made a distinction between the imported and the local, that which he regarded as "huistoe music".[431] Taliep's oscillation between these two idioms and his later attempts at superimposing one on the other suggest that he was comfortable with both, but that his use of either one was not without pragmatic and political ramifications. During these years his recognition of the inherent value and marketability of local folk music is at times juxtaposed with what could be regarded as a cultural stigma resulting from being a second-class citizen of South Africa. Also relevant to this discussion is the question of "originality". Although Taliep consistently performed cover versions of other people's compositions in these years, he also wrote a lot of his own songs. The notions of "authenticity" and "originality" in a culture shaped through processes of creolization will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

The approximately twenty years chronicled in this chapter tell the story of a coloured entertainer attempting to succeed in a world dominated by white concerns. During the course this life and career, compromise was often required. Indeed, in his early years, Taliep showed a willingness to compromise, judging from his comments in 1974 about a potential South African staging of the musical, *Hair*. As he became older, the need for compromise in no way lessened, and though his comments may have become increasingly militant, he nonetheless felt he needed to operate within the system. One thinks here of his appearance wearing the old South African national flag in 1978, his acceptance of a *Sarie* award in 1979, the commercialization and sanitization of his District

[431] Jackman, "Taliep Petersen – homing in on 'huistoe' music", *Cape Argus*.

Six story in *Carnival a la District Six* and his obtaining of a permit to perform in front of racially mixed audiences during its run in Cape Town. At the same time, however, Taliep and Bestman revised *Carnival a la District Six* several times until it grew into what could be called protest theatre. This is an impulse that, alongside a sense of cultural "legitimacy", would grow in subsequent years.

Finally, as Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson note in *The myths we live by*: "Any life story, written or oral, more or less dramatically, is in one sense a personal mythology, a self-justification."[432] This can be seen demonstrated in the construction of Taliep's life story, not only as manifested in stories he told about himself to journalists, but also in written documents such as the *Autobiographical chronicle*, and even in his selection and modification of newspaper articles included in the *Early years scrapbook* – his curation of himself. In his case, as an artist trying to survive financially and achieve success in a society that posited him as a second-class citizen, with all the concomitant restrictions on access to tertiary education, performance opportunities and radio airplay, this personal mythology took particular turns. Perhaps the most visible manifestation of this is Taliep's mythologization of his level of tertiary education until nearly beyond recognition, and his claiming of missed opportunities, such as *Godspell*, as events that actually took place. As the rest of this thesis will attempt to show, Taliep's life story as played out in these early years would eventually form the background, even justification, for subsequent projects.

[432] R Samuel & P Thompson, "Introduction", in R Samuel & P Thompson (eds), *The myths we live by*, Routledge, London, 1990, p. 10.

Part II

Recording *Rosa*

The year is 1983. Taliep Petersen and the other members of Sapphyre troop into Johannesburg's RPM studios. Led by Taliep on mandolin, electric guitar and lead vocals, the band includes Paul Petersen on electric guitar, Ebrahim Petersen on drums, Madeegha Anders on vocals, Paul Hanmer on keyboard and Johnny Isaacs on bass guitar. In addition to playing their instruments, all the band members except Paul Hanmer contribute to the band vocally. Sapphyre has just finished its last set at the five-star Landdrost Hotel where they have been performing covers of well-known American pop, rock and jazz hits to its guests, people who, according to Paul Hanmer, " ... have roast wheeled up to them, and drink Kannonkop till they fall about trying to dance to 'Take five' and stuff like that."[1] The band members are already warmed up and, since it is shortly after 1 AM, launch into their recording session. They are recording a LP with Peter Vee as producer, and Bobby Summerfield, Richard Mitchell and John Lindemann as sound engineers. The LP, *Rosa*, is to be released in that same year, its ten tracks comprising mainly versions of traditional Cape Malay folk songs, including *moppies* and *nederlandsliedjies*.

[1] Interview with Paul Hanmer, 29 November 2010.

At one such a recording session, Paul Hanmer notices that one of the notes on the piano needs retuning. Lindeman steps nearer with a pair of pliers, damps two of the three strings in question and goes to work on the remaining one. To the pianist's surprise, the resultant sound is better. Fresh out of his second year of BMus at UCT, Hanmer is the least experienced of all the musicians, or as the band members would on occasion refer to him, *uitgevriet* (spoilt). In the recording booth, Madeegha Anders, known as Valma before her reversion to Islam, is singing repertoire that is traditionally the domain of male vocalists. She is encouraged to make use of a melismatic technique called *karienkel*, an important feature of this album but that, owing to her gender and her predominantly Christian upbringing, is nonetheless new to her. Upon exiting the booth, Taliep, her future husband with whom she has been performing for the past two years, congratulates her: "Ek sal vir djou 'n star maak! Ek sal vir hulle wys, djy kan sing. Hulle ken nie van djou nie!"[2]

[2] "I will make you a star! I will show them you can sing. They don't know about you!" Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2011.

Chapter 3

Cultural creativity and the case of Sapphyre's *Rosa*

The early 1980s saw apartheid South Africa enter into a period of heightened state security amidst continued instability, widespread school boycotts and riots that would ultimately led to a series of states of national emergency in the mid-1980s. In this climate, international opinion turned decisively against the P.W. Botha-led apartheid government, intensifying the impact of sanctions and cultural, economic and sporting boycotts.[1] Through its involvement in the Angola war, the government had been trying to stem the flow of African nationalism and the perceived threat of communism for the past fourteen years. It was a battle they would continue to fight for nine more years.[2] At the start of the decade, Zimbabwe gained its independence and severed all diplomatic ties with South Africa, no doubt increasing perceptions amongst the majority of white citizens that South Africa was their ideological and political bastion in a sea of turbulent blackness.[3] Closer to home, the forced removals in District Six were finally completed in 1982 as the last remaining coloured family was expelled from Horstley Street, thirty-two years after its designation as a whites-only area under the Group Areas Act.[4] On 28 May 1981, a nine year-old Sub-A schoolboy, Abduraghman Salie, was knocked down by a bus in Hein Road, not far from his family home, an abandoned bus in Surrey Estate. He died the same day after lying for an hour in the back of a whites-only ambulance, waiting for an ambulance reserved for non-whites to take him to hospital.[5]

It was in this time and place that Taliep Petersen formed his new band, Sapphyre. Following the success of the Club New Orleans Dixie Band that had been commissioned by Southern Sun's Entertainment Manager, Heather von Ruben, for the opening of Club New Orleans in the Hotel Elizabeth, Port Elizabeth, Sapphyre had its first gig at the same venue.[6] Sapphyre was initially booked for a three-month run, making it the first coloured band to take up a residency at a hotel run by the Southern Sun's group.[7] As discussed in previous chapters, though the term "coloured" was initially used as a signifier for mixed-race individuals and others who were difficult to classify according to the apartheid government's binary conception of race, this term has since evolved to describe a diverse group of people whose fluid identity formations and heritage are increasingly discussed with reference to the cultural process

1 See H Giliomee, "The penalty of sanctions", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, p. 390.
2 See A Seegers, "A dirty frontier war", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, pp. 389–391.
3 South African History Online, "General South African history: 1980s", n.d., accessed on 17 June 2012, http://www.sahistory.org.za/1900s/1980s.
4 DC Martin, *Coon carnival: New year in Cape Town, past and present*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1999, p. 148.
5 "Ambulance for 'whites only' – boy (9) dies", *Cape Herald*, 31 May 1981.
6 T Petersen, *Autobiographical chronology*, typed document, c. 1984, Taliep Petersen Archive.
7 Questionnaire completed by Heather von Ruben, 28 May 2012.

of creolization. Against the background of coloured identity discourse, this chapter will discuss musical forms that have been shaped by these processes, investigating notions of "tradition" and "authenticity" within a community marked by cultural encounter and the transformative process of creolization. It will do so by focusing on the activities of Sapphyre in the 1980s, with specific reference to their 1983 LP, *Rosa.*

According to Mohamed Adhikari, the application of creolization theory to the question of coloured identity constructions is a development closely related to social constructionism, the third paradigm (after essentialism and instrumentalism) discussed in his essay on the development of coloured identity discourse in South Africa.[8] Social constructionism emerged in the 1980s to emphasize human agency in creating one's one personal or group identity, also emphasizing the fact that identity is not fixed but fluid. Identifying creolization as the fourth and final paradigm in historical writing on the coloured population, Adhikari regards this approach as social constructionism informed by particular perspectives drawn from postcolonial and postmodern theory, concluding that it "holds much potential" for investigating the creation of coloured identity in South Africa.[9] According to Martin, the concept of creolization was introduced by Kamau Brathwaite in 1971 to "account for cultural processes in the course of which the confrontation of cultures was not only cruel, but also creative".[10] The writings of French-Caribbean Édouard Glissant have been particularly influential in discourses of creolization. For Glissant, creolization is an ongoing process that can be understood through the "poetics of relation", a process that, as explained by Denis-Constant Martin, "allows us to conceptualize communication between cultural idiosyncrasies (opacités) mutually freed of the toughness of their differences".[11]

Creolization theory thus calls for a move away from essentialist notions of fixed identity and towards the recognition of creativity in a fluid process of making and remaking identities. Martin notes that, according to the Martiniquan writers Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant, a creole identity involves the creation of "an original human entity" through the aggregation of elements from various places of origin, including those of slave, settler and any other

[8] M Adhikari, "From narratives of miscegenation to post-modernist re-imagining: Toward a historiography of coloured identity in South Africa", *American Historical Review*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2008, p. 94.
[9] Adhikari, "From narratives of miscegenation to post-modernist re-imagining: Toward a historiography of coloured identity in South Africa", p. 96.
[10] DC Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, African Minds, Somerset West, 2013, p. 67.
[11] Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, p. 61

peoples encountered.[12] However, these writers have been criticized by other Caribbean writers for failing to recognize the transformative power of creolization and for presenting creoleness as a specific identity that leaves little room for creativity.[13] According to Martin, this is an invitation to return to Glissant's understanding of creolization. Indeed, the Caribbean scholar differentiates between creoleness and creolization as follows: "Creolization, one of the ways of forming a complex mix – and not merely a linguistic result – is only exemplified by its processes and certainly not by the 'contents' on which these operate. This is where we depart from the concept of creoleness."[14]

Drawing on the work of Glissant in her application of creolization theory to the creation of South African coloured identity, Zimitri Erasmus emphasizes "the condition of its making and re-making" above its "content".[15] Acknowledging the conditions of slavery and domination that underlie creolization, she defines this process as "cultural creativity under conditions of marginality."[16] Within South African discourse, Herman Wasserman and Sean Jacobs have also warned that creolization should not be regarded as a gentle transition that happens without power struggles, nor does it "signify a complete break with the past."[17] To account for the concept of "domination" underlying creolization, and specifically for the dominant representations that have impacted on coloured self-representations in South Africa, Erasmus identifies the coloured community as an example of Glissant's "cornered communities", communities without "cultural hinterland" and where no "autonomous system of production" has been maintained.[18] However, Erasmus warns that this concept does not account for one particular feature of coloured experience, namely the ambiguous positioning in the racial hierarchy between white and black, thus simultaneous domination and complicity with domination. Erasmus furthermore asserts that this contradiction cannot be ignored and that a re-thinking of coloured identity "requires acknowledgement of this complicity."[19] She enlists Glissant's concept of "entanglement" to think through this difficulty: "In exploring the available options,

[12] DC Martin, "Cape Town: The ambiguous heritage of creolization in South Africa", in D de Lame & DC Rassool (eds), *Popular snapshots and tracks to the past: Cape Town, Nairobi, Lubumbashi*, Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, 2010, p. 185.

[13] Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, pp. 60–61.

[14] É Glissant, *Poetics of relation*, trans. B Wing, The University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1997, p. 89.

[15] Z Erasmus, "Introduction: Re-imagining coloured identities in post-apartheid South Africa", in Z Erasmus (ed.), *Coloured by history shaped by place: New perspectives on coloured identities in Cape Town*, Kwela Books in association with South African History Online, Cape Town, 2001, p. 22.

[16] Erasmus, "Introduction: Re-imagining coloured identities in post-apartheid South Africa", p. 16.

[17] H Wasserman & S Jacobs (eds), *Shifting selves, post-apartheid essays on mass media, culture and identity,* Kwela Books, Cape Town, 2003, p. 16, cited in Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, p. 55.

[18] É Glissant *Caribbean discourse: Selected essays,* trans. JM Dash, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1989, p. 103.

[19] Erasmus, "Introduction: Re-imagining coloured identities in post-apartheid South Africa", p. 24.

he argues that diversion – turning away from the pain and difficulty of creolised beginnings – needs to be complemented with reversion – a return to the point of entanglement, the point of difficulty."[20]

In his 2010 essay, "Cape Town: The ambiguous heritage of creolization in South Africa", Martin argues that the musical history of Cape Town is "largely the result of a process of creolization that has been devalued and rejected by the ruling sections of the population but never wiped out".[21] With reference to the work of Orlando Patterson on slavery as "social death", Martin asserts that colonial Cape Town was a melting pot of different cultures within which the slaves fought their own social deaths and asserted their humanity through creation: "They fought their dehumanization by asserting their capacity for invention, in other words, by affirming their belonging to the human race".[22] In this, music played an important role. This was not limited to the vocal practices among the slaves, such as the singing of *ghoemaliedjies* at picnics, but also extended to the practice of instrumental musics. Many slaves arrived in the Cape as skilled musicians, and having familiarized themselves with European instruments, played an important role in early South African entertainment practices. Many country estates kept slave orchestras that accompanied country dances and balls. Similarly, the Dutch governor was in possession of a slave orchestra that performed at public government functions from the late seventeenth century onwards.[23]

Martin argues that these and other musical practices, informed by diverse musical influences abounding in the Cape, created musical forms such as the *ghoemaliedjie* and *nederlandslied*, as discussed in Chapter 1. Martin furthermore argues that political events in South Africa "left the legacy of a creole urbanity to the coloureds"[24] He goes so far as to suggest that the *ghoema* rhythm is the most recognisable Capetonian musical signifier: "The *ghoema* beat gives rhythm to the history of a city that its inhabitants built together, even though they may not necessarily have wanted to, even though some may not have been aware of it, and they and others may not have acknowledged it."[25] However, in regarding Cape Town's musical history as "largely the result of a process of creolization",[26] Martin emphasizes the resultant product at a cost to notions of fluidity characterising this process, to the extent that he later defines repertoires found in coloured

[20] Erasmus, "Introduction: Re-imagining coloured identities in post-apartheid South Africa", p. 24
[21] Martin, "Cape Town: The ambiguous heritage of creolization in South Africa", p. 189.
[22] Martin, "Cape Town: The ambiguous heritage of creolization in South Africa", p. 184.
[23] DB Coplan, In township tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre, 2nd edn, Jacana Media, Johannesburg, 2007, pp. 15–16.
[24] Martin, "Cape Town: The ambiguous heritage of creolization in South Africa", p. 189.
[25] Martin, "Cape Town: The ambiguous heritage of creolization in South Africa", pp. 200–201.
[26] Martin, "Cape Town: The ambiguous heritage of creolization in South Africa", p. 189.

communities as belonging in one of two categories, namely imported and creole.[27] As such, Martin is in danger of dealing with creoleness as opposed to the continuing processes of creolization that oppose reification.

When Sapphyre secured its first gig with the Southern Sun Hotel group, it consisted of Taliep, Valma Anders, Ebrahim Petersen (ex-member of The Playboys and the *Carnival a la District Six* backing band), Paul Petersen (ex-member of Drive, Spirits Rejoice and Dr. Rhythm, who had also been a member of the New Orleans Dixieland Band), Johnny Isaacs and Paul Hanmer. Previous to joining Sapphyre, Isaacs had played for a number of bands, including Bloodshed, E' Lollipop and Pop File, at one stage backing Gerald "Space" Marney, an example of "copycat" culture as South Africa's own Marvin Gaye.[28] Hanmer was the least experienced member of the group, having interrupted his BMus studies at the University of Cape Town to join Sapphyre.[29]

In an interview published in the *Sunday Times Extra* on 10 November 1985, Taliep explained that because of restrictions imposed by the Liquor Act, hotels, as license holders, needed a permit to employ non-white entertainers. Before accepting their first gig at the Elizabeth Sun in Port Elizabeth, Taliep called a meeting with his family members and the rest of the band. During this meeting, everyone was in favour of refusing to play "under permit", except his mother, who allegedly told him, "Taliep, my boy, go and fight them from the inside and not from the outside."[30] In the interview, Taliep explained: "We all agreed these were wise words, coming from a woman who had known exploitation and discrimination and who had been subjected to injustices."[31] Sapphyre accepted an initial three-month contract, that was soon extended first to six months, then to a year.[32] Journalist Peter Randall, writing in the *Oosterlig*, describes Club Orleans as an environment that focused on providing good food against the backdrop of quality entertainment that nonetheless did not dominate the overall experience of patrons, describing the band's mandate as follows: "Die taak van die orkes is om sy gehoor subtiel te vermaak en terselfdertyd met verloop van die aand dié wat lus voel om te dans, baan toe te lok."[33] Sapphyre received high acclaim for

[27] Martin, "Cape Town: The ambiguous heritage of creolization in South Africa", p. 190.
[28] Interview with Paul Hanmer, 22 June 2012; J Isaacs, *To Taliep: Johnnie Isaacs biography,* handwritten document, 15 November 1984, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[29] Interview with Paul Hanmer, 22 June 2012.
[30] R du Preez, "Sapphyre land a gem of a contract", *Sunday Times Extra*, 10 November 1985.
[31] Du Preez, "Sapphyre land a gem of a contract", *Sunday Times Extra*.
[32] R du Preez, "Taliep's hit gold!", *Sunday Times Extra*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[33] "The task of the band is to subtly entertain its audience and simultaneously, over the course of the evening, entice those who feel like dancing, to the dance floor." P Randall, "Puik debuut in P.E. hotel", *Oosterlig*, 11 February 1982.

succeeding in doing this, and was described as "professional and slick"[34] and "musically mature".[35] Even during this first residency, the musicians were praised for their versatility, as a newspaper article of unknown origin in the *Early years scrapbook*[36] attests to: "This band is very versatile and can play anything from disco funk to Viennese waltzes."[37] One reviewer wrote: "The group's ensemble vocals are beautifully blended and very pleasant, the rhythms good and the arrangements of the music excellent, again bearing in mind the difference between dining and dancing."[38]

As discussed in the previous chapter, apartheid legislation in the late 1970s had gradually allowed racially mixed audiences into theatres, albeit under particular circumstances that included obtaining a permit. However, in the case of the Southern Sun hotels, other legislation such as the Liquor Act would ostensibly have prohibited black restaurant patrons from hearing Sapphyre play. Some band members, though, remember performing to racially mixed audiences, possibly because the five-star rating of these hotels would have accommodated foreigners against whom it would have been more difficult to enforce discriminatory laws.[39] According to playwright Athol Fugard, legislative loopholes made it possible to perform to mixed-race audiences in the 1970s and 1980s, provided these performances were presented as private gatherings for guests "by invitation only".[40] Fugard suggests that the hotels where Sapphyre performed would have constituted an exclusive space dominated by economic concerns: "Since a significant amount of money was changing hands in this industry, the police would have been reluctant to interfere with the guest list."[41]

After their first twelve months at the Elizabeth Hotel, Sapphyre opened at the five-star Landdrost Hotel in Johannesburg.[42] It was here that *Rosa* was recorded. The band's next engagement was at the Beverley Hills Hotel in Umhlanga. During this time, the band appeared alongside Taliep on TV1 where he was featured in a thirty-minute episode of *In person*.[43] Shortly after their stay in Johannesburg, Paul Hanmer left the band and was replaced by Onyx Phillips.[44] Over the next few years

34 C Hogan, "Sapphyre: A group well worth hearing", *Eastern Province Herald*, 5 February 1982.
35 "New combo has a lot going for it", *Evening Post*, 5 February 1982.
36 *Early years scrapbook*, scrapbook containing miscellaneous items, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
37 "Talented group in PE for 3 months", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
38 "New combo has a lot going for it", *Evening Post*.
39 Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
40 Personal communication with Athol Fugard, 18 June 2012.
41 Personal communication with Athol Fugard, 18 June 2012.
42 Du Preez, "Taliep's hit gold!", *Sunday Times Extra*.
43 "Taliep nets own TV show", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
44 Interview with Paul Hanmer, 22 June 2012.

Figure 44: The members of Sapphyre – Madeegha Anders, Taliep, Paul Hanmer, Ebrahim Petersen, Paul Petersen (standing) and Johnny Isaacs (kneeling) together with cabaret artist Marti Caine (kneeling), early 1980s.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

(and still in the employ of the Southern Sun Hotel Group), Sapphyre would play in various South African venues including the Beacon Island Sun in Plettenberg Bay and the Cape Sun in Cape Town.[45] As time went by, the membership of the band underwent further changes. Anders, by then known as Madeegha after her reversion to Islam in the early 1980s, gradually stopped singing for Sapphyre after 1986 and was replaced first by Helene Josephs and later by Elspeth Davids. Taliep left Sapphyre in the early 1990s while the band was stationed at the La Galloa Hotel in the Comoros. Having changed its name to Karibu, the band continued with Paul Petersen as band leader for a number of years, only breaking up shortly after South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994.[46]

Sapphyre's gig at the Villa Dei Cesari in 1985 was a particularly important one in establishing the group's reputation. The Cape Sun hotel management had initially decided only to sign acts from abroad; when Sapphyre passed an audition and was finally signed to perform at the Villa Dei Cesari, they were once again the first non-white group to play in the venue.[47] The Cape Sun residency was also important in that it took place against the background of intense political upheaval in South Africa. An interview that appeared in *Die Burger* late in 1985 gives perhaps the clearest indication of Taliep's own perception of his role during apartheid: "Dis moeilike tye dié, maar ek dink die mense soek vrolike musiek om hulle 'n bietjie te laat vergeet. En dis wat ons doen."[48] This point of view was explained as follows by journalist Melvin Whitebooi:

> Ons leef in depressiewe tye. Die noodtoestand. Die eksamen-krisis. Boikotte. Geweld. Ag, 'n mens kan tot laataand toe daaroor praat. Maar dan is daar skielik 'n groep soos Sapphyre op die toneel. En almal geniet hul musiek. Ek bedoel almal. En jy vergeet 'n oomblik van die swaar tye.[49]

During a period of leave in the first half of 1984, shortly before their return to the Beacon Isle Sun for twelve months, and before their residency at the Cape Sun, Taliep and Anders travelled abroad together.[50] Although Taliep had previously spent some time abroad, this was the first time Anders left South

[45] "A Sapphyre in the sun", *The Beacon Island news,* n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive; Du Preez, "Sapphyre land a gem of a contract", *Sunday Times Extra*.
[46] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[47] Du Preez, "Sapphyre land a gem of a contract", *Sunday Times Extra*.
[48] "These are difficult times, but I think the people are looking for cheerful music to let them forget a little bit. And that's what we do." M Whitebooi, "Sapphyre bring 'n bietjie Kaapse son na die Cape Sun," *Die Burger*, 22 November 1985.
[49] "We live in depressing times. The State of Emergency. The exam crisis. Boycotts. Violence. Oh, one can talk about it late into the night. But then, suddenly a group like Sapphyre comes onto the scene. And everyone enjoys their music. I mean everyone. And, for a moment, you forget about the difficult times." Whitebooi, "Sapphyre bring 'n bietjie Kaapse son na die Cape Sun," *Die Burger*.
[50] R du Preez, "It's all go for Taliep!", *Sunday Times Extra*, 1 July 1984.

Africa. In fact, if it weren't for an Alpha Romeo Juliette with a faulty engine, Anders might not have undertaken the journey at all. She describes how she had considered using her savings to buy a car, but that Paul Petersen had taken it for a test drive before he pronounced, amidst billowing smoke, that the engine was faulty.[51] Instead of buying the car, Anders used the money to go abroad with Taliep. They spent time in London, New York (where they visited the home of jazz musicians Abdullah Ibrahim and Sathima Bea Benjamin), and a number of days in Paris where, listening to a jazz group perform in a club one night, they were spontaneously asked by a band member to sing a few songs.[52] In an account of this event published in a 1984 interview with René du Preez, compelling details emerge, such as Taliep's surprise that "there was no cover charge to the place, which, incidentally, is frequented by the rich", but that they were charged nearly R20 for a cup of coffee and a glass of orange juice.[53] In describing the response to their mini-performance, Taliep states: "The people simply freaked out."[54]

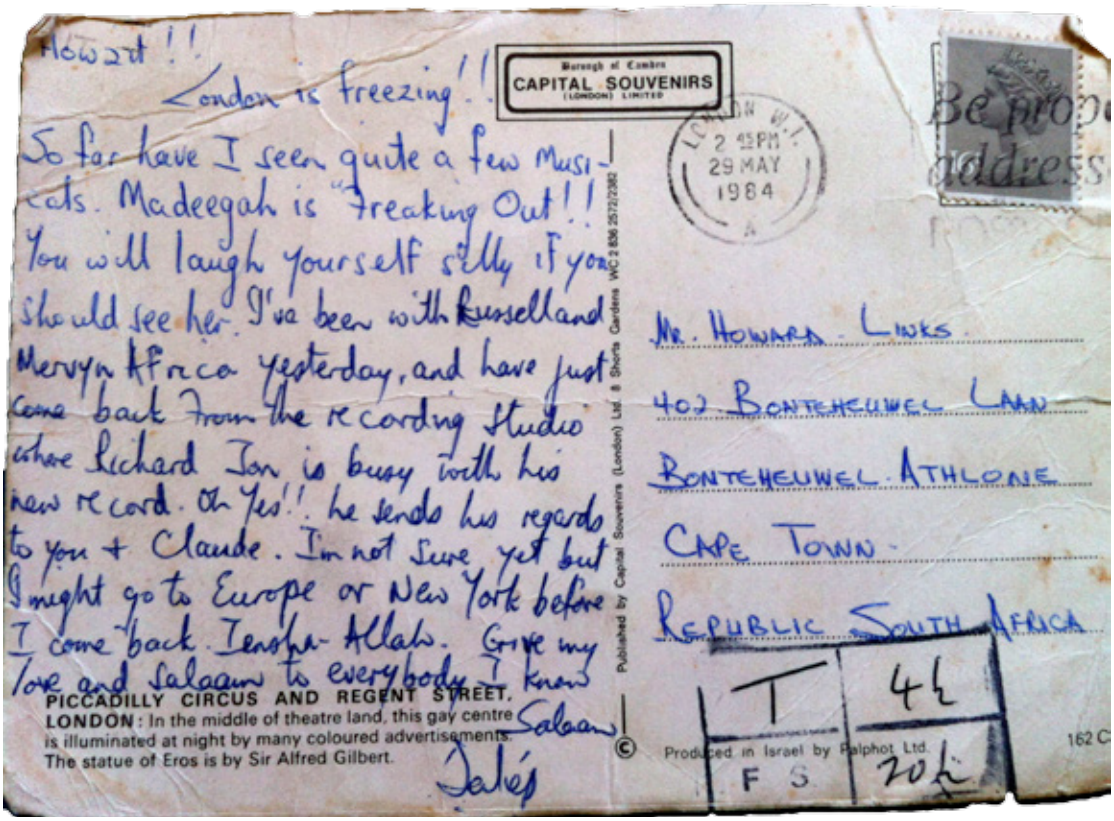


Figure 45: A postcard sent by Taliep to Howard Links from Europe, 19 May 1984.
SOURCE: Howard Links Archive

51 Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.
52 Du Preez, "It's all go for Taliep!", *Sunday Times Extra*.
53 Du Preez, "It's all go for Taliep!", *Sunday Times Extra*.
54 Du Preez, "It's all go for Taliep!", *Sunday Times Extra*.

During this trip, Anders made it her priority to see as many musicals as possible on The West End, including *Cats, Snoopy, 42nd Street, Les miserables, Miss Saigon, Phantom of the opera, West Side story* and *A chorus line*, of which the latter had a profound influence on her future ambition to perform not only as a singer, but also as an actress.[55] In the aforementioned interview with Taliep, the list of musicals he saw is extended to include *Singing in the rain, Y, Starlight express, Little shop of horrors, On your toes* and *Evita*.[56] Taliep also attended the shows of South African artists Russel Herman, Mervyn Africa and Brian Abrahams. As was the case with his previous visit to London five years earlier, Taliep once again remarked on the homegrown content of South African acts abroad: "So, you can see South African musicians living overseas are still proud of their backgrounds and making people abroad aware our music can stand up to the best that England, Europe or the United States has to offer."[57]

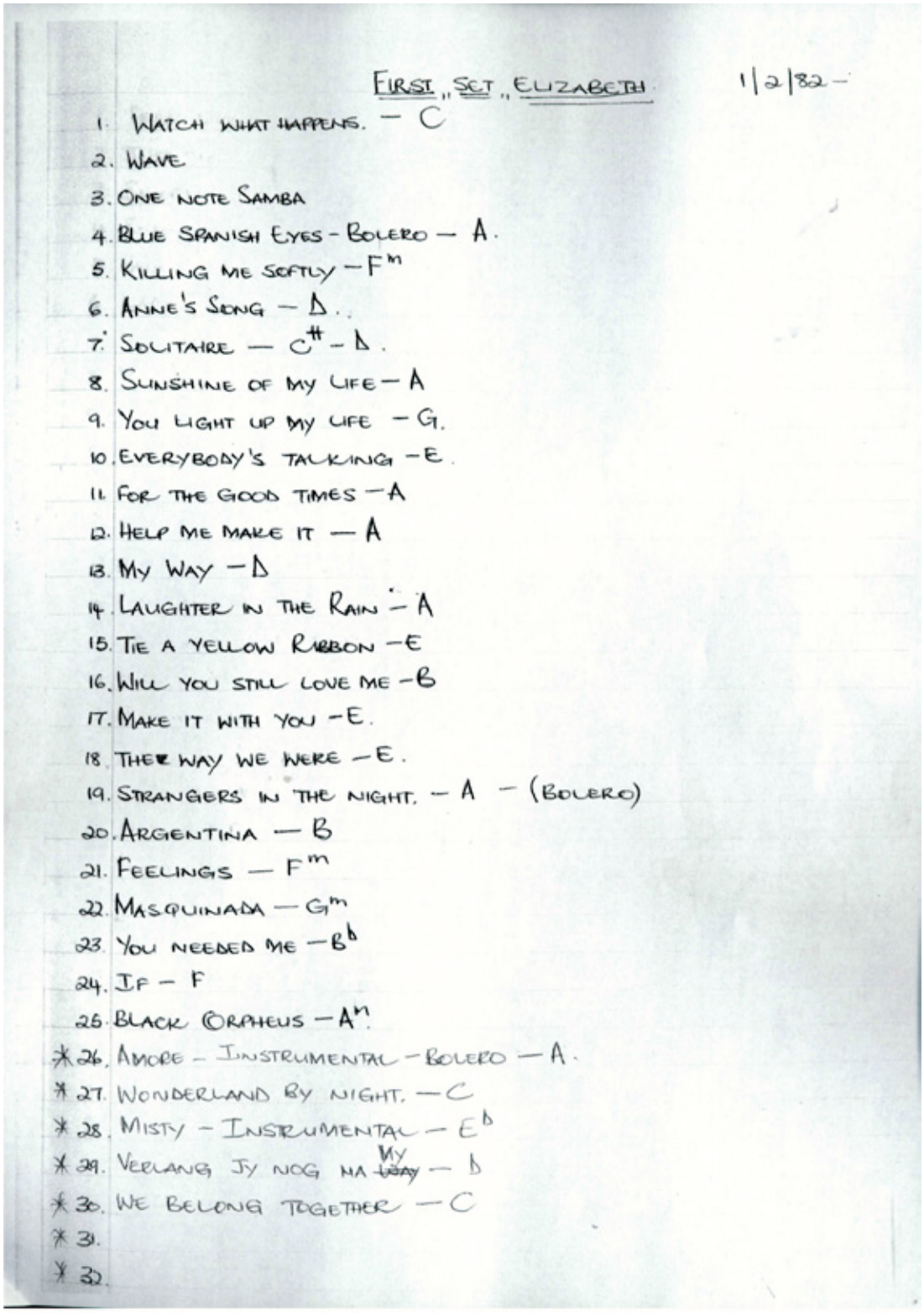
As band leader of Sapphyre, Taliep is described by Hanmer and Anders as a very strict disciplinarian who demanded a high degree of professionalism from the other band members, both in their capacity as musicians and in their conduct off-stage. On occasion he had discussions with individual band members over recreational drug use and even their personal relationships if he perceived these as negative.[58] He could also become impatient and abrasive if anyone made mistakes on stage or did not grasp something the first time it was explained. Taliep is quoted on this subject as follows: "I set the standards, and I don't allow a situation to get out of hand. I use strong words when the need arises and I have found this to be of great benefit to us all. This is a tough business and your act cannot afford to flag when you play five-star venues."[59] This disciplined environment, coupled with rehearsals five days a week from 14:00 to 17:00, demanded high levels of focus from the musicians, and the initially less-experienced band members describe their time with Sapphyre as highly educational, musically and otherwise.[60] Hanmer explains how their band leader would on occasion demonstrate the tempo of a song by playing loudly on his red guitar, but that he would simultaneously be demonstrating the level of liveliness and commitment that he expected from the band members. He states that, at times, the guitar became "a tool of exhortation, more like the flag in front of an army."[61]

55 Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.
56 Du Preez, "It's all go for Taliep!", *Sunday Times Extra*.
57 Du Preez, "It's all go for Taliep!", Sunday Times Extra.
58 Interview with Paul Hanmer, 29 November 2011; Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.
59 Du Preez, "Sapphyre land a gem of a contract", Sunday Times Extra.
60 Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012; Interview with Paul Hanmer, 29 November 2011.
61 Interview with Paul Hanmer, 29 November 2011.

Due to the fact that Sapphyre managed to secure residencies with some of the more upmarket hotels such as the Landdrost, and later the newly-opened Cape Sun, they became one of the highest paid bands on the hotel circuit.[62] Residencies in these hotels lasted for a minimum of two months, with the option of extension depending on the quality of musical performances and consistent "good behaviour" after hours, by which was implied that the stay of other hotel guests should not be disrupted through excessive noise or substance abuse. Taliep was instrumental in enforcing these conditions. According to Hanmer, "He kept the band in work for years. Because of a serious amount of discipline."[63] Taliep also chose the band's uniform: a cream jacket and trousers, vermillion shirt with a plastic gold thread detail, black socks and grey shoes, a choice not popular with all the band members.[64] Finally, a part of his job consisted in negotiating a number of more and less basic rights for the musicians, such as the right to take their meals in the hotel's dining room with the guests and a month's paid leave for every twelve months of work.[65] Whereas, on occasion, Taliep had to enter and leave a venue via the back door during the 60s and 70s, he insisted that one of the conditions of their contract be that the band members of Sapphyre be treated with respect, and not discriminated against on the grounds of race.[66]

Sapphyre's repertoire was very broad, and they adapted their programme according to the preferences and age demographic of their audiences. Occasionally, the band would perform traditional musical material hailing from the Western Cape coloured community, such as "Rosa". The cultural and geographic specificity of these songs is recognized in an interview published in 1983 in which Taliep states: "Johannesburg people have never heard songs like Roosa [*sic*]. It's completely new to them."[67] However, the vast majority of Sapphyre's repertoire consisted of covers of past and current international hits, basically, whatever was popular at the time. Examples of songs frequently covered include "Stand by me", "Under the boardwalk", "Mustang Sally", "My way", "Autumn leaves", "Tie a yellow ribbon round the ole oak tree" and "New York, New York".[68] They also performed jazz standards and songs generally recognized as belonging to the Great American Songbook, including a lot of the music recorded by Frank Sinatra and the Ella Fitzgerald/Louis Armstrong duo. The band also played sixties rock and roll, covering artists like the Rolling Stones and Jimi Hendrix.[69]

62 Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.
63 Interview with Paul Hanmer, 29 November 2011.
64 Interview with Paul Hanmer, 29 November 2011.
65 Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012; Interview with Paul Hanmer, 29 November 2011.
66 Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.
67 Du Preez, "Taliep's hit gold!", *Sunday Times Extra.*
68 Interview with Paul Hanmer, 29 November 2011; Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
69 Interview with Paul Hanmer, 29 November 2011.



FIRST „ SET „ ELIZABETH 1/2/82 –

1. WATCH WHAT HAPPENS. – C
2. WAVE
3. ONE NOTE SAMBA
4. BLUE SPANISH EYES – BOLERO – A.
5. KILLING ME SOFTLY – F^m
6. ANNE'S SONG – D.
7. SOLITAIRE – C# – D.
8. SUNSHINE OF MY LIFE – A
9. YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE – G.
10. EVERYBODY'S TALKING – E.
11. FOR THE GOOD TIMES – A
12. HELP ME MAKE IT – A
13. MY WAY – D
14. LAUGHTER IN THE RAIN – A
15. TIE A YELLOW RIBBON – E
16. WILL YOU STILL LOVE ME – B
17. MAKE IT WITH YOU – E.
18. THE WAY WE WERE – E.
19. STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT. – A – (BOLERO)
20. ARGENTINA – B
21. FEELINGS – F^m
22. MASQUINADA – G^m
23. YOU NEEDED ME – B^b
24. IF – F
25. BLACK ORPHEUS – A^m
* 26. AMORE – INSTRUMENTAL – BOLERO – A.
* 27. WONDERLAND BY NIGHT. – C
* 28. MISTY – INSTRUMENTAL – E^b
* 29. VERLANG JY NOG NA ~~WAY~~ MY – D
* 30. WE BELONG TOGETHER – C
* 31.
* 32.

Figure 46: A list indicating the songs to be performed during Sapphyre's first set at the Elizabeth Sun, Port Elizabeth, 1 February 1982.
SOURCE Taliep Petersen Archive

To stay abreast of current trends, Taliep gave the band members taped copies of the current Top 10 or Top 20 music hits as determined by newspapers and radio stations. Every band member was expected to come to rehearsals prepared, as each individual was responsible for writing out the lyrics and working out his or her instrumental part. When the group met for their daily rehearsal, they would put the music together, and although the band leader would make suggestions and take responsibility for the overall sound, the process is described by band members as collaborative.[70] Paul Petersen stresses the individual creativity that each member brought to this process and states that, "We would take a song and kind of do it our way."[71] Although the basic melody would remain the same in the cover, the arrangement would change the original. The guitar solos, for example, were never copied. This approach allowed band members to give their own interpretation of a piece, but also exempted them from the difficulties inherent in performing a song exactly like the original artist.[72] According to Hanmer, many different elements are involved in giving a song its essence and a cover band musician tries to incorporate as many elements as possible. Original parts that were indispensable to a particular song were often pragmatically assigned to different instruments where the original instrument was not available, such as a brass or third guitar part being assigned to the keyboard player on synthesizer. On the other hand, non-essential parts could be left out, providing the end-result could still work as a "simulacrum of the original."[73] Different songs were also treated differently. For example, more liberty was taken with standards that existed in numerous popular recordings.[74]

Finally, Taliep prided himself on being able to perform any song his audience requested, providing cards on the tables in order to encourage audience members to request songs. As a journalist in the *Cape Herald* reported: "It is no idle boast when Taliep says they play 'everything'. He openly challenges the crowds to request a song, from today's current hits to yesteryear's greats, from the Andrews Sisters to Stevie Wonder ..."[75] Anders recalls that he had "a million songs in his head" and that he could play any song on demand.[76] On the singular occasions when he did not know a song requested by a member of the audience, he would ask them to sing it for him and in Anders's words, "they would hum something and then he would kind of connect it to something, you know, that sounded very similar."[77] On occasions

70 Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012; Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
71 Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
72 Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
73 Interview with Paul Hanmer, 22 June 2012.
74 Interview with Paul Hanmer, 22 June 2012.
75 "The hottest act in Cape Town", *Cape Herald*, 4 January 1986.
76 Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
77 Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.

when the audience was not satisfied with what he played, he would promise them that he would have the song ready the next day. Anders recalls an occasion when a couple, to the great consternation of the band members, requested a rumba. The following morning, they did research and listened to several examples so that, following their afternoon rehearsal, they could play a rumba to the audience that very night.[78] According to Heather von Ruben, Sapphyre was so successful on the hotel circuit precisely because Taliep worked hard to ensure that their repertoire was what the "clientele" wanted.[79] However, Taliep's eldest sister Tagmieda, suggests that (despite his hard work) he did not necessarily find playing covers to restaurant guests satisfying, frequently reporting on the evening's performance as follows: "O gits, julle willie weetie, man, ek het weer vir messe en vurke gespeel."[80]

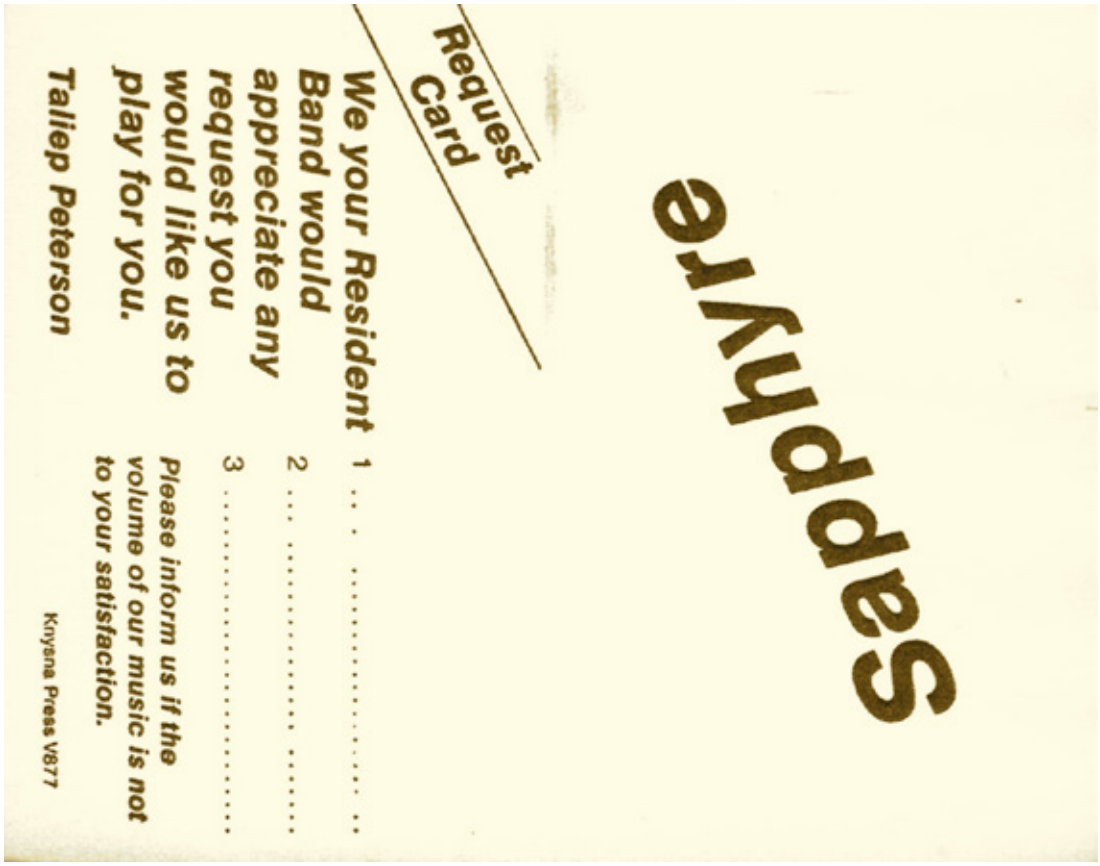


Figure 47: The card that was placed on every restaurant table enabling patrons to request specific songs from Sapphyre.
SOURCE Taliep Petersen Archive

78 Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012
79 Questionnaire completed by Heather von Ruben, 28 May 2012.
80 "Oh boy, you don't want to know, man, I played for knives and forks again." Interview with Tagmieda Johnson, 13 September 2012.

Given the fact that Sapphyre was formed with the goal of earning money on the hotel circuit, playing cover versions of popular music made more sense than the composition and performance of entirely new material. In addition to presenting familiar, palatable music, one could argue that avoiding politics was a prerequisite to making a living as a performer. In describing the South African music world during the early 1980s, David Coplan states: "If your playing had anything visible to do with black political aspirations, or with the cultural expressionism of Black Consciousness audibly encoded in Afro-fusion, soul-jazz, and other syncretic 'Africanist' styles, then contracts, engagements and venues were hard to secure."[81] There is a possible continuation in Sapphyre's story of the seventeenth century slave orchestras that were employed to entertain a class to which they did not belong, or a society in which they were not welcomed as citizens with equal rights. Taliep's approach towards learning repertoire and his reputation of being able to reproduce anything he heard, echo the impressions of Louisa Ross, the wife of a British Army General, on the late nineteenth-century musical life in the Cape:

> She was impressed by the ability of coloured musicians to reproduce anything they had heard, songs and ballads, dances such as waltzes, gallops, jigs and polkas, even overtures and arias taken from operas. Every new tune brought to the Cape on the waves of European fashions and fads was soon learned and broadcast by these musicians. Music was in such demand that some people could make a living out of it.[82]

In his essay examining the cover and tribute band phenomenon in contemporary practice, popular music scholar Andy Bennet writes: "One of the defining characteristics of popular music performance since the rock 'n' roll explosion of the mid-1950s has been 'imitation'".[83] Sapphyre, however, did not focus on producing note-perfect copies of the music they were covering, but rather on playing their own versions of the music. In pointing out the distinction between tribute and cover acts, Shane Homan notes that cover musicians play a wide variety of other artists' material, and although their essential mandate is to "enact some form of kinship with the original", they "may bring their own vocal/instrumental inflections to the cover".[84] Homan notes that, in contrast to this, tribute acts focus on faithfully recreating songs and even the personae of one specific band or artist. Sapphyre, therefore, was a cover band, not a tribute act.

[81] Coplan, *In Township Tonight! Three centuries of South African black city music and theatre*, p. 293.
[82] Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, past to present*, pp. 66–67.
[83] A Bennett, "Even better than the real thing? Understanding the tribute band phenomenon", in S Homan (ed.), *Access all eras: Tribute bands and global pop culture*, Open University Press, Maidenhead, 2006, p. 19.
[84] S Homan, "Introduction", in S Homan (ed.), *Access all eras: Tribute bands and global pop culture*, Open University Press, Maidenhead, 2006, p. 4.

Cape Town's copycat singers, on the other hand, serve as a South African example of the tribute act. In attempting to produce a sound nearly indistinguishable from the original artist, these copycats provided audiences with the opportunity of listening to a sound that they would otherwise not have been able to experience live, either due to economic restraints or cultural boycotts during apartheid. They also served to prove that members of a marginalized South African community could sound "just as good" as international stars. In fact, they could sound just like them. Taliep notes in an interview conducted by Martin in 1994 that these artists practiced long hours perfecting their imitation and that Cape Town, amongst others, had its own Jerry Lewis, Engelbert Humperdinck, Cliff Richard and The Platters.[85] Similar to the rationale behind tribute acts worldwide, was the copycat artist's desire to present audiences with an experience they would otherwise not be able to hear live:

> But the older guys ... because that is how you got recognized, you know ... because the chance was remote that Frank Sinatra was gonna come to Cape Town, so for the people all they could also just close their ... all they had to do was close their eyes and imagine that's Sinatra, because the man was sounding just like Sinatra ... [86]

Sapphyre's experience of tapping into the lucrative cover band circuit instead of creating and playing original music is not surprising, nor is it unique to a South African context. Cover bands worldwide make a living on the premise that familiarity attracts listeners more easily than innovation. Concomitant with the high premium placed on originality in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century music industry, cover musicians are frequently condescendingly regarded as entertainers and not artists, as having "sold out" and incapable of ever achieving success as an original recording artist.[87] However, as argued by George Plasketes, there is a different way of looking at covers, perhaps best summarized in the words of American singer-songwriter Emmylou Harris: "Songs need new voices to sing them in places they've never been sung in order to stay alive."[88] Plasketes notes that "notions of ownership, repossession, borrowing, entitlement and authenticity have always converged as part of the cover song heritage", but that a postmodernist framework has, since the late

[85] Taliep Petersen interviewed by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.
[86] Taliep Petersen interviewed by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.
[87] See S Groce, "Occupational rhetoric and ideology: A comparison of copy and original music performers", *Qualitative Sociology*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1989, pp. 391–410; see also G Morrow, "Selling out or buying in? The dual career of the original and cover band musician", in S Homan (ed.), *Access all eras: Tribute bands and global pop culture*, Open University Press, Maidenhead, 2006, pp. 182-197.
[88] N Griffith, *Other voices, other rooms*, CD liner notes, Elektra Records, 1993 cited in G Plasketes, "Re-flections on the Cover Age: A collage of continuous coverage in popular music", *Popular Music and Society*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2005, p. 137.

1970s, occasioned a move away from notions of authenticity.[89] This has allowed different theoretical engagements with the notion of "cover" that acknowledge the creation of new meanings in new contexts and by different voices.

Plasketes also notes that the process of covering essentially involves adaptation and interpretation, that a song "undergoes a recontextualization, remaining in the same medium, with the artists translating the material into a particular style".[90] This recontextualization not only refers to the adaptation of musical material, but also relates to changes in space, social context and historical situatedness. Re-performances of songs in new contexts evoke musical memory and create, in Pasketes's words: "A delicate and dichotomous dance between past and present, place and possibility. Between the song, its composer, its interpreter(s) and listeners, connecting, disconnecting, reconnecting."[91] Jimi Hendrix material, say, gains added layers of meaning when it is performed by a coloured band in an exclusively white hotel during a national state of emergency in apartheid South Africa.

In her research on South African jazz singer Sathima Bea Benjamin, Carol Muller theorizes the notion of "musical echo" to explore Benjamin's performance of American jazz standards.[92] Although a number of years older than Taliep, Benjamin shares important points of connection with him. They both grew up in a Cape Town that was saturated with popular American music – whether heard on the radio, in the cinema or covered by local musicians in the streets – and was therefore arguably not regarded by them as an imported or "inauthentic" musical manifestation. Benjamin's practice of covering songs becomes not so much imitation as a claiming, and a reinterpretation. The concomitant creation of a palimpsest of American popular culture is testimony to the sheer mobility of music and demonstrate the layers of meaning that a composition can acquire over time.[93] Sapphyre, however, did not necessarily focus on creating artistically rewarding reinterpretations of extant music; rather, their primary motivation was to earn money by playing music. Paul Petersen confirms this and remarks that Sapphyre was a job, not a career path.[94]

[89] Plasketes, "Re-flections on the Cover Age: A collage of continuous coverage in popular music", p. 152.
[90] Plasketes, "Re-flections on the Cover Age: A collage of continuous coverage in popular music", p. 150.
[91] Plasketes, "Re-flections on the Cover Age: A collage of continuous coverage in popular music", p. 157.
[92] CA Muller & SB Benjamin, *Musical echoes: South African women thinking in jazz*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2011, pp. 271–282.
[93] Muller & Benjamin, *Musical echoes: South African women thinking in jazz*, pp. 242–270.
[94] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.

However, Guy Morrow, a Sydney-based cover band musician and popular music scholar, notes that cover bands are created not only for musicians to earn a living, but in some cases also to fund an original music project.[95] In Sapphyre's case, this would include a number of original music projects attempted in these years, including Taliep's seven-inch single, "Songs and sounds of Africa",[96] as well as the seven-inch single released by Sapphyre in 1984 entitled "Toffee apple" with "You're the one" on the flip-side.[97] Important in this regard is Sapphyre's only LP, *Rosa*, the result of a number of late-night recording sessions in Johannesburg.[98] Armed with a demo tape, Taliep had approached numerous recording companies before Gramophone Record Company, a division of Gallo Records, agreed to record and release *Rosa*.[99] Drawing on predominantly "traditional" Cape Malay music, its ten tracks consisted of arrangements of *ghoemaliedjies* and *nederlandsliedjies* as well as two original compositions by Taliep and Asid Rossie respectively, the latter being a prominent member of the Cape Malay choral community. However, *Rosa* did not rely on a straightforward presentation of this music. Although the "traditional" song remains identifiable in each case, the arrangements represent a reworking of these songs into a more modern and popular idiom.

As discussed previously, Sapphyre's activities as a cover band rendered the band members well-versed in the art of copying, but a manner of copying that allowed personal interpretation and therefore a degree of creativity. Although he admits that one can learn a lot about creating music through copying other artists, Hanmer describes working as a cover band musician as follows: "It's about maintaining a lot of disparate parts of different songs in your head, and in your fingers and delivering that night after night after night, and learning new ones. But not, it's not about making new compositions."[100] It is these disparate musical parts, absorbed as they were from their current and past contexts, that the members of Sapphyre brought to the musical material on this LP.

95 Morrow, "Selling out or buying in? The dual career of the original and cover band musician", p.182.
96 T Petersen, *Songs and sounds of Africa,* seven-inch single audio recording, EMI, Johannesburg, 1982.
97 "Sapphyre sparkles with another gem", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
98 Sapphyre, *Rosa,* LP audio recording, Gramophone Record Company, Johannesburg, 1983.
99 "R50 000 suit against Cape record dealer", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
100 Interview with Paul Hanmer, 22 June 2012.

Figure 48: The cover of Sapphyre's only LP, Rosa, released in 1983. The photo used for the album cover was taken by Fiona MacPherson.
SOURCE: GRC, Gallo Record Company

This juxtaposition between modernity and something that is considered older, and simpler, is suggested by the album cover, featuring all five musicians posing in front of a run-down house in Johannesburg. According to Anders, the sepia photograph, taken by Fiona MacPherson, was meant to conjure up images of District Six and reflects a desire to "go back in time".[101] The album title is written in a soft pink cursive and the band members are dressed very simply; some appear barefoot. The generic sartorial style speaks to the timelessness of the photograph, which contains no hint of having been taken in the 1980s. However, this forms a stark contrast with one element on the album cover that does suggest contemporaneity: Sapphyre's shiny blue logo that was designed specifically for the album and came into frequent use thereafter in the form of a banner hung behind the musicians when they performed on stage.[102]

[101] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
[102] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.

Although Sapphyre did not have any brass players, the LP included brass arrangements played and arranged by John Galanakis and the musicians working with him. Barring the one English track composed by Taliep, the written lyrics of these songs, as included in the LP liner notes, reflect the predominantly oral transmission of this repertoire.[103] According to Anders, Taliep obtained most of these texts from Assid Rossie. Although popularly regarded as Dutch, the lyrics of these songs represent a form of Dutch altered through oral transmission that is at times closer to Afrikaans, and specifically the Western Cape dialect of Afrikaans, also known as *Kaaps*. An example of this is a line from "Sal ek dan, my lief uitnoemen" (Would I then name my love) that reads, "Ja maar waai net soe snel".[104] The spelling and pronunciation of "soe" in this song refers to the word "zo" in Dutch and "so" in Standard Afrikaans. Indeed, Michael le Cordeur notes with reference to the work of Hester Dreyer and Adam Small that the unrounding of vowels (occurring in "soe") is a characteristic of *Kaaps*.[105] Furthermore, the texts contain numerous examples of phonetic spelling, with inconsistencies in spelling and pronunciation occurring within individual songs, such as in "Vriende kom luiste" (Friends come listen), where the refrain is variously spelled "Vriende kô luiste", "Vriende kôluiste" and "Vriende kom luiste."[106] In this last example, the use of *Kaaps* can be seen in the tendency to omit consonants at the end of words,[107] such as "kô" instead of "kom" and "luiste" instead of "luister".

The first song on *Rosa*, "Diena kanna kiena", consists of two popular *ghoemaliedjies*: "Diena kanna kiena" and "Die blikkie se boem is uit," (The tin's bottom is out) sung one after the another. Paul Petersen points out that, despite the fact that the lyrics deal specifically with a *ghoema* drum, the characteristic *ghoema* beat has been removed from this song in its conversion to a pop song.[108] Indeed, after the words "Hoor hoe lekker slaat die ghoema",[109] there is a short drum solo that does not remind of this characteristic beat. An interesting feature of this track is the periodic occurrence of the steel drum sound, created with a very basic electronic drum kit, a Simmons sound-set that was used throughout the album. Although considered revolutionary at the time, this sound set is one of the main reasons for the "dated" feel of the LP.[110] Though I initially interpreted this as a signifier of Afro-Caribbean music, noteworthy due to the shared slave history and carnival tradition between

[103] Throughout this chapter, the spelling of songs will be given as on Sapphyre, *Rosa,* LP liner notes, Gramophone Record Company, Johannesburg, 1983.
[104] "Yes but blow just as swiftly" Sapphyre, *Rosa,* LP liner notes.
[105] M le Cordeur, "Die variëteite van Afrikaans as draers van identiteit: 'n Sosiokulturele perspektief", *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2011, p. 766.
[106] Sapphyre, *Rosa,* LP liner notes.
[107] Le Cordeur, "Die variëteite van Afrikaans as draers van identiteit: 'n Sosiokulturele perspektief", p. 766.
[108] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[109] "Listen to that wonderful beat of the ghoema". Sapphyre, *Rosa,* LP liner notes.
[110] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.

South Africa and the Caribbean, David Coplan has suggested that the steel drum sound may be more appropriately regarded as an "empty signifier" as it does not sound any rhythms associated with this repertoire.[111]

Indeed, one of the most important features of this LP is the incorporation of an astonishing number of diverse musical elements, something that perhaps reflects less of a self-conscious play with signifiers as it reflects the musical context in which these songs were recorded. In the second part of this track, the text, "Goema, goema, goema, goema van ta sêra",[112] differs from the corresponding section as written down by I.D. du Plessis in the early 1930s as "Goema, goema, goema, goema van pelsier".[113] According to Adam Samodien of the Suid-Afrikaanse Koorraad (SAKR), he has always sung this song to the words, "van ta sêra"[114] Inconsistencies between this written source and its manifestation on *Rosa* as well as in contemporary performance practice points to the fact that some of these songs have undergone developments within the last century, underlining the creole development of the songs and their predominantly oral transmission.

The other *ghoemaliedjie* on the LP, "Môre tannie", also consists of a medley of three different songs, "Môre tannie" (Good morning aunty), "Kinders moenie in die water mors nie" (Children mustn't mess in the water) and "Solank as die rietjie in die water lê" (As long as the reed is lying in the water). In contrast to "Diena kanna kiena" and "Die blikkie se boem is uit", these three songs belong to a folk song repertoire shared with white Afrikaners, as reflected by their inclusion in the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge sangbundel* (*F.A.K.-sangbundel*).[115] However, there are important melodic and textual differences between these versions. In his 1935 study of Cape Malay folk songs, I.D. du Plessis demonstrated the important textual differences between the white Afrikaner "Môre oompie! Môre tannie" (Good morning uncle! Good morning auntie!) and the Cape Malay "Môre tannie", also demonstrating in his transcription of "Môre tannie" that it is sung to a different tune altogether.[116] On *Rosa,* Taliep sings a harmonization of du Plessis's transcription, with minor textual differences such as a replacement of "jongens" (young men) to "jong man" and "gaat" (go) with "gaan", perhaps suggesting a move away from Dutch and towards Afrikaans.[117]

[111] Personal communication with David Coplan, 23 June 2012.
[112] "Ghoema, ghoema, ghoema, ghoema of aunty Sarah". Sapphyre, *Rosa,* LP liner notes.
[113] "Ghoema, ghoema, ghoema, ghoema of pleasure". ID du Plessis, *Die bydrae van die Kaapse Maleier tot die Afrikaanse volkslied,* Nasionale Pers Beperk, Cape Town, 1935, p. 140.
[114] Telephonic communication with Adam Samodien, 23 June 2012.
[115] DJ de Villiers et al (eds), *Nuwe F.A.K.-sangbundel*, Nasionale Boekhandel, Cape Town, 1961, pp. 483, 490–493.
[116] Du Plessis, *Die bydrae van die Kaapse Maleier tot die Afrikaanse volkslied*, pp. 106–107.
[117] Sapphyre, *Rosa,* LP liner notes.

Only the first line of "Kinders moenie in die water mors nie" is sung, indicated in the LP liner notes as "Kinnes moenie innie wate mossie oumens moenit drink",[118] thereby reflecting the phonetic spelling of an Afrikaans that would not have been recognized as "correct" Afrikaans language usage in the 1980s, and probably will not be recognized as such for a number of years to come. The third part of this medley, "Solank as die rietjie in die water lê", reflects greater textual variation from both the *F.A.K.-sangbundel* version and the version transcribed as a *ghoemaliedjie* by du Plessis. Whereas the *F.A.K.-sangbundel* version includes the phrase "Blommetjie gedenk aan my",[119] du Plessis's transcription indicates this same phrase as "Blommetjie gedink om my".[120] In Taliep's version, this line is sung, "Blommetjies 'n ding van my."[121] Noteworthy is also the difference between "soen haar op haar bekkie"[122] in the *F.A.K.-sangbundel* and "soen haar in haar bekkie" in both du Plessis's and Taliep's versions.[123] Coupled with the second verse of "Môre tannie", "Haar rokkie was 'n kleine skeurtjie in ennie jongman kyk ka naa",[124] this one word difference significantly escalates the sexual innuendo in this song. Once more, in this second *ghoemaliedjie*, a steel drum sound can be heard. According to Hanmer, it is produced by the synthesizer, and can best be described as a guitar part being played by a keyboard.[125]

The three sentimental solos, "Vriende wil gy my aanhore" (Friends will you listen to me), "Sou my minnaar" (Would my love), and "Afskeidslied" (Parting song) developed from old Dutch songs. These tracks remind one of the type of repertoire that could be sung for the adult sentimental solo category at the annual competitions held by the Cape Malay Choir Board and the Suid-Afrikaanse Koorraad, barring the fact that they call for a backing choral part, something that is not allowed in this category. The soloist in these songs does not sing in the same style as the *karienkel* singer in the *nederlandslied*, although similarities exist in that the vocal lines are sung with a pronounced vibrato and are embellished through the incorporation of numerous auxiliary notes. According to Anders, while some of the songs on *Rosa* are more familiar, such as "Rosa" and "Diena kanna kiena", others, such as these old Dutch songs, are more obscure and do not exist in the regular repertoire of the Cape Malay Choirs.[126]

[118] A literal translation of this line reads as follows: "Children mustn't mess in the water old person must drink it". Sapphyre, *Rosa,* LP liner notes.
[119] "Little flower, think of me". De Villiers et al (eds), *Nuwe F.A.K.-sangbundel*, p. 483.
[120] : "Little flower, think around me". Du Plessis, *Die bydrae van die Kaapse Maleier tot die Afrikaanse volkslied*, p. 143.
[121] "Little flowers, a thing of mine". Sapphyre, *Rosa,* LP liner notes.
[122] Kiss her on her mouth". De Villiers et al (eds), *Nuwe F.A.K.-sangbundel*, p. 483.
[123] "Kiss her in her mouth". Sapphyre, *Rosa,* LP liner notes; Du Plessis, *Die bydrae van die Kaapse Maleier tot die Afrikaanse volkslied*, p. 143.
[124] "There was a little tear in her dress and the young man looked at it". Sapphyre, *Rosa,* LP liner notes.
[125] Interview with Paul Hanmer, 22 June 2012.
[126] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.

"Vriende wil gy my aanhore" and "Afskeidslied" are both slow, sentimental pop ballads dealing with loss and love. According to Shamiel Domingo, the old Dutch song, "Vriende wil gy my aanhore", exists in two different versions sung to different melodies.[127] Taliep used the so-called "over dat see" (over the ocean) melody as basis, with Anders singing the solo part, measured verses alternating with a refrain sung by the choir. This song is presented as a slow, rocking waltz with a highly embellished piano part and synthesized strings alternating between *pizzicato* and *arco* playing. The song has a distinctly tragic feel, despite its C-sharp major tonality. In an altered Dutch, the chorus tells of a beautiful and much longed-for lady waiting across the ocean, the second verse tells of her boat accident and how she was found dead on the beach, drowned in her own blood. According to Hanmer, Taliep had a gift for choosing keys that would match individual singers' tessituras or achieve specific vocal effects in a song, such as "Madeegha getting a bit of roughness in her throat", hence the choice of an instrumentally challenging key for this piece.[128]

This skill of Taliep perhaps also contributes to Isaacs's sweet vocal tone in "Afskeidslied", a tone eminently suited to this slow ballad with its embellished vocal line. The Dutch song that forms the basis of this track is called "Het afscheid" (The parting) , although in Taliep's version, the soloist only sings the first six lines from verse one and the last two lines from verse three.[129] At its climatic chorus this song contains elements of the power ballad in that emotive and virtuosic male singing is loudly backed by the choir, drums, synthesizer, piano and bass guitar.[130] In this text, the speaker laments the loss of his mother after setting off on a journey, and imagines hearing her voice again and putting his arms around her. The individual instruments accompanying this track are played with many effects such as phasing on the keyboard, something not uncommon in 1970s pop music.[131] The fourth track on *Rosa*, "Sou my minnaar", is also developed from an old Dutch song dealing with love and potential loss. In contrast to "Vriende wil gy my aanhore" and "Afskeidlied", it is not sung as a slow ballad, but rather as a faster piece characterized by its energetic and syncopated bass line. Paul Petersen sings lead vocals on this track, occasionally backed by the other singers who alternate between singing text and nonsensical syllables. In the text of this song, the speaker implores his "minnaar" (beloved) to promise never to leave him. When listening to "Sou my minnaar", thirty years after recording it, Paul Petersen and Hanmer were reminded of different songs. Paul Petersen

[127] Electronic communication with Shamiel Domingo, 29 June 2012.
[128] Interview with Paul Hanmer, 22 June 2012.
[129] Electronic communication with Shamiel Domingo, 29 June 2012.
[130] S Frith, "Pop music", in S Frith, W Straw and J Street (eds), *The Cambridge companion to pop and rock*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001, pp. 100–101.
[131] S Frith, "Pop music", pp. 100–101.

recalled that, at the time, there was a hit song with the same "kind of groove".[132] Hanmer, however, was immediately reminded of a Motown tune, "What's going on" by Marvin Gaye. This is a potentially significant association, considering that Isaacs had played bass guitar with a band featuring South Africa's own Marvin Gaye.[133]

The first of the original compositions on *Rosa*, "Minnaarlied" (Lover song), is not that different from the sentimental ballads derived from traditional Dutch songs. This song was composed by Assid Rossie in the 1970s.[134] Nevertheless, the LP liner notes credit Taliep as co-composer, ostensibly in acknowledgement of his contribution to the version as recorded on *Rosa*.[135] The text of this song is also in an altered Dutch approximating Afrikaans, as is illustrated by the use of the phrase "Hier in myn hart bens ek".[136] Anders is responsible for the lead vocals in this song, singing a sentimental text in which the speaker proclaims that her worldly riches mean nothing without the commitment of her lover and his willingness to marry her. According to Paul Petersen, it is a good example of a contemporary ballad. He remarks as follows on its cultural non-specificity: "If you took out the Afrikaans and put Italian in there, you'd be fine, you know what I mean?"[137] Indeed, this brisk song with its gently rocking 6/8 meter speaks of diverse influences, from its swooping opening synthesized string glissando that reminds one of the theme song from the 1970s American television series Love Boat, to the Spanish-sounding classical guitar picking. During an interview, Hanmer remarked on this last point and proceeded to mention the spread of Islam from the Arabian Peninsula, through Europe, and into Spain and Northern Africa. According to him, there is something of the Arab-influenced Spanish guitar tradition in Taliep's playing.[138]

The only English track on the LP, "Save our children" was, as mentioned in the previous chapter, originally composed by Taliep in the 1970s and the winner of the songwriting category at South Africa's first National Guitar Festival's eisteddfod.[139] In the years following this event, the song was on occasion included in Sapphyre's nightly hotel gigs, before being recorded on *Rosa*. "Save our children", which could be described as slow gospel, opens with a rising string glissando (very similar to the opening of "Minnaarlied") before launching into a verse sung by Anders, the soloist. The choral refrain is sung by

[132] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[133] Interview with Paul Hanmer, 22 June 2012.
[134] Electronic communication with Shamiel Domingo, 29 June 2012.
[135] Sapphyre, *Rosa,* LP liner notes.
[136] Although the text has been altered to the extent that a word like "bens" does not exist in either Dutch or Afrikaans, the following translation can be deduced: "Here in my heart I wish". Sapphyre, *Rosa,* LP liner notes.
[137] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[138] Interview with Paul Hanmer, 22 June 2012. Refer to Chapter 6 for more information on the points of connection between Arabic and Spanish guitar styles, as well as the perceived impact on guitar players in the Western Cape coloured community.
[139] H Staefel, "Guitar festival winners," *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 July 1981.

the remaining vocalists, four men delivering falsetto interpolations: "Save our children, Lord! Save our children, save them!" Its text, in the form of a prayer, asks for salvation for the children who are not going to school and who, in some cases, are dying. What appears to be a Christian gospel song, complete with references to the Bible, was framed as follows by Taliep: "Kyk, ek is 'n Moslem, en my geloof verskil effens van die Christen-geloof, dus sal dit oneerlik van my wees om ook op die gospel-wa te klim."[140]

Unlike the majority of the songs already discussed, the texts of the *nederlandsliedjies* on Rosa are closer to a form of Dutch altered through oral transmission than they are to Afrikaans. All three of them feature Taliep as soloist, singing melismatic *karienkels* typical of this repertoire, and a choir consisting of the other band members. In "Sal ek dan, my lief uitnoemen", the solo and choral parts are, for the most part, not that dissimilar to performance instances of this genre heard annually during Malay Choir competitions. The most significant departure from the "traditional" manner of performance, however, lies in its instrumental introduction and accompaniment, as well as the particular set of instruments used instead of the usual lineup of upright bass, mandolin and guitar. Hanmer pointedly remarks: "You can't touch it without modernizing it. Because there's no acoustic piano in this stuff. There's no electric bass, there's no electric guitar necessarily."[141] Besides bass guitar, electric guitar, drums and piano, this song also includes synthesized "wind sounds" at strategic moments to underscore the command in the text for the wind to blow. Instead of the slower and typically repetitive rhythm associated with the *nederlandslied*, this version of "Sal ek dan, my lief uitnoemen" is sung to a livelier rhythm carried by electric bass and percussion. "Vriende kom luister" opens with an instrumental introduction and a short vocal chorus entirely atypical of a *nederlandslied*. Underlying this song there is a driving syncopated rhythm played by keyboard synthesizer that gives it a momentum reminding one more of a *moppie* than of the traditionally slower *nederlandslied*. In between the *karienkel* and choir sections, the opening vocal chorus is repeated periodically, in addition to which a rhythmically contrasting instrumental interlude appears twice in the song.

The title track of the LP, "Rosa", is regarded as the most well-known and beloved example of a *nederlandslied*, sung frequently at weddings and having been adopted as the anthem of the Cape Malay Choir Board. Sapphyre's recording

[140] "Look, I am a Muslim, and my religion differs slightly from the Christian religion, therefore it would be dishonest of me to climb onto the gospel wagon as well." "Taliep se Rosa gaan harte steel," newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[141] Interview with Paul Hanmer, 29 November 2011.

opens with two lines of the traditional sound of this song played by mandolin, bass guitar and electric guitar, an opening that has been likened by Hanmer to the crackle at the start of the record: "It's like an antique version of, of playing this song."[142] One could argue that this is a nod towards "tradition" and a concomitant marker of "authenticity", before the band launches into their modernized version of the song. In Sapphyre's version of "Rosa", the soloist's *karienkel* part is similar (though perhaps less embellished) to what might be sung during a performance of this song at a Cape Malay choir competition. And while the choral part fulfils the same role as it would in a traditional performance instance, a significant departure is the inclusion of a catchy refrain that is repeated periodically throughout the piece. This refrain in particular received criticism after the release of the LP, with the staccato "sa" at the end of the word "Rosa" likened by some community members to the way in which one scolds a dog.[143] As with the other *nederlandsliedjies*, however, the most significant changes are found in the instrumentation of the piece, such as the use of a drumkit and brass, as well as its faster tempo and changed rhythm.

In an interview published shortly after the release of *Rosa*, Taliep explained a rationale behind the recording of this LP by referring to his experience at the Dollar Brand concert in London in 1979, (also mentioned in the previous chapter). Commenting on Brand's incorporation of folk songs such as "Emma kô lê ma" (Emma, you can come lie down) in his programme, Taliep admitted: "Ek het toe gedink: Kyk net, Dollar is al meer as tien jaar hier en hy speel nog sulke musiek, en die mense hou daarvan!"[144] As such, *Rosa* could be regarded as a long-anticipated attempt to move away from international styles in favour of uniquely South African repertoire, more specifically, in Taliep's own words, "Iets eie aan ons."[145] However, the basic premise behind the recording of this album was not only to record traditional Cape Malay repertoire, but to modernize it. This was a project that Taliep regarded as "groundbreaking".[146]

In another interview, this one published shortly before *Rosa*'s release, Taliep explained that it had been his "life-long ambition" to record traditional Cape Malay music, but that he had wanted it to be different from contemporary practice at the Malay choir competitions: "It had to be jacked up to today's sound as I am a great believer in doing the 'in' thing."[147] The purpose of all of

[142] Interview with Paul Hanmer, 22 June 2012.
[143] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.
[144] And then I thought: Just look, Dollar has already been here for ten years and he is still playing music like this, and the people like it!" "Taliep se Rosa gaan harte steel," *Early years scrapbook*.
[145] "Something unique to us". "Taliep se Rosa gaan harte steel," *Early years scrapbook*.
[146] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[147] "Taliep realises his dream disc", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.

this seems to have been not so much an engagement with traditional music as producing an innovative and commercially successful LP. In a 1983 interview with René du Preez, the title track, "Rosa", is described as Taliep's "trump-card", and furthermore, "With Taliep giving it a real up-tempo 'western' beat, he thinks it has all the ingredients to become just as big as David Kramer material."[148] According to Anders, Taliep's goal was also altruistic in that he wanted to produce a recording of this music that the youth would be interested in, therefore acting in the service of passing tradition on to a new generation.[149] Something of this goal is reflected in an interview with Taliep regarding *Rosa* where he is quoted as saying: "When we first discussed the concept, we decided that although some of the songs are almost traditional in the community, they did not appeal to everyone. We wanted to cross those bridges ... We hope that it gets through to everyone, young, old, black, white, pink, khaki."[150]

One could argue that producing a "modernized" recording of "traditional" Cape Malay folk music did not qualify as a political act against the apartheid government, but rather served to entrench the status quo. As such, there is an echo of the earlier versions of *Carnival a la District Six* in this recording project. The songs on this LP, especially the *nederlandsliedjie*s and old Dutch solos, contain frequent allusions to the ocean, journeying and a constant fear of desertion and lovelessness balanced on the other hand with the insistent pledge never to desert. The theme of loss and nearly compulsive desire for personal security, as reflected in the song lyrics, suggests a lamentation of the slave heritage whence these songs derive. However, these are easy-listening and eminently danceable songs rooted in the idiom of 1970s and 1980s contemporary music. As Paul Petersen observes, the *ghoemaliedjie*s on the LP are happy songs that don't convey a sense of disgruntlement.[151] Seen through a political lens, Taliep's own composition, "Save our children", is the only track that could be seen as a cry for help against the poor conditions that non-whites were forced to endure, however generic its requests for deliverance from death and starvation. A political interpretation becomes more likely, however, when one considers this song's lamentation over children not going to school against the background of the widespread school boycotts of the late 1970s and 1980s. One particular line of the song, "The bible says we're all your children", preaches inclusivity and universality extended even to a religious terrain, something

[148] Du Preez, "Taliep's hit gold!", *Sunday Times Extra.*
[149] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 4 June 2012.
[150] "Sapphyre releases a gem of an LP", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[151] Interview with Paul Hanmer, 22 June 2012.

that was opposed to the doctrine of racial superiority and policies of separate development adopted by the apartheid government. It has to be said, however, that a lack of textual specificity or any traces of anger in this easy-listening music, argue against overt political readings of its contents.

Hanmer suggests that both Taliep's calling and his training lay in being an entertainer and that it was not necessarily important to him to be politically radical: "That's the main thrust of what Taliep was about and what he strived to do his best at. And, and I think he did his gig very well."[152] But although Taliep may not have been doing anything radical as far as the government was concerned, he was certainly going against the established practices of the Cape Malay choral community. As chronicled in the first chapter, a family tradition of involvement in community musical practices, as well as his own participation in the Cape Coon Carnival and the Malay choirs, meant that he was well-versed in these musical practices. Samodien remembers Taliep, who he says grew up in front of his eyes, as a respectful man who never spoke out of turn: "En as jy met hom is dan voel djy sommer djy's in 'n vuurwarm geselskap wat vir jou nou net gaat happiness bring en niks annester nie."[153] As this suggests, a network of family and community ties crisscrossed Taliep's involvement in this tradition, arguably complicating any attempt at an unusual treatment of its repertoire.

After its release, journalists and reviewers spoke highly of *Rosa,* with a reviewer called "Melly" awarding it five stars and another, presumably Melvin Whitebooi, stating: "Dit is selde dat 'n plaaslike kunstenaar se werk musiek-kritici só opgewonde maak dat hulle mekaar opbel en sê dat jy seker moet maak om dié kunstenaar se album in die hande te kry."[154] The LP did not sell very well, though it is difficult to ascertain how much of this was owing to a trader in the Oriental Plaza, Cape Town, who was later found with a stash of illegal tapes of *Rosa* that he had been selling at a significantly reduced rate of R5 per tape.[155] This discovery eventually led to a lawsuit between Gallo and the owner of the Oriental Plaza, but as Taliep pointed out, the sale of pirated copies of *Rosa* would forever hinder the record from reaching the hit parade.[156] The first royalty cheque that Sapphyre received for *Rosa* was only R93, even though Taliep was well aware of its success: "Everywhere I went in Cape Town I heard the people playing Rosa. Combi-taxi

[152] Interview with Paul Hanmer, 22 June 2012.
[153] "And if you are with him, then you just feel as if you are in fiery warm conversation that will only bring you happiness and nothing else besides." Interview with Adam Samodien, 31 May 2012.
[154] It is seldom that a local artist's work makes music critics so excited that they call each other up to say that you must make sure to get hold of this artist's album." "Taliep se Rosa gaan harte steel", *Early years scrapbook*.
[155] M Whitebooi, "Maatskappy eis R15 000: Kassette is glo onwettig verkoop", *Die Burger*, 18 April 1984.
[156] Whitebooi, "Maatskappy eis R15 000: Kassette is glo onwettig verkoop", *Die Burger*.

drivers played for their passengers and even the schools sang it at their athletics meetings."[157] However, according to several musicians, the album was not received particularly favorably by the Cape Malay community, ostensibly because people are resistant to change, especially where what they regard as their traditional folk music is concerned.[158]

I would like to argue that this attitude was accentuated in an society structured along racial lines and whose ruling government ideology stressed "purity" in culture. It was even more relevant in a community desperate for "tradition", a community whose creole culture had been denigrated. Taliep brought tradition into an encounter with modernity. *Rosa* constitutes an attempt at producing what we would now understand as world music, a phenomenon situated at these crossroads and, in many cases, motivated by the prospect of commercial success. It was, of course, not the first attempt at recording a "modernized" version of "traditional" folk music with electronic instruments. One is reminded here of the folk rock movement of the 1960s that mixed rock music conventions and technology with western folk music structures and themes, and that adapted instruments and techniques associated with folk music. As the mixed reaction towards folk-singer Bob Dylan's plugged-in rock band performance at the 1965 Newport Festival attests, this approach was not always welcomed by folk purists.[159] Regarded as a related manifestation of this movement, *Rosa* is distinguished primarily by its non-western influences, perhaps placing it more firmly in the realm of world music.

Anders remembers that, initially, *Rosa* was received negatively by some members of the community who, according to rumours that had reached the band, accused Taliep of "bastardizing" the music.[160] This particularly ironic choice of words would seem to betray the history of this music and its community of practitioners, as well as introduce an eerie echo of the attitudes harboured by the apartheid government towards cultural "purity". The preoccupation with purity is especially significant when understood as a reaction to the then-ruling class's failure to recognize creolized formations as original creations, and their concomitant perceptions that people of mixed racial origin had no real culture of their own. Although, as Martin has demonstrated, *nederlandsliedjies* are not as old as is generally assumed,[161] many of its practitioners display concern over its "purity" and attach a high

[157] "R50 000 suit against Cape record dealer", *Early years scrapbook*.
[158] Interview with Abdullah Maged, 4 August 201; Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012; Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[159] R Shuker, *Popular music culture: The key concepts,* Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 135.
[160] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 22 June 2012.
[161] Martin, *Coon carnival: New year in Cape Town, past and present*, p. 176.

degree of significance to what is regarded as the traditional performance style. Concomitant with this preoccupation with what I would suggest is an imagined "authenticity", is a highly conservative attitude to the performance thereof and, in a sense, a negation of the principles of creative appropriation underlying its history. The process of creolization has here seemingly been reified into a "creoleness" that leaves scant room for further creativity.

Contemporary responses to *Rosa*, as well as certain conditions surrounding its conceptualization and recording, however, would seem to be obscured behind retrospective reflections. Although Hanmer remembers that Taliep had to ask permission from one of the choir boards to record this music and to obtain the "correct" lyrics of the songs recorded,[162] both Adam Samodien of the Suid-Afrikaanse Koorraad and Shafiek April of the Cape Malay Choir Board are not aware of this, and state that one does not need permission to record this music, of even to change it.[163] And despite rumours that one of the choir boards reacted negatively to the treatment of the traditional material included on the album, this is denied by these representatives from both boards. Samodien maintains that the song "Rosa" "came with the ancestors", but stresses that it does not belong to anyone and that anyone can therefore sing it.[164] According to Samodien, Taliep added something to the music and gave it a "different kick" for the sake of entertainment but, in contrast to the slow "traditional" version, his "Rosa" would never win first prize at the annual competition.[165] These observations reflect a perception of the choir board competitions as cultural yard-sticks and simultaneously demonstrates the influence that adjudicators' decisions have on maintaining the performance standards of this repertoire. This particular reaction perhaps also demonstrates a perception that Taliep's treatment of this repertoire was different and entertaining, but hardly a serious threat to traditional performance standards.

Attitudes towards "authenticity" in this repertoire are hinted at by the following incident relayed by Samodien. A number of years ago, a Dutch professor called Den Haag came to adjudicate at the annual choral competition of the Suid-Afrikaanse Koorraad and "corrected" the lyrics of a *nederlandslied* from "meisie loo" to "meisie loos",[166] a "correction" for which the choirs were grateful. When asked why this professor had jurisdiction to "correct" their lyrics, Samodien

[162] Interview with Paul Hanmer, 29 November 2012.
[163] Interview with Adam Samodien, 31 May 2012; Telephonic communication with Shafiek April, 16 May 2012.
[164] Interview with Abdullah Maged, 4 August 2011.
[165] Interview with Adam Samodien, 31 May 2012.
[166] This phrase can be translated as "without a girl". There is no semantic difference between what these two phrases purport to mean, the first one is simply pronounced with the final letter missing.

states that den Haag had been present when a Dutch choir sang this song years ago and that it is important to use the original words because "Ek glo daaraan, as dit 'n tradisie is, hou die tradisie, moenie weggaan van die tradisie nie."[167] Nonetheless, this episode would seem to contradict Samodien when he recognizes the Islamic influence on the *nederlandslied* as manifested in the *karienkel*. In discussing the origins of the song "Rosa", Samodien simply states: "Ek weet net, dit kom van onse voorvaders."[168] From this, one could deduce an acknowledgement of the processes of creolization that formed this repertoire, but simultaneously recognize the desire to remain faithful to certain aspects that can be traced back to some "original" source with relative certainty, in this case the Dutch text. This raises an important question, namely at what point does the process of creolization stop so that a cultural formation is regarded as stabilized? When does it become possible to assign "authenticity" to a collectively created and historically fluid repertoire?

Engaging this problematic concept, I would like to refer to Allan Moore's overlapping tripartite typology on the different ways in which authenticity is constructed in popular music reception. For Moore, authenticity is not an intrinsic quality of a particular music, but rather something that is created by an audience during the process of listening. What he terms "authenticity of expression", is created when an artist has succeeded in conveying to an audience that he or she is attempting to communicate with them in an unmediated form.[169] Most relevant to a discussion of the musical material on *Rosa*, "authenticity of expression" is related to Timothy Taylor's "authenticity as primality" argument, where "an experience is perceived to be authentic if it can be traced to an initiatory instance", as well as Philip Bohlman's early conceptualization of authenticity in folk music that relies on purity of practice achieved through remaining close to the origins of a style.[170] Moore's "authenticity of execution" is achieved when a performer manages to represent the ideas of another within a specific performance tradition.[171] As such, this understanding of authenticity is highly relevant to a discussion of tribute acts, and to a lesser extent, of cover acts. Finally, Moore's "authenticity of experience" is concerned with whether an audience feels their experience of life is being validated through performance.[172] Unlike the previous two understandings of authenticity, this notion is not dependent on any linkage to the past or to so-called tradition.

[167] "I believe that, if it is a tradition, keep the tradition, don't go away from the tradition." Interview with Adam Samodien, 31 May 2012.
[168] "I just know, it comes from our ancestors." Interview with Adam Samodien, 31 May 2012.
[169] A Moore, "Authenticity as authentication", *Popular Music,* vol. 21, nr. 2, 2002, p. 214.
[170] Moore, "Authenticity as authentication", p. 213.
[171] Moore, "Authenticity as authentication", p. 218.
[172] Moore, "Authenticity as authentication", p. 220.

Moore writes: "So, in acknowledging that authenticity is ascribed to, rather than inscribed in, a performance, it is beneficial to ask who, rather than what, is being authenticated by that performance."[173] There are three possibilities, corresponding with Moore's tripartite typology: in the first, it is the artist, in the second, an absent (third) person, while in the last instance, it is the audience who is authenticated.[174] In the case of Sapphyre's *Rosa*, one could argue that, at the time of its release, it failed to achieve "authenticity of experience", also known as "second person authenticity" because it failed to authenticate the experience of listeners. Because of its specific content, the Cape Malay community could arguably have been the only candidate audience for this, but at the time, there was a rejection (though not wholesale) of the treatment of what they regarded as their traditional music. This brings one to a discussion of "authenticity of expression" or "first person authenticity". Due to the fact that the music on Sapphyre was regarded as so far removed from its origins, partly through the use of modern instruments and partly by its incorporation of musical devices associated with popular music, one could also argue that it failed to achieve "authenticity of expression", remaining an attempt to market traditional music on a world platform. However, I would like to argue that, due to the particular background of the artists, and indeed of the repertoire itself, an "authenticity of expression" was achieved after all.

The traditional material on *Rosa* was subject to diverse modern influences brought to the arrangements, perhaps best summarized by a quote from an interview with Taliep, published shortly before the release of *Rosa*: "Sapphyre are a group of musicians who come from jazz, rock and disco backgrounds, so I was able to incorporate all these mediums into the presentation of the great Malay songs."[175] While listening to the opening guitar riff of the modern "Rosa", Paul Petersen remarked: "Now, I probably came up with that line. More than likely, why, because I'm the guitar player. Wow, that's interesting, I could use that for something else."[176] This comment reveals an important attitude towards the activity of arrangement and composition, one that works with reusable musical building blocks assimilated from diverse sources. This approach towards composition and arrangement is confirmed by Paul Petersen:

[173] Moore, "Authenticity as authentication", p. 220.
[174] Moore, "Authenticity as authentication", p. 220.
[175] "Taliep reali ses his dream disc", *Early years scrapbook*.
[176] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.

> Because we would rehearse and we would add stuff and he [Taliep] always tried to keep up with what was happening presently, modern pop music, you know what I'm saying, so he would take a little bit van hier, bietjie van daar [little bit from here, little bit from there] and then you come up with your own mengelmoes [mishmash], you know what I mean? Was it an entirely original idea? I'm not so sure that it all was, actually, truth be told.[177]

In recording this music and creating these arrangements, each individual band member of Sapphyre engaged creatively with already composite material. They drew on a repertoire of musical devices learnt through their exposure to a vast body of popular music, gleaned not least in youth environments saturated with American pop music, rock and jazz, where the majority of them received their auto-didactical musical educations. These were musicians well-versed in creatively copying other people's music. Herein lies a contemporary musical manifestation of the process of creolization. I would like to argue that, although Taliep's version of this repertoire went against expected standards of performance in this specific cultural and musical context, he acted in a manner not contrary to the tradition of "cultural creativity" that underlies this music. The "authenticity of expression" that was achieved on *Rosa,* perhaps assigned by the band members themselves, was achieved precisely through this continuation.

As a "modern" cover of "traditional" folk music, *Rosa* also constitutes a "modern" cover of tradition. For Philip Bohlman, "In world music, tradition returns again and again, not to be used up or relegated to the past, but to be restored with new meanings in the present."[178] In the assimilation of musical elements surrounding them, the band members of Sapphyre continued the process of creolization, bringing a creoleness into an encounter with their modernity, thereby imbuing tradition with new meanings in a present utterly desperate for it.

[177] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.
[178] PV Bohlman, *World music: A very short introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, pg. 21.

Tapes[1]

1. CARNIVAL A LA DISTRICT 6 (PART 1) FIRST HALF.
2. CARNIVAL A LA DISTRICT 6 (PART 1) SECOND HALF.
3. CARNIVAL A LA DISTRICT 6 (PART 1) FIRST HALF/ ¾ SECOND HALF.
4. CARNIVAL A LA DISTRICT 6 (PART 1) FIRST HALF
5. CARNIVAL A LA DISTRICT 6 (PART 1) 1/9/79. FIRST/ SECOND HALF/ SAMMY HARTMAN – D.6.
6. CARNIVAL A LA DISTRICT 6 (PART 1) FIRST HALF
7. CARNIVAL A LA DISTRICT 6 (PART 1) FIRST HALF/ ¾ SECOND HALF.
8. CARNIVAL A LA DISTRICT 6 (PART 1) MAY '80 SECOND HALF/ SHARKTI
9. CARNIVAL A LA DISTRICT 6 (PART 2) FIRST HALF
10. CARNIVAL A LA DISTRICT 6 (PART 2) SECOND HALF.
11. DISTRICT SIX (PART 2) WORKSHOP TAPE.
12. HUES CORPORATION SHOW (FIRST HALF)
13. DISTRICT SIX (PART 2) ORIGIONAL SELECTION.
14. DISTRICT SIX (PART 2) FIRST HALF MUSIC/ VARIOUS SONGS
15. DISTRICT SIX ORIGIONAL TAPE
16. SOUND AFFECTS (PART 2) BELLS FOR CARNIVAL/ VARIOUS SONGS/ YUSUF ALLIE
17. HUGH MASEKELA – EARL KLUGH/ DISTRICT SIX EXERCISE TAPE.
18. TALIEP'S ORIGIONAL SONGS/ CHIQUITITA BAND.
19. CHIQUITITA (LUGOGO HOLIDAY INN)
20. VARIOUS/ ORIGIONAL SONGS
21. HUES COROPRATION SHOW (FIRST HALF)
22. HUES CORPORATION SHOW (SECOND HALF)/ ORIGIONAL JINGLES
23. HUES CORPORATION SHOW (FIRST HALF)
24. TALIEP'S ORIGIONAL SONGS.
25. VARIOUS/ ORIGIONAL SONGS
26. TALIEP'S ORIGIONAL SONGS
27. DAYS OF MY LIFE/ VARIOUS SONGS/ JINGLES.
28. SHERWOOD CABARET.
29. CABARET IN MASERU – TALIEP PETERSEN.
30. EUROVISION SONG CONTEST 1980.// JOSÉ FELICIANO
31. INDIAN MUSIC/ SHARKTI
32. PLATTERS/ C.T.I. JAZZ/ COLE
33. T.V. COMEDY
34. JOSE FELICIANO – "FOR MY LOVE MOHER MUSIC"
35. JOSE FELICIANO – "SWEET SOUL MUSIC".
36. JOSE FELICIANO – "FELICIANO/ 10 TO 23".
37. LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA – "RHAPSODY IN BLACK".
38. TERESA CARPIO – "IF YOU LEAVE ME NOW"
39. RITA COOLIDGE
40. NEIL DIAMOND – "12 GREATEST HITS".
41. ROBERTA CARLOS/ VARIOUS
42. LETTA MBULU/ DIONNE WARWICK/ VARIOUS.
43. DEMIS ROUSSOUS/ SHIRLEY BASSEY/ DELLA REESE/ AL JARREAU/ NANA MOUSKOURI
44. TILL HANNEMAN.
45. CARPENTERS – "SINGLES 1969–1973".
46. TILL HANNEMAN
47. LETTA MBULI/ VARIOUS.
48. CHARLES AZNAVOUR – "SOUTH AFRICAN SOUVENIR"
49. CHIC/ THE METERS/ TOWER OF POWER
50. JULIO INGLESIAS
51. SHIRLEY BASSEY
52. EARL KLUGH/ VARIOUS
53. CRUSADERS – CHAKA KHAN + RUFUS/ GOOMBAY DANCE BAND/ TOMMY SAAIDEN/ BING CROSBY
54. KAFUNTA/ NANA MOUSKOURI
55. SHIRLEY BASSEY – "25th ANNIVERSARY"/ SAMMY DAVIS JNR
56. "MY FAIR LADY"/ SHIRLEY BASSEY – "25th ANNIVERSARY.
57. VARIOUS SOUNDS
58. VARIOUS
59. TALIEP'S ORIGIONAL SONGS.
60. TAPE FROM HOLLAND
61. SARIE AWARDS – SAT. 28/7/79.
62. VARIOUS – GINO VANELLI/ JOHN MCLAUGHLON/ STEVIE WONDER/
63. VARIOUS
64. P.U.S.H. EXPO (PEOPLE UNITED TO SAVE HUMANITY)
65. EUROVISION SONG CONTEST.
66. VARIOUS/ ORIGIONAL
67. VARIOUS
68. VARIOUS/ ORIGIONAL
69. CAPITAL RADIO – TOP 30 7/9/80 MIKE/BEV.
70. VARIOUS
71. U.K. TOP 30
72. VARIOUS.
73. VARIOUS./ DAN HANDS JINGLE.
74. VARIOUS – ERIC DAVIS

[1] The information in this list is taken directly from a list found in the Taliep Petersen Archive representing the inventory of Taliep's tape collection. It has been typed out without any alterations to spelling or punctuation. As this list contains recordings of *Carnival a la District Six*, "Songs and sounds of Africa", "Carrie" and material played by Sapphyre, though no recordings made with David Kramer, the date of this list has been posited as circa mid-1980s. T Petersen, *Tapes*, list, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.

75. VARIOUS.
76. VARIOUS – ASIET ROSSIE/ MOPPIES/ MATT MUNROE.
77. ONS LEWENSDAE ARRANGEMENTS.
78. RIO ORANJES
79. TALIEP PETERSEN + RIO ORANJES '76 – '77.
B SIDE EMPTY
80. "GODSPELL"
81. "HAIR"
82. "EVITA" (ORIGIONAL)
83. "EVITA" (L.P.)
84. "WEST SIDE STORY"/ "EVITA"
85. "THE JOLSON STORY"/ "AL JARREAU" – "THIS TIME"
86. THE PERRY COMO CHRISTMAS CHOIR
87. PEACHES + HERB/ E.W.F. – "FACES"/
FRANCIS GOYA.
88. JINGLES/ MAIN INGREDIENT – "ROLLING
DOWN A MOUNTAINSIDE"
89. JOSEPH AND HIS AMAZING TECHNICOLOR
DREAMCOAT// FAME
90. "ANNIE"// "A CHORUS LINE".
91. "ACT" LIZA MINELLI/ MY FAIR LADY
92. EVITA/ ISAAC HAYES + DIONNE WARWICK/
BILL WHITHERS/ FRANCIS GOYA.
93. SAMMY DAVIS JNR./ ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK/
DELLA REESE/ BARRY MANILOW.
94. THE WIZ
95. ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW/ JOSEPH
AND HIS AMAZING TECNICOLOR DREAM COAT.
96. SAN REMO SONG FESTIVAL 1971
97. EDITH PIAF.
98. EDITH PIAF/ DIONNE WARWICK
99. JOHN WILLIAMS/ LOS AMIGOS
100. JOHN WILLIAMS + JULIAN BREAM/
DENEICE WILLIAMS + JOHHNY MATHIS
101. "ACT" DES/DAWN LINDBERG – TAPE 1.
102. "ACT" DES/DAWN LINDBERG – TAPE 2.
+ "ACT" L.P.
103. JULIAN BREAM + JOHN WILLIAMS – "LIVE"/
BARBRA STREISAND/ ENGELBERT HUMPERDINK.
104. B.J. THOMAS/ BILL COSBY/ JACQUES BREL.
105. JACQUES BREL/ BILL COSBY/ JOHNNY MATHIS/
ANDY WILLIAMS.
106. JOHNNY MATHIS – "IN PERSON"/ FLORA PURIM/
TOM JONES/ BARRY MANILOW
107. TOM JONES/ CONNIE FRANCIS/ COMMODORES/
GEORGE BENSON/ BING CROSBY/ SAMMY DAVIS JNR.
108. SOUND AFFECTS/ JUSUF ALIE/ ½ SIDE A EMPTY/
ORIGIONAL SONGS/ JONATHAN BUTLER/ JOAN COLLINS/
ANNE MURRAY/ BEATLE SONGS
109. LOU RAWLS/ JOSE FELICIANO/ JOHN CLEMMER/
GINO VANELLI
110. YUSUF ALLIE/ GLADYS KNIGHT + PIPS/ GUYS +
DOLLS/ DR STRUT/ WHISPERS/ CHAKA KHAN./ NATALIE
COLE./ SOWETO SOUL ORCHESTRA.
111. LOU RAWLS – "LIVE"
112. JOHN WILLIAMS – "CHANGES"/ ALPHONSE MOUZON –
"BY ALL MEANS"/ CONNIE FRANCIS – "WHO'S HAPPY NOW"
113. VARIOUS SONGS/ CHIQUITITA LUGOGO HOLIDAY INN.
114. "ACT" AT THE BAXTER 27/6/81
115. VARIOUS DISCO SONGS.
116. ROGER WHITTAKER/ NEIL SEDAKA/ STEVIE WONDER
117. YOUTH IN HARMONY OVERALL COMP./ STEVIE WONDER/
INFINITY/ CONTINENTAL STRINGS.
118. JOHN WILLIAMS + CLEO LAINE/ FOUR SEASONS/
SERGIO MENDES
119. FRANCIS LAI – EARL KLUGH & BOB JAMES –
MANHATTAN TRANSFER.
120. FLAMES/ DRUM RHYTHMS.
121. BEE GEES/ YARBROUGH & PEOPLES./
SAMMY DAVIS JNR./ LENA ZAVARONI
122. DR. RUSHDI PART 1 OF AMERICAN MUSLIMS.
123. DR RUSHDI PART 2 OF AMERICAN MUSLIMS.
124. S.A.T.V. SHOW/ VARIOUS SONGS/ ENGELBERT
HUMPERDINCK/ MARCIA HINES./ BING CROSBY
125. WORKSHOP TAPE.
126. YUSUF ALLIE/ VARIOUS + ORIGINAL SONGS.
127. THE BEATLES./ PETULA CLARK.
128. PETULA CLARK/ TRINI LOPEZ/ LENA ZAVARONI/
BILLY ECKSTINE./ ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK
129. JOHNNY MATHIS/ CARPENTERS/ ROCKING INTO
THE 60'S/ RAY CHARLES.
130. RAY CHARLES/ ELLA FITZGERALD/ REMO CAPRA/
BING CROSBY
131. JOEY LOREN
132. NEIL YOUNG – "HARVEST"
133. ELVIS PRESLEY.
134. RICHARD CLAYDERMAN/ TALIEP/ VALMA/ ADELE FIRST.
135. TALIEP PETERSEN/ VALMA ANDERS/
ADELE FIRST/ ¾ SIDE EMPTY
136.

137. ISLAMIC LECTURE
138. LOU RAULS & VARIOUS.
139. MALAY CHOIR BOARD ALBUM
140. YOUTH IN HARMONY ALBUM
141. CAIPHUS SEMENYA (LISTEN TO THE WIND)
142. VARIOUS:— MANHATTEN TRANSFER/ SEAWIND/ H. HANCOCK/ MICHAEL FRANKS/ G. DUKE.
143. STREISAND — MEMORIES ALBUM
144. TALIEP PETERSEN ORIGIONAL SONGS
145. EARL KLUGH — JIM HALL — WES MONTGOMERY
146. AL JARREAU — MANHATTEN TRANSFER; LEE RITENOUR, JACO PASTORIUS.
147. JULIO INGLESIAS & NATIONAL ANTHEMS.
148. SWINGLE II & WORLD OF WALES IN SONG.
149. DAVID GRISMAN "MONDO — MANDO"// JOE PASS GUITAR STYLE// HOWARD ROBERTS
150. TALIEP PETERSEN & SAPPHYRE.
151. DAVID AXELROD'S ROCK ... MESSIAH — BRUNO WALTO MOZART.
152. TALIEP'S ORIGIONAL SONGS.
153. TAPE FROM OWEN WOLF + CO.
154. VARIOUS
155. SAPPHYRE — ORIGIONAL SONGS
156. SAPPHYRE T.V. SHOW TAPE
157. VARIOUS SONGS (DENON)
158. TALIEP — SONGS AND SOUNDS OF AFRICA & CARRIE.
159. TALIEP'S ROUGH MIX — CARRIE —SOUNDS OF AFRICA.
160. FLAMES & ORIGIONAL SONGS
161. JAM PRACTISE TAPE
162. CARNIVAL DISTRICT 6 PART II — VARIOUS.
163. AL JARREAU — JEFF LORBER — GEORGE DUKE.
164. PATRICE RUSHEN — ANGELA BOFFIL — RANDY CRAWFORD.
165. ASTRID JALBERTO — MICHAEL FRANKS — STYLISTICS — JOSÉ FELICIANO.
166. PORTUGUESE + GREAT MALE CHOIRS.
167. SIMON & GARFUNKEL — "GREATEST HITS".
168. NEIL DIAMOND — "THE JAZZ SINGER".
169. BARRY MANILOW & LATOYA JACKSON
170. JOSE FELICIANO & SHAKATAK.
171. THEY PLAYING OUR SONG// VARIOUS// KINGS OF SWING.
172. REGINA JOHNSON & KINGS OF SWING.
173. SAPPHYRE T.V. SHOW (BAD MIX) + "FRANK SMUTS" GUITAR CLASSICAL PIECES
174. POP GOES THE MOVIES.
175. JAM TAPE FOR IMPROVISATION STUDIES
176. BILLY COBHAM DRUM EXERCISE + JAM PRACTISE TAPE
177. NEDERLANDS LIEDJIES
178. VARIOUS CAPE MALAY LIEDJIES
179. "STANDARD EVERGREEN" BALLADS; BOSSA NOVAS, ETC
180. THE HI-LO'S & ROB MC.CONNELL BIG BAND.
181. THE KING SINGERS + MARLENA SHAW + CLEO LAINE & DUDLEY MOORE + ROB MC.CONNELL B.B.
182. OLD HITS:— MAIZE; WHISPERS; MARVIN GAYE; SEAWIND; G. VANELLI; SKY; G. WASHINGTON; MCCONNELL BIG BAND
183. LOUIS ARMSTRONG & ELLA FITZGERALD — RAY CHARLES & CLEO LAINE
184. SAKILE ALBUM
185. PACO DE LUCIA — JOHN MC LAUGHLIN & AL DI MEOLA — GINO VANELLI
186. JOE CHISHOLM — CABARET TAPE
187. SAN REMO '83.// CLAUDIO BAGLIONI
188. ARTHUR FIEDLER BOSTON POPS// GERRY BOSMAN & S.A.B.C. SYMPHONIC POP 2.
189. ECHOES OF PARIS// PACO PEÑA FABULOUS FLAMENCO// SAN REMO '83.
190. SAPPHYRE DEMO OF ORIGIONAL SONGS AND MALAY ALBUM MATERIAL
191. OLD SONGS:— 1940's; 1950's & MINSTREL SONGS
192. SOFT & EASY:— 27 GREAT EASY LISTENING FAVOURITES
193. GILBERTO GIL & BRAZILIAN MUSIC.
194. LEE RITENOUR & GAL COSTA & SIMONE (BRAZILIAN MUSIC)
195. MEMORY LANE (ALL STANDARDS)
196. OLD FASHIONED PIECES OF MANDOLINE ,GUITAR + BASS// PACO DE LUCIA// DEMO TAPE OF WAH-LAH.
197. LOUIS ARMSTRONG// FANFARES// IRISH JIGS// "FEESTE" BACKGROUND MUSIC
198. CLAUDIO BAGLIONI — "ALÉ-ÓO" (ITALIAN SONGS)
199. SO SCHÖN WIE HEUT, SO MÜPT ES BLEIBEN (GERMAN SING ALONGS)

200. DIE SUPER HIT PARADE DE VOLKSMUSIK — (GERMAN SONGS)
201. "BACKING TRACKS"
202. "BACKING TRACKS" — ½ B SIDE EMPTY
203. AL DE MEOLA// STANLEY CLARKE.
204. CABARET — LIZA MINELLI// THE SHADOWS.
205. NEW YORK, NEW YORK SOUNDTRACK// SWING FEVER.
206. "SAPPHYRE" — "SOUTHERN SOUNDS" — R. GOOD HOPE INTERVIEW
207. HOOKED ON SWING (SWING:— SINATRA; LOVE SONGS; SHEARING; SHOWS; DIXIE; 20's;)
208. SAN REMO SONG FESTIVAL 1983
209. SERGIO MENDES// RANDY CRAWFORD
210. RUSSIAN MUSIC
211. GERMAN MUSIC:— MOZART OVERTÜREN// VIENNESE ENCHANTMENT.
212. MAX BYGRAVES — OLD STANDARDS
213. MAX BYGRAVES — OLD STANDARDS
214. DISTRICT SIX — RUSSEL HERMAN// MERVYN AFRICA, BRIAN ABRAHAMS
215. MERVYN AFRICA & MIKAL NIELSEN.
216. ROCK & ROLL MUSIC.
217. THE EAGLES// BOB DYLAN// GERALDENE// CROSBY STILLS, NASH & YOUNG// ALPHONSE MOUZON
218. TANIA MARIA// RARE SILK// LEON THOMAS// ELAINE ELIAS
219. LIONEL RITCHIE// ROBERTA FLACK & PEABO BRYSON// MICHAEL FRANKS// VARIOUS ROCK JAZZ
220. ITALIAN MUSIC
221. LES COMPAGNONS DE LA CHANSON// DIONNE WARWICK// RANDY CRAWFORD// EARL KLUGH
222. "THE WOMAN IN RED" BY STEVIE WONDER// IT'S YOUR NIGHT BY JAMES INGRAM
223. MICHAEL FRANKS "PASSION FRUIT"// GINO VANELLI "NIGHT WALKER".
224. SERGIO MENDES "CONFETTI"// CARMEN MCCRAE "VELVET TOUCH".
225. LINDA RONSTADT & NELSON RIDDLE ORCHESTRA// 60's & 70's HITS
226. SING-A-LONG// ROCK & ROLL LEGEND 55
227. SHAKATAK "DOWN ON THE STREET"// BRIGHT BLUE "JIVE WIRE".
228. NAT KING COLE
229. CHICAGO 17// MANHATTEN TRANSFER
230. PETER SARSTEDT// PUSSYCAT// NEIL DIAMOND// LOUIS ARMSTRONG
231. LOUISE ARMSTRONG// THE GLEN MILLER STORY
232. VOCAL SCALES
233. JULUKA "SCATTERLINGS"// ANNE MARIE "4 PIECE JAZZ OUTFIT"
234. "STARS ON 45" BEATLE SONGS// "ROCK & ROLL STARS ON 45"
235. THE BEST OF THE DUBLINERS// HOOKED ON CHRISTMAS.
236. WERNER MÜLLER & HIS ORCHESTRA// HOOKED ON CHRISTMAS.
237. JODLER AND SCHUHPLATTER.// B SIDE EMPTY.
238. AL JARREAU LIVE "THIS MASQUERADE IS OVER"
239. GIUSEPPE VERDI "AIDA".
240. TRINI-LOPEZ "LIVE AT PJ's// INTERNATIONALES TANZTURNIER "STRICT TEMPO"// HARRY BELAFONTE
241. TRINI LOPEZ "LIVE AT PJ's// RAY CONNIFF'S CONTINENTAL.
242. HARRY BELAFONTE "CALYPSO"// BLACK LACE "AGADOO"// SATHIEMA BEA BENJAMIN.
243. ALBANO// JULIO INGLESIAS
244. "BLACK LACE"// DEAN MARTIN.
245. HOOKED ON ITALY// SPANISH SUNSHINE.
246. SPANISH SUNSHINE// "ITALY" ROGER LAREDO & ORCHESTRA// "HBAH PEQPOB" IVAN REBROFF
247. DAVE GRISLIN "MOUNTAIN DANCE"// RANDY CRAWFORD "PASTEL HIGHWAY"
248. MEZZOFORTE "RISING"
249. DES & DAWN LINDBERG.
250. JONATHAN BUTLER//
251. SIPHO "HOT STIX" MABUSE "BURN OUT"
252. JAMES INGRAM "IT'S YOUR NIGHT".
253. EARL KLUGH "WISHFUL THINKING"// JOE PASS GUITAR LESSONS
254. SOUND AFFECTS No. 3.
255. SOUND AFFECTS No. 5.
256. THE ANDREWS SISTERS
257. THE ANDREWS SISTERS// SWAN LAKE.
258. SWAN LAKE// "THE BEST OF B.J. THOMAS" (GOSPEL)
259. SOUND EFFECTS NO. 10// NELSON NED.
260. THE PIPES AND STRINGS OF SCOTLAND// NELSON NED// SPANISH SONGS// MATT MONROE.

Chapter 4

District Six: The musical and the memorialization of sacred space

The mid-1980s were what could arguably be considered some of the most violent years of the anti-apartheid struggle, with 879 political fatalities in 1985 rising to 1298 in 1986.[1] The genesis of the widespread protests lay in a rebellion that broke out in the Sebokeng township in the Transvaal in response to new government legislation allowing Indian and coloured representation in central South African government (henceforth known as the Tricameral Parliament) but which excluded the black population, offering them an increased presence in local government bodies instead. Protests broke out in September 1984 and gradually spread to other parts of the country, reaching the Western Cape and, more specifically, Cape Town, by March 1985. On 20 July 1985, the South African government declared a State of National Emergency that was to be lifted briefly in March 1986, but was reinstated from 12 June 1986 to 1 February 1990. These years would later be described by Adriaan Vlok, who was Minister for Police from 1986, as follows: "It was like a pot of water with a lid on. It could not go on forever. Eventually the steam would blow the lid off."[2]

In 1986, Taliep was performing nightly with his cover band, Sapphyre (discussed in the previous chapter), in the Villa di Cesare in the recently opened Cape Sun. The contract at this prestigious venue came at a fortuitous time as, on 15 January 1986, a little girl, Jawaahier Petersen, was born to Taliep and Madeegha Anders at the St Monica's Hospital in the Malay area known popularly as the Bo-Kaap.[3] On a personal level, and for various reasons, the mid-1980s were a significant time for Taliep. His grandmother, Fatiema, with whom he had always had a very close relationship, had passed away in 1984 and his own mother, Jawaiya, had died of pancreatic cancer in 1985.[4] In 1987, together with his youngest sister Ma'atoema and her husband, Mogamat Nasief Groenmeyer, Taliep would go on his first pilgrimage to Mecca.[5] He would later describe this as an incomparable experience that trumped all the other significant achievements of 1987, including his acceptance of a Four Outstanding Young South Africans (FOYSA) award.[6] Ma'atoema remembers that Taliep returned from Hajj on a "spiritual high" and was determined to live his life according to the religious principles he had embraced since childhood.[7] Cognizant of his own fragmented family life as a child, he was eager to give his youngest daughter the chance of growing up in a stable family with both of her parents present.[8] In August 1987, it was finally the right time to

1 The information in this paragraph is taken from H Giliomee, "An urban uprising", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, pp. 382–389.
2 Giliomee, "An urban uprising", p. 386.
3 Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2012.
4 Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
5 Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
6 M Allie, "Taliep is working on the 'people's music'", *Prisma*, 1987, Taliep Petersen Archive.
7 Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
8 Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.

marry his longstanding partner, Anders. The wedding took place in the living room of the house in Sirius Road, Surrey Estate, belonging to his eldest sister, Tagmieda, and her husband.[9] Although the newlyweds reportedly had dreams of starting their married life in a property in Oranjezicht, segregationist laws that were still in force led them to buy a property in Ashby Road, Athlone.[10] During the late 1980s their family would grow further with the birth of their second daughter, A'eesha, on 7 January 1989.[11]

Just over a year before his wedding, Taliep had what was to prove one of the most significant encounters of his professional life – the meeting with David Kramer that would kick-start their working relationship. This collaboration would eventually led to six musicals, the majority of which were set in District Six. As was discussed in Chapter 1, both of Taliep's parents, Mogamat Ladien and Jawaiya, had been born in District Six, and so had Taliep and all of his siblings from this marriage. Ostensibly under strain from the worsening conditions around them, the Petersens had left the district in the early 1960s, well before District Six had officially been declared a whites-only area under the Group Areas Act. Taliep retained a strong connection to the memory of this urban landscape, and as will be argued in this chapter, formed an "inner landscape", a term I employ as it is used by anthropologists Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern.[12] This "inner landscape" accompanied him for the rest of his life, even after District Six had been demolished. This chapter focuses on Taliep and Kramer's first project, *District Six: The musical,* to explore the musical representation of historical space in this work, as well as to investigate its role as protest theatre aimed at bridging racial divides through the facilitation of "collective" experiences revolving around the remembrance of marginalized narratives. With specific reference to Zoë Wicomb's discourse on coloured identity and shame,[13] it will also focus on the sacralization of District Six and its development into a marker of identity and subsequent object of commemoralization.

One night in mid-1986, roughly four years after the last remaining coloured family had been removed from District Six, Taliep attended a screening of Junus Ahmed's film about District Six, *Dear Grandfather, your left foot is missing*, at the Cape Town Civic Centre.[14] At the screening, Taliep once again encountered David

[9] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[10] D de Villiers & M Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2011, p. 229.
[11] Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2012.
[12] PJ Stewart & A Strathern, "Introduction", in PJ Stewart and A Strathern (eds.), *Landscape, memory and history: Anthropological perspectives*, Pluto Press, London, 2003, p. 7.
[13] Z Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", in D Attridge & R Jolly (eds.), *Writing South Africa: Literature, apartheid and democracy*, 1970–1995, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 91–107.
[14] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.

Kramer, the folk singer whom he had first met at the University of Cape Town in 1977 when, together with Des and Dawn Lindberg and Keith Blundell, they had performed in *Folk rag '77*.[15] Although not mentioned in other narratives detailing the start of Taliep and Kramer's relationship,[16] the two men had met on a number of other occasions in the years separating these two meetings. Kramer recalls a meeting that took place at the house in Greef Street, Salt River, where Taliep had been writing out chord charts and preparing for an upcoming show.[17] He does not remember which project Taliep was working on, but remembers that, at that stage, Madeegha was a very young singer who had been taken under Taliep's wing. It is uncertain whether Sapphyre had been formed yet, but Kramer also recalls a subsequent meeting, in the early 1980s during Sapphyre's Beacon Isle residency.[18] On that occasion, Taliep had invited Kramer to his hotel room and played him a number of his own songs that he thought would be suited to Kramer, saying "Hier's jou ding", ostensibly in the hope that the folk singer would be interested in performing or even recording them.[19] However, as Kramer notes, "I think he was a bit put out that I wasn't really interested in his songs, for me."[20]

As is detailed in numerous newspaper articles, as well as in his biography by David de Villiers and Mathilda Slabbert, Kramer had been engaged in researching District Six well before encountering Taliep at the film screening.[21] Having previously conceived the idea of a musical specifically about the area, he had also begun putting down his thoughts on paper, writing songs and developing characters. However, according to Kramer, he had begun to realize that such an undertaking was not possible on his own. Firstly, he realized that research on relevant literature and audiovisual material was not enough to tell the story – he would have to speak to people who had lived there, and perhaps even work with someone who had known the area very well. The second reason was political:

> I was starting to understand how sensitive an issue this was and how people felt about it, and that, for me as an outsider, and a white person at that time, it wouldn't be acceptable at all for me to come along and say, "Well, here, hello! Here's District Six! You know, a musical."[22]

[15] G Kirkham, "Taliep charming", *Cape Argus Tonight*, 1977, *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive; Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[16] See De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*.
[17] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[18] Madeegha Anders maintains that Kramer did not visit Taliep in the Beacon Isle Hotel and that this incident did not take place. Telephonic communication with Madeegha Anders, 16 November 2013.
[19] "Here's your thing." Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[20] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[21] See De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, pp. 208–215.
[22] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.

According to Kramer, when he saw Taliep at the Civic Centre, he immediately realized that he had found the right person to speak to.[23] Before Kramer could suggest a meeting, however, Taliep indicated that he had been thinking about Kramer and wanted to speak to him as well. At this time, Taliep, too, harboured a dream of writing a fully-fledged musical, and had had plans to revisit *Carnival a la District Six*, the musical revue he collaborated on with Dave Bestman in the late 1970s (discussed in Chapter 2). Kramer never saw this production, and when he would ask about it during subsequent meetings, Taliep would say, "No, no, no, no, no, we ... los daai nou."[24] Despite Taliep's reticence on the subject, he once indicated that *Carnival a la District Six* had largely consisted of covers of established songs with a rewritten text, not unlike contemporary practice at the Cape Coon Carnival. Kramer remembers Taliep saying: "Ag, you know, we took like a Beatles song like 'Obladi, oblada' and then we, we put our own kind of thing to it."[25] After the film screening, the two men sat down together, discovered their mutual interest in musical theatre and agreed to meet again. At a subsequent meeting, Kramer showed Taliep what he had already created, playing him a completed song called "My broertjie, my bra." According to Kramer, this song, together with the unfinished lyric of "Seven steps of stone", convinced Taliep to work with him in the first place. The collaboration proper started when Taliep took this unfinished lyric, sat in the corner of the room with Kramer's guitar and started to set it to music.

According to Kramer the collaboration did not take off immediately, nor did it do so without difficulties.[26] Taliep was suspicious of him at the beginning, perhaps unsure of what Kramer wanted from him, and perhaps also afraid of being exploited. Kramer, on the other hand, describes himself as having had doubts over whether he was capable of sharing the creative process. Unlike Taliep, who, as discussed in Chapter 2, had a history of co-writing (for example with Paul Petersen or Dave Bestman), Kramer had never collaborated with anyone before. By 1986, Kramer had produced two albums a year for the past five years and was an established solo artist. He notes: "It was a challenge for me to put my ego aside for a bit."[27] These difficulties were present from the very beginning, when Taliep had completed his setting of "Seven steps of stone". As Kramer recalls: "It wasn't anything like I had in mind and I was a little bit dubious at first. It was not what I had imagined in my head at all. So it was very difficult for me in the beginning to just hand stuff over like that, being a songwriter."[28]

[23] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[24] " ... leave that now." Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[25] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[26] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
[27] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
[28] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.

This difference in vision can be ascribed to the discrepancy between Taliep's reality and what de Villiers and Slabbert have referred to as Kramer's "overly romantic sense of the fundamental unity of 'coloured culture'"[29] Kramer has always had an interest in exploring the folk roots of the Western Cape, and had visualized a musical permeated by the *ghoema* beat, and one that drew predominantly on *moppie*s and other folk music from the Cape Malay choir tradition and the Cape Coon Carnival.[30] Taliep, as discussed in previous chapters, had grown up in a District Six permeated by contemporary popular American music, and Kramer had to learn to acknowledge this side of the district as well. In an interview conducted with Taliep by Denis-Constant Martin in 1994, he states that the American influence in District Six operated on many different levels during his childhood.[31] As discussed in the first chapter, Taliep's father, Mogamat Ladien, had a coon troupe called the Darktown Strutters, alongside the Mississippi Crooning Minstrels and Stars Spangled an example of the American influence in naming the teams of singers said to have originated from blackface minstrelsy. This influence was also extended to the use of red, white and blue for troupe uniforms, as well as their repertoire (troupes sang songs like "Carry me back to old Virginy", "That lucky old sun" and "Swanee, how I love ya").[32] As was also discussed in the first chapter, the bioscopes played an important role in District Six, not only as purveyors of films and, as such, conduits of American culture, but also as venues for live local music in the form of variety shows. Together with contemporary cinema, recordings of American music also proliferated in the district, implanting themselves on the soundscape of District Six as firmly as any *ghoema* rhythm and giving rise to the tradition of Cape Town's copycat singers, discussed in the previous chapter.

Kramer eventually learned to recognize and accommodate the American aspiration as an integral part of District Six, broadening what he had come to recognize as a narrow approach towards his subject matter.[33] He also realized that they were working within the American tradition of creating musicals and, in Kramer's words, "the American tradition of musical writing kind of dips its pen or paintbrush into all different pots of different styles of music".[34] Nonetheless, Kramer recalls a frustration while writing *District Six: The musical* in that there was very little original songwriting taking place among the solo singers hailing from District Six, many of whom specialized in covers or copycat acts: "I mean,

[29] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 212.
[30] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
[31] Taliep Petersen interviewed by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.
[32] Taliep Petersen interviewed by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.
[33] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[34] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012

this drove me nuts, the fact that people were held in high regard because they could sing like someone else."[35] Of the other musical traditions associated with the district, only the *moppies* represented an attempt at original songwriting. However, especially in the heavily Americanized coon troupes, these frequently consisted of pop songs with a custom-made text.

Kramer notes that Taliep sought to distance himself from the cultural forms traditionally associated with District Six in favour of what he regarded as more complex and perhaps also more sophisticated Anglo-American musical forms that would provide him with the challenges inherent in, for example, learning to master the more complicated chords: "You know, if Taliep could play a more interesting chord than the basic chord then he would."[36] Taliep was interested in writing what he regarded as Broadway or West-End musicals: "He was ambivalent about his own traditional ... his own background and the traditional music that he was so involved with. He didn't see that as being what, the way he saw himself, as a musical composer."[37] Instead, Taliep was heavily influenced by contemporary global music styles, and was able to recall from memory a large repertoire of early crooners songs and hits from the 1950s and 1960s, largely through exposure to the records his family listened to at home.[38] Although he was extremely well versed in the musical genres considered "traditional" in his community, he resisted exclusion from all that emerging black modernity could offer, perhaps in reaction to the attempts of apartheid agents such as I. D. du Plessis to constitute a coloured and specifically Malay culture through what was considered their traditional folk music. Kramer explains as follows:

> So in other words, so it's the old ... it's this thing that goes on in Cape Town and has ... there's a split, a kind of split personality. In many aspects of our culture. On the one hand, people will grow up in the klops and, and langarm bands and they know that thing and it's part of ... but they aspire towards the sophisticated in jazz and in music. And put forward a completely different international facade. And want to be measured at that level. And Taliep was like that.[39]

Kramer's narrative provides an interesting counterpoint to what has emerged throughout the preceding chapters of this dissertation as Taliep's growing desire to pursue locally influenced music over and above imported styles associated with the global North. Despite the established position of American music in

[35] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
[36] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[37] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[38] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
[39] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.

District Six, Taliep made a clear distinction between these two musical idioms and was not unaware of their cultural and political ramifications. His reaction to the Dollar Brand London concert in 1981 is worth recalling: "It's huistoe music now."[40] Similarly, his comments about Sapphyre's LP, *Rosa,* suggest that it was an attempt to engage with uniquely South African repertoire, or as he put it, "Iets eie aan ons."[41] However, as has emerged from the previous chapter, Taliep was not content with this project to record unchanged versions of repertoire traditionally associated with Cape Malay cultural formations. He attempted radically to modernize this repertoire, playing it through the lens of pop music styles and with modern instruments ostensibly to increase its popularity and in the process, produce a hit LP. Taliep's comments on *Rosa* just three years before collaborating with Kramer strike a puzzling chord in this new context: "With Taliep giving it a real up-tempo 'western' beat, he thinks it has all the ingredients to become just as big as David Kramer material."[42]

No doubt these contradictions had to do with Taliep's background and aspirations. He was aware of something unique in the traditional music he grew up with, but felt that creative challenges, and perhaps that ever elusive hit song, lay in the contemporary musical idioms he had been equally immersed in since childhood. Taliep's musical vision would seem to have been quite different to that of Kramer, resulting in Kramer jesting about *District Six: The musical*: "So what I often say is all the white stuff was written by Taliep and all the other stuff was by me."[43] An example of the more traditionally Cape influenced tracks would be "The heart of District Six", whereas a song like "Precious moments" is an example of a track aligned with global pop trends. Other styles also found their way into the musical, audible in, for example, the *mbaqanga*-influenced "Blind man's tears" composed by Kramer and Taliep, Kramer's Gilbert and Sullivanesque "Hester's complaint" and "What's a man to do?", where Taliep sought to emulate a Jewish sound.[44]

For the most part, the division of labour in the collaboration that would produce as its first musical, *District Six: The musical* was not always well defined, with contributions interwoven and difficult to separate. Kramer describes interviewing

[40] "It's homeward music now!" T Jackman, "Taliep Petersen – homing in on 'huistoe' music", *Cape Argus*, 29 June 1981.
[41] "Something unique to us". "Taliep se Rosa gaan harte steel," newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[42] R du Preez, "Taliep's hit gold!", *Sunday Times Extra*, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[43] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012. This statement, an exaggeration intended to bring across a point, needs qualification as it does not entirely reflect Kramer and Petersen's contributions to the musical. Although Kramer did compose some *ghoema*-influenced tracks such as "Galiema", Taliep wrote a number as well, including "It's New Year" and "The heart of District Six".
[44] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.

Taliep at length about life in District Six – not only was Taliep a good storyteller, he also had a very good memory of his childhood.[45] Most remarkable, however, was Taliep's capacity to remember the erstwhile urban landscape of District Six. Indeed, as was discussed in the first chapter, Taliep seemed to have a map of the district in his head. As Kramer recalls: "When we moved through District Six, he could say to me, this street was here and that street was there and here was a tailor shop and there was a barber shop and in his mind he could recall all of that."[46] Kramer relates this skill to a particular feature of Taliep's childhood touched upon in previous chapters: Taliep frequently accompanied his father through District Six, often assisting him with what some would regard as rather unconventional chores. However, his father, with whom he would always maintain a very good relationship, was also very strict and made great demands of his eldest son:

> The theme came up quite often about you know when he had to go and fetch the money from the prostitutes for the taxi drives, he had to remember where everything was. So he started to develop his observation, looking and listening and remembering. So because his father was really hard on him ... so in order to avoid getting some kind of hiding from his father, he couldn't ask twice where would this place be, he had to find those places and go and fetch the money.[47]

In their introduction to the edited volume, *Landscape, memory and history*, Stewart and Strathern set out their understanding of the overlapping concepts of landscape, place and community. According to their conceptualization, landscape connotes the "perceived settings that frame people's senses of place and community", place is understood as "a socially meaningful and identifiable space to which a historical dimension is attributed", while community refers to "sets of people who may identify themselves with a place or places in terms of notions of commonality, shared values or solidarity in particular contexts."[48] Landscape thus becomes a "contextual horizon of perceptions" that provides the setting for space and community, for a people's being in the world.[49] According to this conceptualization, landscape is dependent on human perceptions, acquiring a fluidity and, as noted by Eric Hirsch, becoming a process.[50] Stewart and Strathern argue that, largely through first-hand memory of a place, but also through imparted

[45] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[46] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
[47] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
[48] Stewart & Strathern, "Introduction", p. 4.
[49] Stewart & Strathern, "Introduction", p. 4.
[50] E Hirsch, "Introduction", in E Hirsch and M O'Hanlon (eds), *The anthropology of landscape: Perspectives on place and space,* Oxford University Press, Clarendon, 1995, p. 5, cited in in PJ Stewart & A Strathern, "Introduction", p. 4.

knowledge, people can carry their own "inner landscapes" with them that help to create a sense of "home" regardless of where their physical bodies are, and with it, also a "sense of identity".[51] Furthermore, "the inner landscape of the mind" can encompass different types of knowledge about place and community, for example, historical, political and artistic.[52] Stewart and Strathern conclude: "This knowledge is transportable and can be objectified through sharing, or it can remain private. In either case, it remains a source of identity."[53]

I argue here that Taliep had a multi-layered knowledge of District Six, an "inner landscape" within which he understood District Six as a place, a concept and an identity. He had an intimate knowledge of the urban geography of District Six the place, and of its recent history. He had knowledge of both its internal politics (such as gang territory demarcations) and the external politics of apartheid that changed it. He had cultural knowledge of the communities of District Six, artistic knowledge about the language, music and poetics of the people who inhabited it. Most significantly, perhaps, this knowledge gave Taliep a sense of identity rooted in District Six. Taliep shared this "inner landscape" with Kramer and helped him to create his own, adding to the image of the district he had started to build up through texts, films and photographs he had researched before embarking on the collaboration. The love story that would result from this collaboration was set against the backdrop of life in District Six at the time of the forced removals, replete with markers of this landscape: physical landmarks such as the seven steps of stone, cultural landmarks such as the Cape Coon Carnival and Malay choir traditions, and representations of stock characters such as gangsters and hawkers. Even existential conditions of the district find expression in the musical, for example the nonracial interaction between the Jewish Mr. Goldberg and the other characters, the musical aspirations of Cassiem and Mary and the fear of prosecution under the Immorality Amendment Act when Cassiem and the young English photographer, Sandy, fall in love.

While engaged in research for *District Six: The musical,* Taliep and Kramer would, as noted earlier, visit the near-empty space that once was densely populated with the inhabitants of District Six. By the mid-1980s, nearly all houses had been demolished, and all that remained were the schools, mosques, churches and the skeleton of District Six: paved and cobbled streets as well as traces of the foundations of demolished structures.[54] There was also a new structure: the

[51] Stewart & Strathern, "Introduction", p. 5.
[52] Stewart & Strathern, "Introduction", p. 7.
[53] Stewart & Strathern, "Introduction", p. 7.
[54] M Hall, "Social archaeology and the theatres of memory", *Journal of Social Archaeology*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2001, p. 54.

Cape Technicon, built in the 1970s amid harsh criticism, stood on a portion of District Six land that was renamed Zonnebloem by the government. This was the same land where, a year later, the entire cast of *District Six: The musical* would be approached by a security officer from the Cape Technicon who said that they needed a permit to visit the area. Although they managed to convince the security officer to let them continue their tour of the area, director Fred Abrahamse felt "an ironic sense of *deja vu*."[55]

On one of their walks in District Six, Taliep took Kramer to the site where the landmark Seven Steps had been. An important meeting place in District Six, this location was also the erstwhile haunt of the Seven Steps gang and their reputedly "good Samaritan" leader, Vyf, ostensibly named so because he had only one hand.[56] The romanticization of Vyf and his portrayal as a positive figure could be seen as a manifestation of the figure of the likeable and harmless District Six gangster that exists in popular memory, as discussed in Chapter 1. An article that appeared in 1986 in the *Weekend Argus* reported that the landmark Seven Steps had been removed from their original location and that their whereabouts were then unknown. According to this article, a former teacher and inhabitant of District Six, Achmat Majiet, had requested the Cape Town City Council to allow him to remove the Seven Steps to rebuild them at his holiday home.[57] Although they were reportedly advised by city engineers to deny this request, to restore the steps and install them as a historic monument in a public park, the City Council eventually granted Majiet permission to remove the steps and four street signs. Majiet died roughly two weeks after the council decision, but the steps had nonetheless been removed. They could not be traced, and were all presumed lost until, during a walk through the derelict landscape of District Six, Kramer and Taliep discovered two of the original seven steps buried beneath the sand.[58]

Taliep told Kramer about Vyf, whom he knew as "Boeta Vyf", and who eventually formed the basis for the character named Nines in *District Six: The musical*.[59] The seven steps also played an important role on the set of the musical, with designer/director Abrahamse reporting in an interview: "The most authentic piece on the stage will be the Seven Steps which I have tried to recreate as accurately as possible."[60] This importance is reflected in their

[55] T Jackman, "An ironic revisit for District Six cast," supplement to the *Cape Argus,* 15 April 1987.
[56] K Stander, "Missing...the famous Seven Steps", *Weekend Argus,* 25 April 1987.
[57] Stander, "Missing...the famous Seven Steps", *Weekend Argus*.
[58] Stander, "Missing...the famous Seven Steps", *Weekend Argus*.
[59] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[60] M Thamm, "Musical monument to District Six", *Cape Times*, 26 February 1987.

multilayered use as emblems of District Six, most clearly manifest in the finale to the musical, entitled "Seven steps of stone". In this lyric, the stone steps function as witness to the joyfulness of lived experience in District Six before its destruction – "It was here, you must remember, our children played their games and the skollie gangs smoked dagga, young lovers scratched their names" – and witness to the destruction of District Six, before they are then asked to stand in as judge over those who initiated that very destruction.[61] They are repositories of memory, having born the weight of the residents of District Six and having been "smoothed by many footsteps".[62] They also become that which remembers, finally responsible for the dissemination of that memory. The stones will carry a message, a "curse" that will speak to the world about the evils of apartheid, but that will also give courage to the children, who, as the lyrics predict, "will revenge us, for better or for worse.[63]

Figure 49: The Seven Steps of Stone, District Six, 1973.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

Through Taliep, Kramer also met a group of musicians, including Salie Daniels, Terry Hector and Giempie Vardien who remembered District Six well

[61] D Kramer & T Petersen, *District Six: The musical*, LP liner notes, Banjo Records, Cape Town, 1986.
[62] Kramer & Petersen, *District Six: The musical*, LP liner notes.
[63] Kramer & Petersen, *District Six: The musical*, LP liner notes.

and would eventually play an important role as performers in subsequent Kramer/Petersen projects.[64] Kramer describes himself as an outsider who was constantly interviewing informants to shape the script that he was in the process of writing. Sometimes, when Kramer would show Taliep the scenes he had written in response to his stories and recollections, Taliep would correct the dialogue, saying: "No, no, no, you don't say it like this, you say it like that."[65] Like a number of characters from *District Six: The musical*, Taliep also knew about street corners and singing, and about gangs. Kramer relates that, as a teenager in Salt River, Taliep was friends with a group of youths who used to gather on their neighbourhood corner to socialize and smoke *dagga* together. When Taliep returned home his grandmother would smell his clothes and often falsely accuse him of drug use. Some of Taliep's friends eventually became deeply involved with gangs, and he would always retain a relationship with them, never distancing himself from that world, but viewing it with empathy. Kramer describes what Taliep regarded as a watershed moment of his youth:

> And there was a certain point where he realized he had to make a decision. Either if he stayed here he would become a gang leader, he would be the leader of this gang, or he should walk away. And he walked away. And he often returned to that story, you know, that was so close that he could have taken that decision and been a very different person to what he is now.[66]

Largely through interviews with Taliep and his contemporaries, Kramer augmented the research he had done on his own, and became more confident of telling a story about District Six. Taliep never participated in the actual process of writing the script, and Kramer was responsible for writing all the dialogue.[67] He also wrote all the lyrics, barring those of three songs: "This time", "It's New Year" and "So long, goodbye", songs that Taliep had already written prior to the start of the collaboration with Kramer, and which the two men had decided to include in the musical.[68] Taliep was generally responsible for setting all of Kramer's lyrics to music. Once again this excluded three songs: "My broertjie my bra", written by Kramer when he was still working on his own, and those written during the collaboration, "Herster's complaint" and "Galiema".[69] There were also lyrics that Taliep and Kramer set to music together, namely "Precious moments", "The law, the law", "Now I understand", and "Blind man's curse."[70]

[64] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[65] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[66] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
[67] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[68] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
[69] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
[70] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.

Figure 50: The Seven Steps of Stone on Saul Radomsky's model of the *District Six: The musical* set, Baxter Theatre, Cape Town, 2002.
SOURCE: Saul Radomsky Archive, photograph by Paula Fourie

Although they had no fixed working method, the majority of songs were written in the following manner: Kramer would give Taliep a newly-written lyric, and while Taliep used to go home and bring back a song in the earlier stages of the collaboration, he soon began to stay in Kramer's studio to complete his musical settings.[71] According to Kramer, he often had a melody or rhythm in mind when writing song lyrics, but that these ideas never coincided with Taliep's musical treatment of the texts. The two men soon realized that the collaboration was most fruitful when the primary songwriter was allowed to follow his own musical instincts and then, only if he felt he was temporarily at a loss, he would ask the lyricist to share his ideas, asking: "Wat het jy gehoor, my broertjie?"[72] Next Kramer would make suggestions, such as going into a minor key or writing the melody differently. He acknowledges that Taliep had a more extensive knowledge of chords than he did: "So he could take ... where I would use very basic chords he would put quite a sophisticated turn on the arrangement."[73] Although in most cases the entire lyric

[71] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[72] "What did you hear, my little brother?" Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
[73] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.

would have been written before the music, this was occasionally inverted, such as during the writing of "The heart of District Six", when, in keeping with his vision, Kramer asked Taliep for a song with a "ghoema Klopse rhythm".[74] Not regarding the style that Kramer was describing to him as a challenge, Taliep said, "Daai's tjoklits!", and came back with the tune that Kramer eventually wrote his lyrics to.[75] However, partially as a statement against the political situation in South Africa, the two men "wanted to present an equal partnership" and for every song that was published, they each received 50% royalties.[76]

Adopting a practice observed from musical co-writers Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, Kramer and Taliep opted to release a soundtrack of *District Six: The musical* before the actual premiere of the musical, in the hope that audience members would be drawn to the performance to hear now-familiar (and hopefully, loved) songs performed live.[77] In November 1986, the album was released by Priority Records under Banjo Records, Taliep and Kramer's own label. It was launched at Cape Town's Baxter Theatre, chosen not only because Kramer had an established relationship with the theatre, but also because it enjoyed a certain protection from apartheid legislation due to the University of Cape Town's claim to academic freedom.[78] Consisting of thirteen tracks, this album, as indicated on its back sleeve, featured the following artists: Aggies, Madeegha Anders, Basil "Manenberg" Coetzee, Mary Daniels, Salie Daniels, Boeta Ghaan, Heidi, Al Hendricks, Robbie Jansen, Howard Links, Dennis Maart, Paul Petersen, Taliep Petersen, Onyx Phillips, Joey September, Terry Hector and Cyril Venter.[79] Hailed in the press as "a moving tribute to District Six and its people,"[80] the album was received favorably, with journalist Melvin Whitebooi awarding it five stars and calling it: "maklik die beste Suid-Afrikaanse plaat van die jaar."[81] Discussing its content, a reviewer from the *Cape Argus* noted: "Most tracks are perfectly in character with the music of District Six – banjos, and a Malay choral sound are much in evidence – while others are sentimental, sometimes overly so."[82]

Years later, Vincent Kolby would state: "The musical, which a few musos innocently put together for fun, stirred up memories for ordinary people that had been repressed."[83] However, the collaborative team was anything but innocent

[74] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
[75] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
[76] Interview with David Kramer, 10 May 2012.
[77] De Villiers, & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, pp. 208-209.
[78] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 223.
[79] Kramer & Petersen, *District Six: The musical*, LP liner notes.
[80] "A worthy tribute", supplement to the *Cape Argus*, 4 December 1986.
[81] M Whitebooi, "'n Album vol treffers", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[82] "A worthy tribute", supplement to the *Cape Argus*.
[83] G Willoughby, "Music, memory, myth", *Mail & Guardian*, 25–31 October 2002.

in this regard. In an article published shortly after the LP release in 1986, Louis Heyneman discussed the two collaborators' reasons for working on *District Six: The musical*, noting that Taliep wrote the music in longing of the District Six he had to exchange for Salt River.[84] Kramer, on the other hand, was reportedly motivated by a desire to comment on the political situation in South Africa at the time, and to mine the musical resources of the Cape. He was quoted as saying: "Dis 'n poging om die Kaap 'n musiekstem van sy eie te gee. 'n Soektog na musikale identiteit gebou op 'n ryk tradisie."[85]

Another article published in 1986 attributes a similar desire to Taliep, namely "to emphasize the value of the musical traditions of the area" and quotes Taliep as saying that "I wanted to explore a music which was more personal to me and make that traditional music popular to others."[86] Heyneman's article continues by reporting that the collaborative team was moving further away from the trappings of modern international jazz and rock, returning to the tradition of the so-called "old" district.[87] By setting up a dichotomy in this manner, these statements would seem to contribute to the confusion surrounding the role of the so-called imported music in District Six, a role that is sometimes purported to constitute organic and natural musical manifestations, but is sometimes rejected as inauthentic. No doubt these opinions continue to express the reluctant acceptance of the role of American culture in District Six, and as such, a clinging to notions of cultural purity and authenticity that would only gradually be broadened.

[84] L Heyneman, "District Ses se musiek leef", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d. Taliep Petersen Archive.
[85] "It's an attempt to give the Cape a musical voice of its own. A search for musical identity built on a rich tradition." Heyneman, "District Ses se musiek leef", Taliep Petersen Archive.
[86] K Udemans, "David Kramer in PE to publicise musical he co-wrote", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[87] Heyneman, "District Ses se musiek leef", Taliep Petersen Archive.

Figure 51: *District Six: The musical.* 1986 LP cover sleeve featuring the Seven Steps of Stone. The photo used for the album cover was taken by Jansje Wissema.
SOURCE: Banjo Records, photograph by Paula Fourie

Terry Hector, who had known Taliep from an early age and had also performed in *Carnival a la District Six*, pointed out that the songs on the LP were not necessarily sung by the singers who would eventually play the leading roles in the stage musical, as the actors had not yet been cast when the recordings took place.[88] According to Hector, his own involvement with the musical began when he dropped by Taliep's studio, where, unbeknownst to him, the recording of the LP was taking place. Trusting Hector's capabilities, Taliep immediately supplied him with the lyrics and a melody of "My broertjie, my bra", asking him to sing, recording the song verse by verse and encouraging Kramer to listen to what the

[88] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2012.

singer could do. Although Kramer had reportedly wanted him to sing it differently, Hector insisted on singing the song in the way that he thought best. Referring to Taliep's practice of drawing from the group of talented musicians that he was acquainted with, Hector notes: "this is Taliep's way, my dear, he knows he can."[89]

Shortly after the release of the *District Six: The musical* LP, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), preempting formal censorship by enforcing stringent criteria, deemed four of its tracks, "The law, the law", "Galiema", "Hester's complaint", and "Seven steps of stone" unsuitable for broadcast on all of its services.[90] In addition to this, "Sexy boys" was barred from being broadcast on the SABC's "black services".[91] As is displayed on the photograph shown on the right, the SABC copy of *District Six: The musical* was henceforth decorated with four little white stickers stuck on the track-listing at the back of the LP cover, all reading "avoid".[92] Describing the lyrics in question as "undesirable", Roelf Jacobs, general manager of both the English and Afrikaans radio services, also stated his preference for the word "avoid" as opposed to "ban".[93] South African newspapers reported extensively on the SABC decision, in some cases printing the lyrics of the offending songs. As noted by a columnist in the *Cape Times*: "It is a weird philosophy that regards reportage of an event, especially an event initiated by the government, as the evil rather than the event itself."[94] As is shown by the photograph of the LP currently housed in the record library, there was also a red cross next to "So long, goodbye". A possible inference is that, as Kramer identifies this specific track as one that had received airplay,[95] it was earmarked for broadcast it this way.

In an article that appeared in *The Star*, Kramer stated that both the show and the soundtrack to *District Six: The musical* contained a "strong political message".[96] Indeed, this is reflected in the lyrics of the tracks banned by the SABC. Although it contains crass language in the use of the words "donder" and "moer",[97] a political message is perhaps least visible in the song entitled "Hester's complaint", sung by the character of an overworked washerwoman who complains about her husband's bad habits and his failure to contribute economically to the household.[98] "The law, the law", however, deals mainly with

89 Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2012.
90 R Jacobs, "Restricted records: Memo no. 209", SABC internal correspondence, 28 November 1986, SABC Record Library Archive.
91 Jacobs, "Restricted records: Memo no. 209", SABC Record Library Archive.
92 Kramer & Petersen, *District Six: The musical*, LP liner notes.
93 R du Preez, "SABC bans Kramer songs", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
94 "Banning the reality", Cape Times, 9 December 2012.
95 Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
96 J Simon, "SABC bans four District Six songs", *The Star*, 8 December 1986.
97 These Afrikaans words do not have English equivalents, but are verbs that refer to violent action.
98 Kramer & Petersen, *District Six: The musical*, LP liner notes.

the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act and contains the text, "I went to hell and the Devil was there/ He looked at me and said it's alright/ You don't have to worry/ 'Cos this place of mine/ Is Reserved for Whites."[99] "Galiema", which tells the story of a particular woman's eviction from District Six and her resultant move to Bonteheuwel on the Cape Flats, contains the Afrikaans lyric, "Hie op Distrik Ses/ Is racial harmony op sy bes."[100] Possibly the strongest example of anti-apartheid sentiment is found in "Seven steps of stone", containing an ominous and, considering the ongoing effects of Group Areas legislation on contemporary South African society, prophetic text:

> The children will revenge us/ For better or for worse/ 'Cause they can clearly hear the steps/ And understand its curse/ For they too have been broken/ And scattered like the bricks/ The stones, cement and concrete/ That once was District Six.[101]

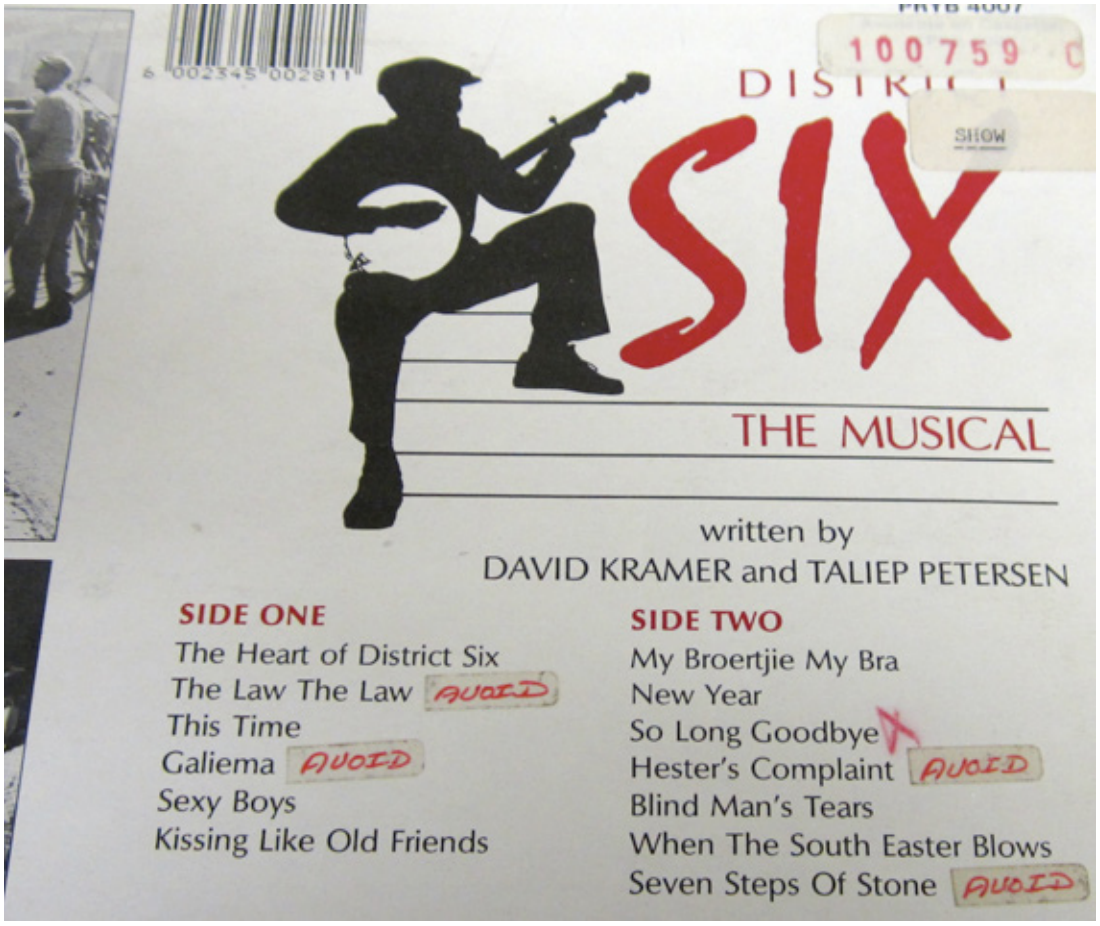


Figure 52 Evidence of censorship on the SABC Record Library's copy of the 1986 LP, *District Six: The musical.* SOURCE: Record contained in the SABC Record Library, photograph by Paula Fourie

[99] Kramer & Petersen, *District Six: The musical*, LP liner notes.
[100] "Here in District Six, racial harmony was at its best." Kramer & Petersen, *District Six: The musical*, LP liner notes.
[101] Kramer & Petersen, *District Six: The musical*, LP liner notes.

Today, Kramer does not remember being overly perturbed by the SABC restrictions, as he had experienced severe restrictions on his solo albums in the past and there was very limited airplay for local material anyway, whether banned or not. Kramer describes their objective with *District Six: The musical* as follows: "I wasn't interested in the SABC or, it being broadcast ... that wasn't, that's not what we were trying to do at all. And we weren't trying to be restricted and we weren't ... we were just wanting to tell a story, a musical story."[102] However, the SABC ruling would have had economic consequences. One song in particular, "Seven Steps of Stone", was described by Kramer in an interview as "a potentially chart-topping hit".[103] Kramer denies ever considering changing the lyrics of this song so that it could be broadcast.[104] However, according to a letter sent by Bill Brooks of Priority Records to Cecile Pracher at the SABC library on 11 December 1986, this possibility seemed viable at least to certain involved parties. Referring to the restriction of "Seven steps of Stone", the core of the letter reads as follows:

> Whilst we are not all unhappy with this decision, we would appreciate it if you could indicate to us exactly the parts of the song you find offensive. The reason that we are asking this is that we think the song is probably the best track on the album and we would, if possible, re-record it leaving out the offensive parts so that we can then obtain airplay on the number.[105]

However, no re-recording resulted from this exchange: possibly because the songwriters declined to change it, also possibly because the song is so specifically about the destruction of District Six that it would have been difficult to sanitize it sufficiently for the SABC. After the LP had been released, all of the singers had a chance to audition at the Baxter for a role in *District Six: The musical*, and although they were nervous about auditioning alongside trained actors, Taliep (as ventriloquized by Hector) would say, "Hei, moenie vir julle worrie nie, man! We want this, this is how we want the show to be like"[106] This information is consistent with de Villiers and Slabbert, who note that despite the "strong bias in favour of proper credentials" that Taliep and Kramer encountered in the theatre world, they consistently suggested casting artists who had direct experience of District Six.[107] For the first production, Hector was cast as one of the gang members, also known as the Sexy Boys, as well as understudy to Nines, their leader.[108] Madeegha Anders, beginning to fulfil her dream of acting as well

[102] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2013.
[103] P Schirmer, "David hits for six", *Personality*, 9 May 1987.
[104] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2013.
[105] B Brooks, "Letter to Cecile Pracher", correspondence, 11 December 1986, SABC Music Library Archive.
[106] "Hey, don't worry yourselves, man! ... " Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2012.
[107] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 225.
[108] Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2012.

as singing, was first cast as understudy for the character Mary, but was then called in three weeks before opening night to take over as principal actress in the role.[109] According to Anders, Taliep was reluctant to cast her because he did not want to break up Sapphyre. As it happened, she and Taliep eventually divided their time between the band and the musical, with Helene Josephs, originally cast as Mary, filling in for her at the Cape Sun.[110] The other actors in the original cast of *District Six: The musical* were Al Hendricks, Cyril Valentine, Fahruq Valley-Omar, Mary Daniels, Soli Philander, Leslie Kleinsmith, Dennis Maart, Basil Appollis, Salie Daniels, Paul Savage, Neisha Harley, Gail Reagon, Zenith Adams, Joey Wishnia, Gordon van Rooyen and Emma Mezher.[111]

On 11 April 1987, more than twenty one years after District Six had been declared a whites-only area under the Group Areas Act, *District Six: The musical* opened at the Baxter Theatre for a provisional run of six weeks.[112] Initially, the show was produced jointly by the Baxter and Blik Productions (owned by Kramer and his wife Renaye).[113] According to Kramer, because Taliep could not contribute financially, he was not one of the producers for the first production and only received royalties.[114] Anders points out that this was not because Taliep lacked the financial means, rather because he did not want to risk losing money on a production that he was not sure would be a success.[115] Eventually, however, the contract with the Baxter ended when Taliep was brought in as a third producer. Lacking a formal theatre background, Kramer and Taliep did not initially feel confident enough to take responsibility for the direction of the musical.[116] As manager of the Baxter, John Slemmon appointed Fred Abrahamse as director and set designer, with Monty Weber as musical director, Val Steyn as choreographer and Sydney Jansen as lighting designer.[117] Kramer and Taliep were appointed as "artistic consultants" who, according to Kramer, were meant to retain a measure of artistic control.[118] Despite the success of the initial run, Kramer and Taliep experienced artistic differences with the rest of the creative team and Kramer eventually took control over the direction in subsequent productions. Likewise, Kramer notes that Weber more specifically

[109] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.
[110] Interview with Madeegha Anders, 11 June 2012.
[111] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 226.
[112] C Harper, "Hurt of District Six comes of age", *Cape Times*, 11 February 1987.
[113] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, pp. 225–226.
[114] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[115] Telephonic communication with Madeegha Anders, 16 November 2013.
[116] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[117] "Musical on D6 for the Baxter", *Plainsman*, 4 March 1987.
[118] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.

fulfilled the role of a band leader and that Taliep increasingly became nearly solely responsible for the musical direction. He describes the reason behind this process as follows: "We'd come into this theatre from playing in bands, and so we thought maybe other people knew better than us. But we decided they didn't."[119]

For the first staging of *District Six: The musical*, Taliep and Weber were responsible for teaching the music to the band, which initially also included Issie Ariefdien, Basil "Manenberg" Coetzee and Howard Links, a long-term member of Taliep's backing band and an erstwhile *Carnival a la District Six* band member.[120] During the songwriting process, the music had not been notated in conventional western music notation, but existed as a series of chords written alongside the song lyrics, with parts of the melody written down using letters of the alphabet.[121] As such, the particular rhythm of each song was remembered, and repeated orally to singers and band members. Kramer tells that, in the band culture he and Taliep came from, performers could not read music notation, but listened and played back what they heard.[122] At most, they would have had chord sheets to work from. Though led by Weber and Taliep, this was therefore an organic collaborative process that happened within the band, much in the same way that Sapphyre developed their repertoire. Kramer explains: "Just like, when you rehearse a play or whatever. It is under the direction of somebody but there's a lot of ideas flowing around and then it gels into something. So Taliep would've been very involved in teaching the music and almost arranging the music, whether he knew it or not."[123] This collaborative process also applied to the band that performed on the LP, recorded some months earlier, and which included several members of Sapphyre – Anders, Taliep, Paul Petersen and Onyx Phillips.[124] Commenting on the role of each band member in creating the LP, guitarist Paul Petersen recalls: "When we did District Six, I know that Onyx and I contributed a lot to that album, in a big way, you know? David Kramer was involved in that album, obviously as a writer, but you know, we were there every day, you know?"[125]

[119] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[120] "Musical on D6 for the Baxter", *Plainsman*.
[121] Kramer also points out that Taliep, like himself, could not read or write notated music without difficulty. Nonetheless, there is material in the Taliep Petersen Archive that suggests an engagement with western music notation: although the vast majority of compositions in the archive are in the form of lyrics and chord symbols, there are a few examples of notated scores, such as "Save our children", as well as didactic exercises on manuscript paper consisting of written out modes and chords. Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2013.
[122] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2013.
[123] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2013.
[124] D Kramer & T Petersen, *District Six: The musical*, LP audio recording, Banjo records, Cape Town, 1986.
[125] Interview with Paul Petersen, 16 June 2012.

Figure 53: A scene from the revival of *District Six: The musical* at the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town, 2002.
SOURCE: David Kramer Productions

The life of this production is comprehensively documented in Kramer's biography by de Villiers and Slabbert and will not be reproduced here, beyond mention that it ran for three years and played in numerous South African venues, including the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town, the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, the Port Elizabeth Opera House and, after it renounced government funding in 1989, the Joseph Stone Theatre in Athlone.[126] It was also staged internationally, appearing at the Edinburgh Festival in 1988. During the course of its three year life, the production experienced several cast changes, changes to its creative team, as well as alterations to the script in the form of character re-workings and the addition and removal of musical numbers.[127] When it closed at the end of 1989, the show had reportedly played to nearly 400 000 people.[128] During this time, a scheduled run in April 1988 in the State Theatre was cancelled due to its status as a state-funded organization in what was regarded the heart of the apartheid state, Pretoria.[129] This decision, taken in response to an announcement by the

[126] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, pp. 229–235.
[127] F Chisholm, "Win some, lose some in the new 'District'", *Cape Times*, 3 December 1987; Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[128] K Jaffer, "Notions of coloured identity in Cape Flats theatre," *South African Theatre Journal*, vol. 12, no. 1-2, 1998 p. 94.
[129] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 231.

exiled ANC that encouraged the boycott of state-funded institutions, despite the fact that the party's cultural boycott was eased late in 1987, was met by harsh criticism from the press.[130] This was not the only occasion when political protest impacted on performances. On 5 May 1987, in compliance with the national boycott over the whites-only election held on the same day, UCT students had convinced the cast and audience of *District Six: The musical* to cancel a performance half an hour before it was due to start.[131]

The show received enthusiastic notices when it opened in the Baxter in 1987, and was hailed as "the most successful musical ever staged in South Africa".[132] Several reviewers praised the show for its realistic and authentic representation of District Six during the period of forced removals, such as Trevor de Wynter who wrote: "Heady stuff this, but we are not treated to a rose-coloured flashback."[133] Similarly, Melvin Whitebooi located the power of *District Six: The musical* in the fact that it recreated life in the district authentically.[134] Derek Wilson reported that although sentimental, the musical was not saccharine and had not misused the issue of forced removals, but rather reinforced "the injustice of the rape of District Six".[135] Indeed, the authors were also of the opinion that their musical "portrayed the good, the bad and the ugly of the place."[136] However, it is worth noting that the journalists who were wont to praise the musical for its true-to-life representation of District Six were already romanticizing this urban space, as is evident from statements such as "The musical portrayed the happy as well as the sad time of a once sprawling and untidy suburb where 40 000 people from all walks of life and persuasions made music and lived in harmony."[137]

Other reviews were more critical. Jean Fairbairn identified "My broertjie, my bra" as possibly the only part of the production addressing the dark side of District Six and noted the irony inherent in the translation of disenfranchised second-class citizens' experiences into a "bourgeois musical form".[138] There was also criticism from certain reviewers about the reworked and restaged version that played in the Baxter near the end of 1987, with Fiona Chisholm remarking that it was less "spontaneous, honest and moving" than the first staging.[139] Her review

130 De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 231.
131 M Thamm & Y Fakier, "Baxter shows called off in election protest", *Cape Times*, 6 May 1987.
132 R Rive, "Always Friday night", *Sunday Times*, 25 October 1987.
133 T de Wynter, "The tragedy of District Six in song", *Sunday Times*, April 26 1987.
134 M Whitebooi, "Stort 'n traan vir Distrik Ses", *Rapport*, 19 April 1987.
135 D Wilson, "Moving musical earns the raves", Cape Argus, 21 April 1987.
136 R du Preez, "The good, the bad and the ugly," *Sunday Times*, 23 November 1986.
137 "District Six takes you back seven steps", *Prisma*, 31 May 1987. Refer to Chapter 1 for a more detailed discussion of the romanticization of District Six in popular memory.
138 J Fairburn, "Bittersweet memories of District Six", *Cape Argus*, 13 April 1987.
139 Chisholm, "Win some, lose some in the new 'District'", *Cape Times*.

also contained a warning: "District Six: The Musical is too good, too special to be spoiled with the schmaltz of a Broadway hit. Care should be taken to prevent any more creeping in."[140] Although *District Six: The musical* continued to draw full houses, and strong reviews, both at the Baxter as well as in the Market Theatre and in the Port Elizabeth Opera House, it did not fare so well at the Edinburgh Festival in 1988.[141]

In Edinburgh it received a few neutral to positive reviews, such as Allen Wright of *The Scotsman* who wrote: "Chorus lines don't come with more colour or more zest", but was given a number of negative reviews, not least by John Fowler of the *Glasgow Herald* who wrote: "The script is thin, the songs trite, the acting is at best adequate and at worst wooden."[142] It also famously received scathing reviews from three London critics, Paul Taylor of *The Independent*, Joyce McMillan of *The Guardian* and Jeremy Kingston of *The Times*.[143] Taylor emphasized its mediocrity, stating that the collaborators had created "a musical that is in itself an artistic disaster area", while Kingston was puzzled by what he perceived as its contradictions: a musical about Africa with American music.[144] The most merciless criticism came from McMillan, who called it "one of the most perfect clashes between form and content that I have ever seen in the theatre". She continued:

> On the one hand the show ... tells the story of an oppressed people wretchedly manhandled out of their homes and their heritage by apartheid. On the other, it wraps that story up in such a glitzy, European package that the very look and sound of the thing seems like an admission of defeat in the face of the commercial tat and creeping banality of white South African life.[145]

Some reviewers clearly found the production lacking in standard, prompting the South African press, who were very quick to publicize the Edinburgh mauling, to examine the reasons for the disjunction between South African and international reactions to the musical. Dirk de Villiers interviewed South African actor and playwright Pieter-Dirk Uys in this regard, who noted that South African theatre

[140] Chisholm, "Win some, lose some in the new 'District'", *Cape Times*.
[141] P Feldman, "District 6 season a near sell-out on Reef", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive; "'District Six' stole the limelight", *Weekend Post*, 24 December 1988.
[142] The Argus Foreign Service, "'District Six' wiped out – and praised – by Scots", *Cape Argus*, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[143] London Bureau, "Critics maul District 6 musical", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[144] London Bureau, "Critics maul District 6 musical", Taliep Petersen Archive.
[145] London Bureau, "Critics maul District 6 musical", Taliep Petersen Archive.

standards were generally low during the 1980s, not least due to the effects of the cultural boycott.[146] However, some reviewers (notably McMillan and Kingston) clearly betrayed a lack of knowledge about the diverse cultural influences abounding in twentieth century Cape Town and came with preconceived ideas of what music from Africa was supposed to sound like. This ignorance of the diversity of South African culture unknowingly threatened to negate coloured experience as a part of the broader black political experience in South Africa, as Taliep noted exasperatedly in an interview published shortly after their return: "Om te sê dat dit nie deel van Afrika is nie, is net so goed as om te sê dat die Kaap nie deel van Afrika is nie."[147]

It is nevertheless interesting to interrogate idea that protest against the razing of District Six could be expressed in and through the tradition of Euro-American musical writing. Although entirely different in content, *District Six: The musical*, not unlike *Carnival a la District Six* discussed in Chapter 2, spent a considerable part of its energies on recreating life in District Six as it existed in memory. This included attempting to depict its famous energy and rich sounds and textures. *District Six: The musical* certainly has a strong political message, with several biting lines and the dark spectre of apartheid creeping into nearly every scene. Perhaps, given the romanticization of District Six and the nostalgia that it has long conjured up, the genre of the musical was ideally suited to its remembrance. As previously discussed, Taliep grew up in a milieu where an aspiration towards American forms did not negatively connote as an identification with Westernness as opposed to Africanness, but rather an identification with African Americans and their perceived success as a minority in a white-run state. Furthermore, he had been exposed to examples of the musical genre that were socially conscious and celebrated black experience, such as *Bubbling brown sugar* and others that expressed a message of racial tolerance, such as *Hair* and *West Side story*, all of which had made a significant impression on him at the time. It is therefore unlikely that Taliep would have regarded the musical as genre as unsuitable for telling his story about District Six.[148]

Nonetheless, as Kay Jaffer has noted, at worst, *District Six: The musical* has been criticized for being "vacuous, escapist and sentimental entertainment quite out of

[146] D de Villiers, "Where did District 6 go wrong in transfer?", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[147] "To say that it is not a part of Africa is just as good as saying that the Cape is not a part of Africa." E Lombaard, "Ja, daar was ook goeie resensies – Taliep Petersen gesels oor die Edinburgh-Fees", *Rapport Ekstra*, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[148] See G Fransman, *Negotiating coloured identity through encounters with performance*, Masters thesis, University of Cape Town, 2005, p. 79.

step with black political awareness and opposition."[149] It has also been accused of presenting stereotypes of coloured people on stage,[150] recognizable, for example, in the figures of Henry the fruit vendor and his domineering wife, Hester, who tries very hard to reform his irresponsible ways. Jaffer cautions, however, that that there is more to these stereotypes than meet the eye. Drawing on the work of James C. Scott, she recognizes these two characters as representative of the "public transcript", one type of codified social behaviour shown by dominated groups towards dominating groups, for the benefit of the latter.[151] Jaffer demonstrates how, seen in this light, Henry is acting the care-free *skollie* and Hester the decent, god-fearing coloured. According to Jaffer, the "hidden transcript" is also operative in a scene where the gangster, Nines, taunts the young white photographer, Sandy, with the following: "Ja, colourful old District Six, we Kaapies are mos full of fun and jokes. When are you whiteys going to wake up, lady?"[152] According to Jaffer, *District Six: The musical* thus achieves a subversion of stereotypes associated with apartheid labels, though this is a view certainly not shared by Gino Fransman, who identifies the figure of the gangster, Nines, as "a damaging portrayal of a subject so sensitive."[153] He argues that Kramer/Petersen projects, through their use of stereotypes, exemplify the notion that "the Coloured group can be encapsulated into fragmented or derivative representations."[154]

It is possible to argue that essentializing tendencies were certainly evident in much of Taliep's earlier work involving District Six. The figures of the "gay" (complete with effeminate hand signs written into the script), the "dronkie" (drunkard) and the "hawker" already featured in a draft script entitled *Carnival part III*, ostensibly intended to be a follow up of *Carnival a la District Six part two* that he wrote with Dave Bestman in the early 1980s.[155] Some of these stereotypes made their way into *District Six: The musical*, most notably that of the *moffie* (homosexual) and the hawker, though embodied in new characters. However essentializing and limiting these representations were, they nonetheless facilitated recognition on the part of the audience. And it is in the musical's accessibility to multi-racial audiences that one of its most significant contributions lay. For although the first audience was nearly completely white, subsequent performances increasingly drew a new audience of coloured individuals, in many cases residents of the Cape Flats, to the theatre.[156] The musical was widely praised for this, as Richard Rive

[149] Jaffer, "Notions of coloured identity in Cape Flats theatre", p. 97.
[150] See Fransman, *Negotiating coloured identity through encounters with performance*.
[151] Jaffer, "Notions of coloured identity in Cape Flats theatre", p. 98.
[152] Jaffer, "Notions of coloured identity in Cape Flats theatre", p. 99.
[153] Fransman, *Negotiating coloured identity through encounters with performance*, p, 52.
[154] Fransman, *Negotiating coloured identity through encounters with performance*, p, 39.
[155] T Petersen, *Carnival part III*, script, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[156] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, pp. 226–227.

notes: "The white image which the Baxter has tried to slough off for years has, with this production, disappeared, perhaps forever. The theatre is no longer a blue-rinse preserve."[157]

Kramer asserts that *District Six: The musical* facilitated a collective experience for audience members of different races, creating space for dialogue, even as basic as on the level of conversations in the foyer after the performance.[158] It constituted a cathartic experience of quite a different order for each. From Kramer's point of view, coloured audience members identified strongly with what was happening on stage and were proud to have their story verbalized and dramatized in such a prominent production.[159] In a milieu where coloured experience was severely marginalized, *District Six: The musical* broke the silence with a representation that, as argued by Jaffer, was replete with familiar signifiers, points of experience that coloured audiences could identify with.[160] Moreover, it was a representation that seemed to make white audience members curious and, without historical precedent, eager to listen to their stories. Kramer describes a fictionalized example of an encounter: "People sitting next to each other would say, 'Did ... ?' And then they would say, "Yes, I came from District Six. I lived there and it was just like this.'"[161] I would like to argue that the accessibility of *District Six: The musical* to white audiences lay partly in its use of stereotypes, but that the musical challenged their expectations that went together with those stereotypes. Kramer notes that white audiences were confronted with a production that "humanized the coloured people", gaining a depth that went beyond stereotypical representations:

> Where white people perhaps would have, you know, sort of seen the coloured person as a stereotype, you know, the jolly coon, the hawker, you know. The musical gave it an emotional depth and a humanity that white people were suddenly confronted with, and confronted with the reality of what the politics were doing to people.[162]

In addition to providing audience members of different races with a collective experience revolving around the issue of forced removals, the musical also brought this topic into renewed focus in the public consciousness. In addition to stimulating public dialogue, this created the necessary space for a number of

[157] Rive, "Always Friday night", *Sunday Times*.
[158] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[159] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[160] Jaffer, "Notions of coloured identity in Cape Flats theatre", pp. 101–102.
[161] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[162] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.

plays dealing with coloured experience,[163] the first of which was Richard Rive's stage adaptation of his *Buckingham Palace: District Six*, performed in 1989.[164] Discussions about the musical also contributed directly to the founding of the District Six museum in 1994.[165] Tellingly, Kramer points out: "That, no-one remembers. But, it wasn't a badge of honour to come from District Six, before the musical."[166]

In an essay entitled "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", Zoë Wicomb alleges that although this process began with earlier writers such as Alex La Guma and Richard Rive, "the self-fashioning of a totalizing colouredness located in a mythologized District Six of the 1950s and sixties found its expression in the eighties in the popular eponymous musical."[167] Exploring coloured identity, Wicomb reads a "silent inscription of shame" in the condition of postcoloniality that is intimately bound up with shame over a history of miscegenation and slavery.[168] She asserts that the creation of coloured identity, through positing District Six as sentimentalized "ethnic homeland", has occurred within a milieu of collective amnesia.[169] Significantly, Wicomb writes: "Our postmodern suppression of history demands a strategy of relocating and rehistoricizing our own situation lest we come to believe the myth of our collective birth in Cape Town's District Six in the early 1960s."[170] Wicomb also reflects ironically on the attempt to constitute an "authentic" culture through what are borrowed cultural conventions, criticizing *District Six: The musical* for its stylistic diversity and particularly its American influence. For her, this "pastiche" connoted "a refusal to engage with collocations of colouredness", as well as with other emergent South African identities, indeed a failure to connect with the struggle of the black majority overall.[171] Wicomb concludes her somewhat harsh criticism of the musical as follows: "The popular attempt at inventing an authentic colouredness illustrates how representation does not simply express, but rather plays a formative role in social and political life."[172]

[163] Jaffer mentions the following playwrights as examples: Vinette Ebrahim, Soli Philander, Zulfa Otto-Salies, Fred Abrahamse, Farouk Valley-Omar and Nazli George, to which the names Adam Small, Mike van Graan, Marc Lottering, Nadia Davids, Barto Smit, David Isaacs, Ashraf Johaardien, Malika Ndlovu, Oscar Petersen and Heinrich Reisenhofer can certainly be added. Jaffer, "Notions of coloured identity in Cape Flats theatre," p. 104; Electronic communication with Mannie Manim, 4 May 2013.
[164] "Memories of Rive", *Mail & Guardian,* 5 June 1998.
[165] Willoughby, "Music, memory, myth", *Mail & Guardian*.
[166] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[167] Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", p. 95.
[168] Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", p. 94.
[169] Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", p. 94.
[170] Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", p. 94.
[171] Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", p. 95.
[172] Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", p. 95.

Although the positioning of District Six as "ethnic homeland" may have found the height of its expression in the musical, a few months before opening night, Rive had already remarked, "It's amazing how many people talk with nostalgia about their days in District Six who never lived there".[173] Taliep's desire to claim District Six as home was also exemplified much earlier in song lyrics found in the *Taliep original songs (1977 diary)* entitled "The rise of District Six". The first line reads: "We're happy cause we have a place that we all can now call home."[174] Taliep's memory of District Six was not an isolated manifestation, and had long since been influenced by the broader discourses of nostalgia and sentimentalization that had begun to accrue to this place since the middle of the twentieth century. As such, *District Six: The musical* tapped into a rich vein of collective feeling, crystalizing collective memory and consolidating an identity that was already being constructed by individuals trying to eke out an existence on the Cape Flats. It is also important to remember that *District Six: The musical* did not present an unquestionable identity without room for individual interpretations thereof, as Laurence Kirmayer notes:

> Trauma shared by a whole community creates a potential public space for retelling. If a community agrees traumatic events occurred and weaves this fact into its identity, then collective memory survives and individual memory can find a place (albeit transformed) within that landscape.[175]

In an interview published shortly after the LP release in 1986, Kramer is credited with a quote that identifies music as a ritual of the community, whereupon the journalist in question, Louis Heyneman, conceptualizes *District Six: The musical* as an attempt to stage this ritual as an inheritance for future generations.[176] The notion of *District Six: The musical* as embodied ritual reified into an heirloom prompts us to consider the notion of the musical's commemoralization. The conceptualization of *District Six: The musical* as a monument to District Six crops up frequently in discourse surrounding this production, not least in the proliferation of newspaper articles detailing its progress. Significantly, this narrative was even pre-empted in articles published before opening night. Reporting on a press conference with John Slemmon of the Baxter Theatre, one journalist wrote:

[173] "A silly season," *Style*, 8 February 1987.
[174] T Petersen, "The rise of District Six", song lyrics and chords, n.d., *Taliep Petersen original songs (1977 diary),*Taliep Petersen Archive.
[175] LJ Kirmayer, "Landscapes of memory: Trauma, narrative, and dissociation", in P Antze & M Lambek (eds), *Tense past: Cultural essays in trauma and memory*, Routledge, New York, 1996, pp. 189–90.
[176] Heyneman, "District Ses se musiek leef", Taliep Petersen Archive.

> The musical could also be seen as a monument to all those thousands who have been affected by the act, not only those from District Six ... In some ways this musical will preserve the harmony and goodwill that existed in these communities, something that could never be revived in the dull monotony of the townships that were created for them.[177]

This sentiment extended to a cultural terrain, as an article that appeared in 1988 in *Vlieënde Springbok* attests, with journalist Andrzej Sawa reporting that the musical had "delved from the archives and delivered as folklore a culture which otherwise would have been forgotten".[178] The same article also had Taliep describing the "Cape rhythm" informing its musical language as otherwise "neglected, forgotten and unexplored."[179] When read alongside the work of Wicomb, the following statement opens certain possibilities for interpretation: "*District Six – The Musical*'s biggest impact has possibly been its symbolic reawakening of an interest in Cape Town's history and identity. People are no longer ashamed to admit they came from District Six and their culture is receiving standing-ovation treatment."[180] What emerges here is a double-layer of shame. Superimposed upon the shame of a history of miscegenation and slavery is the shame of having been an inhabitant of an overcrowded and crime-ridden city slum. With projects *like District Six: The musical,* the most recent layer of shame was effaced through the politics of nostalgia that sought to accentuate the positive features of District Six and to romanticize negative aspects, turning them into an expression of the suburb's unique character.[181] Rive describes audience experiences of watching *District Six: The musical* as follows: "It becomes a psychological, cultural and political act. A yearning for an identifiable past even if the reality was a dark, dank and rotten slum."[182] Naturally, reality is transformed during this process, the slum is mythologized until it becomes "the symbolic space of 'the world we have lost.'"[183] As Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson note, "Many, maybe most, of the stories will be true. It is the omissions and the shaping which make these stories also myth." [184]

[177] "Musical on D6 for the Baxter", *Plainsman*.
[178] A Sawa, "District Six – The musical," *Vlieënde Springbok*, April 1988.
[179] Sawa, "District Six – The musical," *Vlieënde Springbok*.
[180] Sawa, "District Six – The musical," *Vlieënde Springbok*.
[181] See Chapter 1 for a discussion about the mythologization of District Six.
[182] Rive, "Always Friday night", *Sunday Times*.
[183] R Samuel & P Thompson, "Introduction", in R Samuel & P Thompson (eds), *The myths we live by*, Routledge, London, 1990, p. 9
[184] Samuel & Thompson, "Introduction", p. 9.

A discourse of shame could also be extended to the music.[185] In an interview published in 1986, Kramer was quoted as talking about Cape music's "forgotten and perverted history", its compartmentalization "into Malay choirs and *Kaapse klopse*" and its relegation "to a tourist attraction"."[186] Not only did the diverse musical styles contained in *District Six: The musical* decompartmentalize the variety of music that was on offer in 1960s District Six, it was also an exploration of what practitioners called "sopvleis" (soup meat),[187] described in de Villiers and Slabbert as a "concoction of pop and traditional music".[188] An exploration of *sopvleis* would also be held up as the goal of an album entitled "Cape Town" and the concerts designed to launch it in 1989. This album featured a project band consisting of Taliep, Madeegha, Kramer, Issie Ariefdien, Onyx Phillips, Basil "Manenberg" Coetzee, Paul Petersen and Monty Weber.[189] Kramer first heard this term from Weber, who had a worked with Abdullah Ibrahim in the past. He describes his own understanding of the term as follows:

> What I understood then, was that, you know, it is a kind of ... when you throw things into a pot and you mixed them up, like you make a soup. It was a musical soup. And that, in some ways, the borrowing of different musical elements and mixing them together created a kind of a local sound and because of that, a local flavour and sound. It was called sopvleis.[190]

"Galiema" could be considered an example of *sopvleis* from the 1987 LP recording of *District Six: The musical*.[191] With its strummed banjo accompaniment and *ghoema* beat, it relies on musical influences traditionally associated with Cape Town musics, specifically *moppies* and *ghoemaliedjies*. The chorus employed – "Dis nie myne nie, dis nie joune nie"[192] – is adapted from a folk song known as "Dis te vêr om te ry" included in the *F.A.K.-sangbundel.*[193] As such, it belongs to the repertoire once claimed by white Afrikaners as exclusively their own but now recognized as overlapping with the musical heritage of those classified as coloured under the Population Registration Act. Elements of pop and jazz are

[185] I do not hereby make the claim that Taliep's apparent diffidence about the traditional music that he grew up with, as relayed by Kramer, translates into shame. Numerous projects in his past (including Carnival a la District Six), his continued involvement in the Malay choirs, and his role in coaching a coon troupe (the African Zonks) demonstrate his continued affiliation and support of these musics.
[186] M le Chat, "District Six – The saga lives on", supplement to the *Weekend Argus*, 1 November 1986.
[187] Le Chat, "District Six musical may pick up where Dollar Brand left off", supplement to the *Cape Argus*, 22 April 1987.
[188] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 236.
[189] "David Kramer maak nou sopvleis", *Oosterlig*, 23 June 1989.
[190] Interview with David Kramer, 10 May 2013.
[191] Kramer & Petersen, *District Six: The musical*, LP.
[192] "It's not mine, it's not yours." Kramer & Petersen, *District Six: The musical,* LP.
[193] DJ de Villiers et al (eds), *Nuwe F.A.K.-sangbundel*, Nasionale Boekhandel, Cape Town, 1961, p. 457.

subtly introduced in "Galiema" in the use of saxophones, the incorporation of a driving rhythm played on the drumkit, as well as in the vocal delivery which has more in common with Broadway and West End musical theatre than with traditional *ghoemaliedies*. Another example is "When the Southeaster blows", a song with a disco beat and saxophones. It incorporates the retexted melody of the Cape Malay *pieknieklied*jie, "Hoe gaan die padjie na die Kramat toe" (How does the path to the Kramat go),[194] as well as a section derived from "Kinders moenie in die water mors nie" (Children mustn't mess in the water), one of the folk songs mentioned in the previous chapter.

In an interview with music director Weber, journalist Marc le Chat wrote about *sopvleis* as follows: "The meat in the soup was Malay music and the other ingredients were Dutch traditional songs, possibly even sounds from original khoi-san inhabitants and then, skipping a couple of centuries (to District Six), the influence of American 'coon' marching jazz and black African music."[195] This description acknowledges the transformative process of creolization in the creation of this repertoire, having originated through a process of "cultural creativity under conditions of marginality," to borrow a definition from Zimitri Erasmus also employed in the previous chapter.[196] However, considering the elements described by Weber as the basis of this soup (Malay music, Dutch traditional songs and Khoi-San influences), one has to conclude that it has been on the stove for a while, so to speak, and that the contemporary musicians "mashing it up", to borrow a phrase from Kramer, were adding ever more ingredients. Nor is it irrelevant to the meaning of this metaphor to reflect that soup meat, in the culinary sense, consists of cuts not regarded as suitable for consumption on their own. They are the cheaper, tougher parts of the animal. The inclusion of this meat in a soup therefore rests on the understanding that additional ingredients will enhance its flavour, and the time involved in cooking will soften it and make it more digestible.

According to Weber, Dollar Brand was one of the few musicians to make a success out of *sopvleis*. As for the rest, it was "shunned": "It was neglected. Call it what you like, social neglect, whatever. We were ashamed because it was not British or American."[197] By combining Cape influences with contemporary music styles and including them alongside older traditional numbers such as

[194] Interview with David Kramer, 10 May 2013.
[195] M le Chat, "District Six musical may pick up where Dollar Brand left off", supplement to the *Cape Argus*.
[196] Z Erasmus, "Introduction: Re-imagining coloured identities in post-apartheid South Africa", in Z Erasmus (ed.), *Coloured by history shaped by place: New perspectives on coloured identities in Cape Town*, Kwela Books in association with South African History Online, Cape Town, 2001, p. 16.
[197] Le Chat, "District Six musical may pick up where Dollar Brand left off"off", supplement to the *Cape Argus.*

the *nederlandslied* "Rosa" and American-influenced pop songs like "This time", Taliep and Kramer attempted to lift the profile of the music, as it were, and erase a layer of shame that this music had accrued to itself through, firstly, its slave origins and secondly, its reputation for catering to tourists and portraying apartheid stereotypes such as "the happy coon". Most importantly, through the showcasing of marginalized but recognizable musical signifiers, the musical language of *District Six: The musical* stood in the service of the imagining of District Six as "a place that we can now call home,"[198] a symbol of a people's resilience and a monument to their loss.

According to Katharina Schramm, declaring something sacred means removing it from the "everyday realm", according it significant symbolic value and, ideally, regarding it as indisputable.[199] By this reckoning, District Six has become a sacred space. Sacrality is understood here not as the embodiment of an intrinsic quality, but rather as a potentiality relating both to "the violent past and its relationship with the present", as well as to a geographical space.[200] As Schramm continues: "If applied to the commemoration of violence, the process of sacralization can be regarded as an attempt to bring the past to a close and adjust it to a future-orientated and almost evolutionist narrative of progress."[201] Indeed, as Martin Hall has suggested, responses from the press hailing *District Six: The musical* as a monument were eager for closure, recognizing it as a definitive marker of the trauma suffered during the forced removals, and with it, a possible laying to rest.[202]

The notion of *District Six: The musical* as monument receives a rather different treatment in a 1988 newspaper article of unknown origin found in the Taliep Petersen Archive. Here, the writer suggests the following: "What we should do in Cape Town is build a theatre right in District Six and have the show running all the time as a monument and living reminder of the evil of the Group Areas Act."[203] While this, in a sense, still suggests a reification and perhaps even institutionalization of memory, this view underlines the importance of keeping these memories alive. Mike Rowlands draws a distinction between memorials and monuments, recognizing a diachronic development between the two: "Memorials

[198] Petersen, "The rise of District Six", *Taliep Petersen original songs (1977 diary).*
[199] K Schramm, "Introduction – Landscapes of violence: Memory and sacred space", *History and Memory*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2011, p. 7.
[200] Schramm, "Introduction – Landscapes of violence: Memory and sacred space", p. 6.
[201] Schramm, "Introduction – Landscapes of violence: Memory and sacred space", p. 7.
[202] Hall, "Social archaeology and the theatres of memory", p. 54.
[203] "District Six – The Musical, moves across the seas later this month when they perform at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.

become monuments as a result of the successful completion of the mourning process."[204] Perhaps the 1980s production of *District Six: The musical*, could more aptly be regarded as having been a memorial. Although it did not provide conclusive healing, the musical did contribute strongly to the constitution of a "District Sixness". This was to be greatly facilitated by the District Six Museum, an institution that would increasingly play a role in rekindling the memories of former residents. The museum would indeed set itself the goal to assist in "the reconstitution of the community of District Six and Cape town by drawing on the area's pre-apartheid heritage of nonracialism, nonsexism, [and] anti-class discrimination movements."[205]

Perhaps one of the most telling monuments for the loss of District Six is the landscape itself, much of which still lies barren today. But this is a temporary monument that may look vastly different in the future. Although a comprehensive discussion lies outside the scope of this chapter, the ongoing land restitution process involving former District Six inhabitants has been continuing over a number of years; indeed, it was a current issue even when a reworked *District Six: The musical* was revived in 2002. However, the restitution programme has drawn a limited number of claimants out of the estimated sixty thousand inhabitants who were forcibly removed from the 1960s onward, a number of which have opted for monetary compensation over a return to the area, something that Christiaan Beyers has ascribed to former inhabitants' "skepticism about the possibility of having a sense of belonging in a new District Six."[206] This reaction among former residents does suggest that *District Six: The musical* made the journey from memorial to monument, its revival in 2002 best seen as a museum-piece. For the revival was again hailed as "living reminder" of "arguably the single greatest act of cultural terrorism of the apartheid era,"[207] but it was also criticized heavily for being dated, its stereotypical representation of races and stock characters suddenly more glaring and as Fransman has suggested, "more suited to engaging in a discussion of the past perhaps, and not the present or the future."[208] Journalist Rafiek Mammon has critically reflected: "And while one cannot say the messages are lost, one can certainly question their validity and potency. Should we not be moving on as a nation? Are these the only stories the coloured community can tell and do we need to see them again and again?"[209]

[204] M Rowlands, "Remembering to forget: Sublimation as sacrifice in war memorials", in A Forty & S Küchler (eds), *The art of forgetting*, Berg, Oxford, 1999, p. 131.
[205] V Layne, "The District Six museum: An ordinary people's place", *The Public Historian*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2008, p. 54.
[206] C Beyers, "Land restitution's 'rights communities': The District Six case", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2007, p. 278.
[207] J Battersby, "The spirit of District Six is resurrected", *Sunday Independent*, 29 December 2002.
[208] Fransman, *Negotiating coloured identity through encounters with performance*, p. 38.
[209] R Mammon, "Perpetuating a pigeonhole: Slick and charming, but oh so stereotypical", *Cape Times*, 4 November 2002.

Although fiercely criticized by Wicomb, in its time *District Six: The musical* facilitated the claiming of District Six the slum as home. Through the politics of nostalgia that sought to transform the slum, it addressed a layer of shame accruing to the postcolonial subject, thought not necessarily one identified by Wicomb. It did so partly through interacting with a stigmatized music strongly associated with the Cape Coon Carnival, and a simultaneous broadening of the musical identity associated with its eponymous place, demonstrating the problematic nature of attempting to assign musical authenticity to a community marked by cultural encounter and transformed through processes of creolization. Taliep would continue to identify strongly with District Six in subsequent years, writing a number of musicals during the course of the 1990s with his collaborative partner, Kramer. This list of their collaborations would come to include *Fairyland* (1990), *Poison* (1992), *Crooners* (1992), *Kat and the Kings* (1995) and *Klop klop* (1996). Apart from *Poison*, all of the musicals would be set in District Six. However, it was only a matter of time before Taliep would go in search of his slave origins in Malaysia, in so doing beginning to combat what Wicomb called "the total erasure of slavery from the folk memory".[210] In doing so, he would be trying to erase yet another layer of shame.

[210] Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", p. 95.

The biographer as significant other[1]

My relationship to my biographical subject has been one of the most perplexing and exciting aspects of this study. At times I feel like Taliep's ambassador, obsessively responsible for representing him accurately at all costs. I am frequently confronted with the fact that we are very different from each other, not only in musical sensibility, but also in approaches towards religion and society. I am disturbed by the fact that I know so much about Taliep, about his decisions and his activities, without having met him at all. How much do our actions say about who we are? I have a suspicion they don't even come close. And after having sorted through the contents of his studio, read through all his documents and looked at all his photographs I still have the feeling that if we were to meet somehow, he would surprise me.

And then there was the dream in which he called me on the telephone. I addressed him as Mr. Petersen and he told me to call him Taliep. Then he said that it was time for us to meet in person. The disturbing part of the dream is when he told me to meet him in Khayamandi, Stellenbosch. Khayamandi was founded in the early 1950s as a segregated suburb to house black male labour working on the wine farms in the region. Why would I dream of Taliep wanting to meet me in Khayamandi? Do I have a subconscious sense that he belongs outside white Stellenbosch in a former group area determined for non-whites? If that were the case, why not Cloetesville or Idasvallei, areas where the majority of the inhabitants are coloured? I have never been to Khayamandi.

[1] This title is taken from a paper presented by Willemien Froneman at the 2012 conference of the South African Society for Research in Music.

I sometimes feel guilty about my work. I feel very close to Taliep, entirely without his consent or agency. I have become his significant other, and he had no choice in the matter. Sometimes I feel guilty for trying to write about him at all. In the year of his death, Taliep was quoted in an interview as follows: "Ek móét die boek van my lewe skryf, eendag, regtig."[2] He never got around to it, and now I am writing it. And I came across another quote from a few years earlier where Taliep refers to the start of his collaboration with David Kramer with the following, " ... he was a white man writing my story ... ".[3] Is it happening all over again? I am a white researcher from the University of Stellenbosch, an institution that would not have allowed Taliep to study there when he was my age. During the course of this research, I have realized how protective people are of District Six subject matter, and how resentful they are of non-(former)residents writing about it with any sense of authority. I have come to believe that this is regarded in the same light as a cultural appropriation. And I have also come across this attitude in my work on Taliep. Am I the wrong person to write about him?

Sometimes I find myself talking to him. And then I think that he would never have wanted me to step away from an experience solely because of the colour of my skin.

[2] "I must write the story of my life, someday, really." H Retief, "Afrikaans deur dik en dun", *Rapport,* 26 February 2006.

[3] J van der Walt, "Long-awaited encore for musical that captured hearts of the nation", *Sunday Independent,* 27 January 2002.

Chapter 5

Rediscovering Talieb with a “b”

We, the so-called "Cape Malay People", have been part of the social "make -up" of South Africa for more than three centuries. Since my "growing- up" years in the now destroyed area called District Six, did I find it quite bizarre to be a so-called "Coloured" and Cape Malay at the same time? Later on I discovered that all the Cape Malays were Muslims, and the rest of the "Coloureds" were Christians. By the time I was about to enter my "teens" I attended the wedding of one of my relatives, where I had my first "inter–religion" experience. As he was a Muslim and she a Christian. As a "common–tradition" in District Six, would the bride normally move in with the husband's family. And from then on we called her "Aunty Salaam" instead of Aunty Sybil. So now ... did that make her a Cape Malay? Needless to say did the "Apartheid–System" under which I grew up, just confuse me more. The "force removal" that happened through out South Africa in the 1960's gave me my first Experience of designated areas for the people of my country; i.e.: different residential areas for whites, Blacks, Chinese + coloureds and Indians, but my first I.D. card called me Malay and so did my birth Certificate. How come not South African? For many years various situations and experiences had me on different "emotional roller coasters" that left me sometimes angry, frustrated, rebellious, disillusioned and many times confused and depressed. Questions like "who am I? Where do I come from, where do I fit in"? kept on running havoc in my head.

Taliep Petersen[1]

[1] This body of text has been reproduced directly from the source document, which I have called *Two worlds – One heart (Satu hati) concept.* It was written by Taliep as a rough draft of a concept pitch for a possible future television project. T Petersen, *Two worlds – One heart (Satu hati) concept*, typed document: concept pitch, 2005, Herman Binge Archive.

On 11 February 1990, Nelson Mandela, the long-imprisoned leader of the African National Congress (ANC) and by then emblem of the anti-Apartheid struggle, was released from Victor Verster Prison.[2] Under increasing pressure from outside and inside South Africa, the ruling government had began negotiations with members of the ANC in exile from mid-1986, when Taliep and Kramer were starting work on their first collaboration, *District Six: The musical*. At the same time, covert discussions had been taking place in prison with Mandela. Terrified of losing all political power in South Africa, the National Party (NP) was trying to negotiate a system of power-sharing. On 9 November 1989, the Berlin Wall began to be dismantled, signalling the end of the Cold War in Europe and concomitantly, the end of communist rule over Eastern Europe. Hermann Giliomee opines that the crumbling of the Soviet Union left the ANC without one of their most powerful backers, and the discrediting of communism world-wide left their ideology damaged. F.W. de Klerk, who had taken over the presidency from P.W. Botha after the latter had suffered a stroke early in 1989, described this as a "God-sent opportunity", but also realized that the fall of communism meant that the NP had been deprived of an important argument for keeping black-rule at bay, or even for negotiating a system of power-sharing.[3] In early February 1990, de Klerk announced his and his cabinet's decision to unban the ANC, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and other liberation movements to begin negotiations in earnest, ushering in a period that Giliomee describes as marked by "profound uncertainty and potentially dangerous instability." [4]

These events eventually led to Mandela's inauguration on 10 May 1994 as South Africa's first democratically elected president. An important part of his approach to leading South Africa into a fledgling democracy was a number of reconciliatory gestures towards South Africa's formerly formally segregated racial groups. In 1994, the majority of Western Cape coloureds voted for the National Party as opposed to the ANC, something that was described by Zoë Wicomb as the "failure, in coloured terms, of the grand narrative of liberation".[5] This development sparked renewed interest in coloured identity, for as Wicomb states, "our vote against non-racial democracy [...] demands fresh enquiry into the questions of postcolonial 'hybridity' and identity as well as the territorialization

[2] The information in this paragraph is taken from H Giliomee, "Weakening control", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, pp. 391–395.
[3] Giliomee, "Weakening control", p. 394.
[4] Giliomee, "Weakening control", p. 396.
[5] Z Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", in D Attridge & R Jolly (eds.), *Writing South Africa: Literature, apartheid and democracy*, 1970–1995, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. 94.

or geography of belonging within which identity is produced."[6] For Wicomb, as discussed in the previous chapter, a partial answer to this conundrum lay in wiping out shame over a history of slavery and miscegenation.[7]

The devastating effects of shame on identity construction are also addressed in the work of Cheryl Hendricks. Reflecting on the impulse to respond to the coloured vote with a debate on coloured identity, she points to an underlying assumption that coloured identity is fundamentally flawed and in need of ideological transformation, an assumption that fails to take into consideration the broader context of identity construction in South Africa.[8] In addressing post-apartheid tensions in the Western Cape, Hendricks argues that identity cannot be read in isolation and that historical, psychological and material factors need to be taken into consideration. In this, she calls for a greater recognition of the fact that this diverse group of individuals have historically been assigned a group identity "cloaked by the perceived shame of 'illegitimacy' and lack of authenticity that has to a large extent psychologically disempowered the bearers of this identity."[9]

During the early 1990s, Taliep and his wife Madeegha's last children were born: their son, Mogamat Ashur, on 5 July 1992 and their youngest daughter, Fatiema, on 15 September 1993. However, roughly three years after the birth of their last child, their marriage would end in divorce. In an interview published on 5 November 2011, Madeegha tells of her erstwhile friendship with a high school friend, Najwa Dirk, and how the latter became romantically involved with Taliep.[10] Dirk had been a firm friend for many years, having come to visit the couple when they were touring Swaziland, performing in Plettenberg Bay with Sapphyre, as well as when they were living in Cape Town. Through gestures of growing significance, Dirk befriended Taliep and his children, to the point where she attended the birth of Fatiema in 1993.[11] According to Taliep's father, Mogamat Ladien Petersen, he was aware of a growing relationship between Taliep and Dirk. He describes one occasion when he saw Dirk coming into the house in Ashby Road, Athlone, and kissing Taliep: "I knew, hier's daar iets aan. Something is brewing here."[12] He furthermore describes the situation as follows:

6 Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", p. 94.
7 Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", pp. 94–95, 100.
8 C Hendricks, "Debating coloured identity in the Western Cape", *African Security Review*, vol. 14, no. 4, 2005, p.118
9 Hendricks, "Debating coloured identity in the Western Cape", p. 118.
10 I Roggeband, "Taliep se eerste vrou", *Die Burger: By*, 5 November 2011.
11 Roggeband, "Taliep se eerste vrou", *Die Burger.*
12 " ... here something is going on ... " Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.

> Then, she and Madeegha were friends and she crept in like this. She wormed herself in. But Madeegha didn't know. Alright, a man, is a man after all. There's a weakness in man, not a weakness in a woman ... Let's be, let's be open. As far as sex is concerned, a man can stay without a woman for two or three days. A woman can stay, right through. It doesn't worry them at all![13]

Mogamat Ladien describes thinking of Dirk, with whom he had a good relationship, as "a lovely person" who was "very open hearted".[14] Dirk would even occasionally request Mogamat Ladien to ask Taliep to marry her. Madeegha and Taliep's marriage took increasing strain under gossip about Taliep's second relationship, with people asking, in Madeegha's words, "Wie is hierdie vrou wat rondloop en maak of sy mevrou Petersen is?"[15] In 1997, one year after his divorce from Madeegha, Taliep was to marry the also recently-divorced Najwa Dirk.[16] By and large, Dirk was accepted by the Petersen family, with Taliep's younger sister, Ma'atoema, saying that they were "like sisters".[17] However, in the early 1990s, Taliep and Madeegha were still building their family, and although Madeegha performed less and less due to the demands of motherhood and pressure from the Muslim community who frowned upon a stage career for women, she still occasionally took part in Taliep's projects.[18]

Post-1990, with the success of *District Six: The musical* temporarily behind them, David Kramer and Taliep were approached by a number of former cast members who had played the Sexy Boys, such as Salie Daniels, Terry Hector, Giempie Vardien and Dennis Maart, who wanted to put on their own show performing songs from the musical.[19] The collaborative team denied the group permission, but decided to write something else for them to perform, hence the creation of a cabaret called *The Sexy Boys in Fairyland,* performed at the Ritz Plaza Hotel in Cape Town on Sunday nights.[20] Soon this production was expanded into a musical and its title shortened to *Fairyland*. The collaborative team's second musical opened in December 1990 at the Dock Road Theatre in the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town, a new venture in which David and Renaye

[13] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
[14] Interview with Mogamat Ladien Petersen, 27 October 2011.
[15] "Who is this woman who walks around pretending to be Mrs. Petersen?" Roggeband, "Taliep se eerste vrou", *Die Burger: By.*
[16] Roggeband, "Taliep se eerste vrou", *Die Burger: By.*
[17] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 14 May 2012.
[18] Roggeband, "Taliep se eerste vrou", *Die Burger: By.*
[19] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[20] D de Villiers & M Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2011, p. 248.

Kramer were partners.[21] Like the previous Kramer/Petersen success, *Fairyland* was also set in District Six and, in dealing with a group of actors who were reminiscing in a dressing-room backstage about life in this suburb, had strong undertones of longing and nostalgia.[22] According to Kramer, this was a pattern that would be repeated in the future, for example with *Kat and the Kings* in 1995, where a desire to create employment for a specific group of actors was often fuel for the writing of new projects.[23]

Fairyland proved to be very successful with audiences: at the end of its three-year run it had had over 1500 performances.[24] But before *Fairyland* had finished its run, the collaborative team had already written a new musical. Motivated by a desire to explore the theme of Cape Town's copycat singers, as discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, Kramer and Taliep wrote *Crooners*, featuring singers Al Hendricks, Cyril Valentine, Solly Junior, Douglas Schrikker and Rudolph Walker in a musical revue consisting of a number of covers alongside original Kramer/Petersen compositions.[25] *Crooners* opened in the City Lights Theatre at the Cape Town Holiday Inn in March 1992.[26] It, too, would run for three years, finally closing in 1995 at the Tropical Nites Theatre at the Wild Coast Sun in Port Alfred.[27] During the writing and staging of *Fairyland* and *Crooners*, Taliep and Kramer had continued discussions on a larger musical they were planning on writing – something that addressed contemporary issues and affected the Cape Town youth.[28] Their first idea was a love story set in the political turmoil of the final years of apartheid, a plot that would play out on the barricades of Belgravia Road in Athlone. During research for this project, other themes increasingly came to the fore, such as drug abuse, gangsterism and the Number gangs that operated throughout the prisons of South Africa.[29]

As has been mentioned in previous chapters, Taliep had been vehemently opposed to drugs for the greater portion of his life, having on occasion addressed issues of substance abuse amongst the members of Sapphyre. He was also someone who, according to Kramer, remained in contact with a number of his childhood friends who had become involved in the world of gangs, never distancing himself

21 De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 248.
22 Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
23 Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
24 Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
25 "*Crooners": City Lights Theatre,* programme, Holiday Inn, Cape Town, 1992.
26 De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 249.
27 De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 249.
28 *"Poison": Cape Performing Arts Board Opera (Nico Malan Theatre)*, programme, CAPAB, Cape Town, 1992.
29 *"Poison": Cape Performing Arts Board Opera (Nico Malan Theatre),* CAPAB.

from their world, but viewing it with empathy.[30] For a period spanning more than ten years, Taliep, bass guitarist Howard Links (who had been performing with Taliep since their teenage years), and three other musicians would go to Pollsmoor and Brandvlei prisons to help the Number gangs with preparations for their own internal coon competition, held yearly on Boxing Day.[31] In order to distribute their help fairly, they would coach the 26s one week and the 28s the next. Howard Links remembers that this gave them a measure of personal security: "Now I'm asking you the question, if one of the gangsters sees us in the road, will they kill us?"[32]

According to ex-*Carnival a la District Six* and *District Six: The musical* cast member Terry Hector, Taliep received a lot of respect from gangsters, something that was also facilitated by his activities in the Malay Choir community with the Rio Oranges, as well as the coon troupe he coached, the African Zonks.[33] He corroborates that Taliep would have been safe everywhere in the Western Cape, partly because they were proud of him as "their star".[34] Taliep's "connection" with gangsters was something that aided the Kramer/Petersen production when it came to researching this new venture, even allowing for Kramer to interview them.[35] One day, returning from prison after a coaching session, Taliep became convinced that the new production should focus on the Number gangs, and the love story in Belgravia Road was abandoned in favour of a musical that was eventually to be called *Poison*.[36]

Poison opened in the Nico Malan Theatre on 20 October 1992, with leads Al Hendricks, Winston Pienaar, Jody Abrahams, Steve Walsh, Jenny de Lenta, Giempie Vardien, Ricky Rudolph, Bettina Schouw, Linda Alexander, Didi Moses, Arthur Petersen and Rashied Cassiem.[37] The band consisted of Hotep Galeta, Claude Fry, Howard Links, Calli Housdon, Billy Brandt, Lynne Poulsen, Ebrahim Petersen, Victor Kula and Luyanda Ntete.[38] Staging *Poison* at the Nico Malan was something of a personal triumph for Taliep and the fulfilment of a promise he had made seventeen years ago. As discussed in Chapter 2, Taliep had been part of the multiracial cast of Des and Dawn Lindberg's 1975 production of *Pippin* that had run aground because a number of state-funded theatres, foremost

30 Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
31 Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013.
32 Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013.
33 Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
34 Interview with Terry Hector, 15 January 2013.
35 Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2012.
36 *"Poison": Cape Performing Arts Board Opera (Nico Malan Theatre)*, CAPAB.
37 T Seale, "This sort of poison should go down well", *Weekend Argus*, Taliep Petersen Archive; *"Poison": Cape Performing Arts Board Opera (Nico Malan Theatre),* CAPAB.
38 *"Poison": Cape Performing Arts Board Opera (Nico Malan Theatre)*, CAPAB.

among them the Nico Malan, had refused to accommodate them. In a newspaper interview reporting on Taliep's disappointment over the fate of *Pippin*, he had stated with reference to his fans: "My triumph is also theirs and one day I'll be back permanently to produce our own Cape shows."[39]

The times had indeed changed. *Poison* was a significant development for a number of reasons. Taliep had, for the first time since *Carnival a la District Six, District Six: The musical, Fairyland* and *Crooners*, put his energies into the creation of a musical production that was not in some way rooted in the iconic suburb of his birth. Instead of focusing on the tragedy of leaving District Six as a result of the Group Areas Act, *Poison* focused on life after forced removals in the drug and gang-infested Cape Flats, as reflected in lyrics sung by the chorus: "Trapped like a rat/ In a council flat/ No money/ No future/ The anger grows/ No-one listens/ To our problems".[40] Kramer and Taliep's new musical was a tragic love story that consciously borrowed from Shakespeare's *Othello*, as well as from Arrigo Boito and Guiseppe Verdi's operatic treatment of it.[41] In *Poison*, the figures of Othello and Iago become the drug lord, Mandrax, and his dealer, Poison, and through the trickery of the latter, Othello/Mandrax eventually ends up strangling his own wife, the figure of Desdemona embodied in the young character of Juanita.

Not only did Taliep and Kramer write about hitherto unaddressed topics in their collective oeuvre, they also attempted to write in a new genre, namely that of a sung-through pop-opera, employing accompanied recitative instead of spoken dialogue.[42] In a newspaper article published shortly before opening night, Taliep commented on this development as follows: "This is the most ambitious work we've ever tackled. It's a wall-to-wall musical, with all the dialogue in song. Although I wouldn't make comparisons, it's somewhere in the *Les Miserables, Miss Saigon* genre, using various unexplored local rhythms."[43] Because they were less confident working in this medium, the collaborative team again decided to hand over the direction of the opera, this time to director Janice Honeyman and musical director Hotep Galeta.[44] The rest of the creative team consisted of stage designer Andrew Botha, costume designer Fanie Steenkamp and lighting designer Malcolm Hurrell.[45] The production was praised by a number of reviewers, such

[39] B Jongbloed, "Taliep Petersen advises Cape talent – Grass is greener in the city of gold", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., *Early years scrapbook*, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[40] D Kramer & T Petersen, *Poison*, script, Blik Music, Cape Town, 2004, p. 2.
[41] C Slabber, "David Kramer se rock-opera rou...én teer én goed", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[42] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2013.
[43] Seale, "This sort of poison should go down well", *Weekend Argus*.
[44] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 249.
[45] *"Poison": Cape Performing Arts Board Opera (Nico Malan Theatre)*, CAPAB.

as Coenie Slabber who complemented the Cape Performing Arts Board (CAPAB) for staging a new and potentially groundbreaking production[46] and Ryland Fisher who pronounced the Kramer/Petersen collaboration as unbroken in their "winning streak."[47] However, these two reviewers also agreed that it would be a mistake to compare *Poison* with Broadway or West End fare. Indeed, Kramer was to look back at this musical and label their effort at recitative "pretentious", stating that, in their attempt to emulate musicals abroad, they "got beyond themselves."[48]

In the same year, Taliep and Henry Paulse, artistic director of the Joseph Stone theatre, were invited by the United States Information Agency and the Academy for Educational Development to visit the United States for three weeks and take part in a "multi-regional international visitor project".[49] This project was designed to teach participants, who were drawn from several different countries, more about American theatre. During this exchange, they went to Washington D.C., Waterford, Louisville, Winston-Salem, Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle and New York, in the process visiting a number of theatrical establishments such as the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Centre and the North Carolina School for the Arts, as well as attending the 16th Annual Humana Festival of New American Plays.[50] Later, Taliep would claim this experience as one that had a deep impact on his decision to trace his own origins. According to him, he became increasingly conscious of the sometimes troubled relations between Native Americans, African Americans, those known simply as Americans and a host of other ethnicities such as Americans of Italian, Jewish and Hispanic descent, finally reaching the point where he reportedly thought to himself: "The Gods must be crazy. For here I was in N.Y., the 'City of Liberty', a country who has gone through a world renowned emancipation, who sells to the world the 'American dream', famous for nearly everything ... had the same problem as me."[51]

Subsequent to the 1992 production, *Poison* was rewritten with spoken dialogue replacing the recitative,[52] although traces of the latter still remained. In 1994, as a part of the Volkswagen Musicactive programme, this production had a week-long run in the Baxter with a cast that consisted nearly entirely of school-going pupils and served as an opportunity to give this new version its trial run.[53]

[46] Slabber, "David Kramer se rock-opera rou...én teer én goed", Taliep Petersen Archive.
[47] R Fisher, "Another winner from duo with the magic touch," newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[48] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[49] *A multi-regional group project: American Theater, March 16 – April 10, 1992,* programme, United States Information Agency, Washington, 1992.
[50] *A multi-regional group project: American Theater, March 16 – April 10, 1992,* United States Information Agency.
[51] Petersen, *Two worlds – One heart (Satu hati) concept,* Herman Binge Archive.
[52] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[53] F Chisholm, "Bravo for VW music project", Cape Times, 6 August 1994.

David de Villiers and Mathilda Slabbert report that, during this run, Taliep had became acquainted with Malaysian corporate leader, Ishak Ismail, who was very enthusiastic about musicals and eventually offered to take *Poison* to Kuala Lumpur.[54] Ismail was the head of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) in Malaysia and had been awarded the non-hereditary federal title of Datuk, signifying his advanced position in the Malaysian social strata.[55] Ismail Davids, a friend of Taliep and later musical collaborator, asserts that Taliep had travelled to Malaysia prior to the *Poison* tour for a concert, also sponsored by Ishak Ismail and KFC, that was in service of an anti-drug campaign.[56] In preparation for the Malaysian run, the reworked *Poison* was staged at the Baxter Theatre and the Port Elizabeth Opera House with a professional cast including Jody Abrahams, Mortimer Williams, Abigail Coetzee, Maree Kim Louis, Arthur Petersen, Mark Fransman, Luqmaan (also known as Loekmaan) Adams and Zenith Adams.[57] Kramer once again assumed his role as director, with Taliep as musical director, Paul Abrahams as lighting designer and Didi Moses and Zerilda Schuller in charge of choreography.[58]

In an interview discussing the reworked version, Taliep stated that up to seventy percent of the musical had been re-written, with Kramer adding that the previous version had not succeeded in capturing "the texture of life here."[59] It had also run the risk of alienating the team's main audience. The new version had been given an uplifting ending for, as Kramer noted: "The original musical never captured young Cape Flats audiences. It was too dark and serious, but it had some nice moments and characters."[60] The production was described as set to music "which derives from the people and the place, with the same driving force and compelling rhythms of the Coons, mixed with a little Brecht and Kurt Weill."[61] *Poison* does indeed incorporate local influences in its musical language, such as "Friday night" with its driving *mbaqanga* rhythm (that nonetheless incorporates the *ghoema* beat) and its prominent use of saxophones.

However, a number of tracks, such as "Bottleneck", employ a musical language that is in line with the American tradition of musical writing. Indeed, according to

[54] De Villiers & Slabbert, David Kramer: A biography, p. 250.
[55] Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2013.
[56] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[57] "Top cast for new Poison", newspaper article of unknown origin, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[58] K Rutter, "Lean, mean new machine from Kramer & Petersen", *Sunday Times*, 19 February 1995.
[59] I Macdonald, "Show aims to drain poison from young lives on the Flats", *Weekend Argus*, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive.
[60] Macdonald, "Show aims to drain poison from young lives on the Flats", *Weekend Argus*.
[61] O Williams, "New Poison overflows with zest and brio", newspaper article of unknown origin, 15 February 1995, Taliep Petersen Archive.

Figure 54: Actor Jody Abrahams playing the title role in *Poison* at the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town, 1994.
SOURCE: David Kramer Productions

Kramer, Taliep "wanted to be remembered sort of for a Western type musical, like *Poison*," and as a consequence, regarded this as his best work.[62] South African audiences and reviewers responded positively to this production, with Karen Rutter reporting: "Stripped down and streamlined, the new model *Poison* is a lean, mean machine which roars through its paces with the power and ease that comes with rebuilding a product with fresh materials."[63] Though some reviewers also remarked on its excessive length, as well as on the sometimes corny lyrics – "What a pity, that scarf was so pretty" – it also received praise for attempting to put on stage a spoken language ordinarily only heard on the Cape Flats.[64] As Jeremy Dowson noted, "One of the most striking things about the production is the sheer pleasure shown by the audience at hearing language exactly as it's spoken around them."[65]

The 1995 production of *Poison* opens with a low, menacing melody played on synthesized strings.[66] The melody is joined by occasional notes sounded by a synthesized sitar, and a higher string part. The synthesized strings continue while a coffin is brought on stage, and what looks like a corpse wrapped in white linen is removed from it. Then the music changes. A prominent syncopated drum beat is sounded on a low pitch, much slower than the *ghoema* beat is normally played, and the sound of the sitar returns, now joined by a hollow flute sound, reminiscent of the Middle Eastern ney flute. It plays an embellished line, often sliding up to the desired pitch from below. Together with the sitar, the ney flute is evocative of the East, suggesting orientalist tendencies in the music. A possible explanation for this, as the dialogue on stage soon shows, is that the "corpse" was actually mandrax imported from Bombay. Another possibility is that these musical signifiers were meant to acknowledge the Eastern slave origin of a number of Cape Flats inhabitants. This orientalism is even more prominent on a recording of the first chorus number of *Poison*, entitled "Danger," as contained on *The Kramer Petersen songbook*.[67] This number opens with the same ney flute sound, together with percussion that conjures up images of rattlesnakes. The flute melody is played with strong vibrato and contains embellishments in the form of small pitch fluctuations reminiscent of certain forms of Indian classical music. After this introduction, a very different, more contemporary sound is introduced on electric guitar and drum kit, the latter playing a faster syncopated rhythm than the one described above. Throughout this number, the rhythm section plays a prominent role and is particularly strong in the spoken text sections as an accompaniment to the chant.

[62] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2013.
[63] Rutter, "Lean, mean new machine from Kramer & Petersen", *Sunday Times*.
[64] Williams, "New Poison overflows with zest and brio", Taliep Petersen Archive.
[65] J Dowson, "Musical that'll give you a high", *Sunday Times*, 19 February 1995.
[66] D Kramer & T Petersen, *Poison*, DVD video recording, 1995, David Kramer Archive.
[67] D Kramer & T Petersen, *The Kramer Petersen songbook*, CD audio recording, Blik Music, Cape Town, 2008.

Reflecting on the instruments used in the opening of *Poison*, Kramer notes that Taliep was particularly interested in this stage of his life in the developments in computer software of sound modules that could emulate a number of instruments. Discussing the drum rhythm employed in this section of the musical, he remarks that one of its functions was "to get that hypnotic stuff going."[68] This would be appropriate enough in a musical about drug abuse, but Kramer goes further to suggest a possible relation between these evocative openings and the practice of *ratiep* or *khalifa*. *Ratiep* is a controversial Islamic religious practice rooted in Sufism that was practiced in the Cape since at least the beginning of the nineteenth century.[69] Though this ritual is regarded by practitioners as being of South-Eastern Asian origin, Denis-Constant Martin notes that similar rituals are practiced in a number of countries where Sufism is prominent. As such, Martin regards it as "testimony of the complexities which lie at the root of South African Islam rather than evidence of one particular affiliation."[70]

During this ceremony, accompanied by drums and a religious chant or *dhikr*, dancers enter a trancelike state called *tariek* which enables them to pierce their bodies with sharp objects without causing blood to flow.[71] According to John Edwin Mason, the *ratiep* was not only intended to demonstrate God's power to protect the believer from physical harm, it was also a way for slaves to reclaim their bodies, which were sold, bought, put to work and flogged by slave owners. As such, *ratiep* reinforced a message taught by the imams: "Though their bodies were enslaved, their souls were free."[72] According to Martin the beat that usually accompanies *khalifa* is related to the *ghoema* beat, and indeed, the rhythm in question from *Poison* has similarities with a slowed-down *ghoema* beat.[73] This interpretation is strengthened considering Taliep's statement in 1992 that *Poison* contained "various unexplored local rhythms."[74] Kramer, however, is not certain whether this was a conscious thought behind the composition of this music, but states that he and Taliep had had numerous conversations about the slave heritage of the Cape and the history of the Indian Ocean basin, something that Taliep was increasingly interested in incorporating into the music.[75]

68 Interview with David Kramer, 10 May 2013.
69 Interview with David Kramer, 10 May 2013.
70 DC Martin, *Coon carnival: New year in Cape Town, past and present*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1999, p. 69.
71 Martin, *Coon carnival: New year in Cape Town, past and present*, p. 40.
72 JW Mason, *Social death and resurrection: Slavery and emancipation in South Africa*, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, 2003. p. 207.
73 Martin, *Coon carnival: New year in Cape Town, past and present*, p. 72.
74 Seale, "This sort of poison should go down well", *Weekend Argus*.
75 Interview with David Kramer, 10 May 2013.

Early in May 1995, the cast of *Poison* boarded a plane for Malaysia. Apart from starring in *Poison*, a number of them also performed in the *Variety gala show,* where they sang Kramer/Petersen songs and pop music covers in front of an audience that included the King of Malaysia.[76] *Poison* was very well received in Malaysia, not only for its strong anti-drug message, but also because of its perceived quality as a world class musical.[77] This stimulated interest in theatre in Malaysia and, among talk of co-producing with the Kramer/Petersen team, encouraged the National Theatre Council to look into further developing performing arts on home ground.[78] Together with KFC, Ishak Ismail subsequently became very involved in sponsoring a number of Taliep's activities in Malaysia, inviting him to perform at social functions and concerts.[79] Ishak Ismail also regularly visited South Africa. According to Herman Binge, who would produce Taliep's later forays into television, Ishak Ismail was fascinated by the Cape Malay community as they had been so isolated that they still practiced Islam the way that Malaysians had practiced it three hundred years ago.[80] As a consequence, he found going to mosque in South Africa akin to time travel. He also felt that the Muslim community was more conservative than the rest of the Islamic world.

Taliep was to experience this first-hand in a project he embarked on with Ismail Davids in 1995, the result of which would be the album *Tribute*, released in 1997.[81] Trained as a flamenco guitarist, Davids is an Afrikaans Cape Malay who had grown up in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia and had spent a number of years engaged in religious studies.[82] Some years earlier, Davids had developed a strong friendship with Taliep, the basis of which was an overlapping of religious interests and specifically, an interest in "the unseen world".[83] They began a process of educating each other within the friendship. Davids could speak Arabic and contributed a richer knowledge of Islam, while Taliep had an extensive knowledge of musical genres and ideas that were unfamiliar to Davids. A tangible outcome of this friendship was *Tribute* for, although this is not reflected on the CD cover or the inlay notes, this album can only be described as a three-way collaboration. Taliep and Davids composed and arranged the music, and accompanying texts were conceived by Taliep, Davids and an Egyptian national called Mamadouh Khan. However, as Taliep was not fluid in Arabic, the other two men were responsible for writing down the text as it would be sung. All three men performed on this album – Taliep and Davids singing and Khan playing the tabla drums.

[76] "King attends variety dinner show," *New Straits Times*, 4 May 1995; G Shamala, "A show fit for the King", *The Sun*, 4 May 1995.
[77] RH Ariffin, "Catch Poison's cast today", *The Sun*, 30 April 1995.
[78] S Yunos, "Plays to expound social issues", *The Malay Mail*, 13 May 1995.
[79] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[80] Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.
[81] T Petersen, *Tribute,* CD audio recording, Sapphyre Communications, Cape Town, 1998.
[82] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[83] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.

Figure 55: Taliep performing in Malaysia, mid-1990s.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

Tribute was released by Sapphyre Communications, a company that Taliep had started together with Davids and a man called Mogamat Matthews. One of the main goals of this company was to make available recordings of Arab music in South Africa, particularly for use by the Voice of the Cape radio station. According to Ismail Davids, he and Taliep were very involved in the radio station and had wanted to obtain the sole broadcasting rights for a body of Islamic musics that was readily available in the rest of the world.[84] For this purpose, the three men travelled together to Cairo, to Saudi Arabia and also to Turkey, where *Tribute* would be produced, both in cassette and compact disc format. A newspaper article in the *Athlone News* reports as follows: "Talieb [*sic*] has given exclusive rights of his album to Voice of the Cape, which in turn sells the CDs and tapes to charitable organizations to raise funds.[85]

According to a newspaper article that appeared in 1997, *Tribute* consists of recordings of "qasidahs", meaning "songs of salutations to the Prophet Muhammad – upon whom be peace".[86] Two South African sources dating from the 1980s shed more light on this musical genre. Achmat Davids defined

[84] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[85] It is not certain whether Sapphyre Communications is synonymous with Voice of the Cape, but elsewhere, other distributers are mentioned, namely the Islamic Da'wah Movement and Jamaitul Falag, both non-profit organizations. G Paleker, "Explorations of spirituality", *Muslim Views*, February 1997; M Toffar, "Islamic songs for Talieb's solo album", *Athlone News*, 5 March 1997.
[86] Paleker, "Explorations of spirituality", *Muslim Views*.

these songs, which he spells "kasedas", as "Arabic songs mainly in praise of the Prophet".[87] Desmond Desai's definition is more specific, terming them a "popular type of religious music, with a garbled Arabic text, sung by a soloist (or a pair of singers forming a duet) to the accompaniment of instruments such as the mandolin and drum."[88] In another source, Desai names "kasedas" as a musical genre unique to the Cape Town Islamic community and not found elsewhere in the world.[89]

Figure 56: Taliep (third from the left) and Sapphyre Communications on tour in Egypt, 1990s.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

The term "qaṣīda", however, has existed elsewhere since pre-Islamic times, referring to a genre of classic Arab poetry that consists from ten to a hundred lines, in which the same rhythmical structure is repeated in each.[90] *Qaṣīdas* were traditionally recited orally in public and Amnon Shiloah notes that this genre

[87] A Davids, "Music and Islam", in *Fifth symposium on ethnomusicology, 30 August – 1 September 1984*, International Library of African Music, Grahamstown, 1985, p. 38.
[88] D Desai, *"Cape Malay" music and its application in the school,* Masters thesis, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, 1983, p. 49.
[89] D Desai, "The musical context of the Ratiep performance in relation to South African Islamic and Cape Malay music", in C Muller (ed.), *Eleventh symposium on ethnomusicology*, *23 – 25 August 1993*, International Library of African Music, Grahamstown, 1993, p. 28.
[90] A Shiloah, *Music in the world of Islam: A socio-cultural study*, Scolar Press, London, 1995, pp. 3–4.

is "considered the highest achievement of Arabic eloquence."[91] In a discussion of Islamic folk music traditions, Shiloah also mentions the singing of *qaṣīda* poetry, often to fiddle or lute accompaniment.[92] Habib Hassan Touma defines *qaṣīda* as a form of music set to poetry (presenting religious or secular themes) that is particularly popular among the Sufi fraternities of Islam and that is found "throughout the Arabian world".[93] He also writes: "Among the early handed-down musical forms, the *qaṣīda* is the only one that allows the composer a relatively free hand in setting preexisting text to music."[94] However, in discussing the performances of the Egyptian singer, Umm Kulthūm, Touma notes that she performed *qaṣīdas* that were "expressly written and set to music for her",[95] suggesting that it is possible to write new *qaṣīda* texts. It would appear that this term has also moved beyond its traditional designation as a form of classical music, with *qasidah* blogger Abdullah Ali noting that the Arabian pop singer Maher Zain sings what could be termed "*qasidah* modern".[96]

Tracing the origin of South African *kasedas* is outside the scope of this research, beyond suggesting that this heterogeneous repertoire was created as a result of diverse musical influences brought to the Cape by political prisoners and slaves who hailed from countries where Islam was prevalent.[97] However, despite the fact that Desai postulates a specific repertoire of traditional *kasedas* found solely in South Africa,[98] *qasidahs* in the form of Arabic songs sung to instrumental accompaniment clearly exist elsewhere in the Islamic world. Ismail Davids notes that, in some Islamic societies, such as in India and Malaysia, these songs can be in praise of the Prophet Muhammad, or of Allah, although songs glorifying the latter are to be sung only to drum accompaniment.[99] However, there are also schools of Islamic thought, particularly in the Arab world, that disapprove of praising the Prophet instead of praising Allah. Davids also makes clear that not all South African *kasedas* explicitly praise the Prophet Muhammad or Allah, but some are merely conveyors of a positive message and implicitly religious: "Kaseda in terms, in long terms, kaseda is always been perceived as good, like,

[91] Shiloah, *Music in the world of Islam: A socio-cultural study*, pp. 3–4.
[92] Shiloah, *Music in the world of Islam: A socio-cultural study*, pp. 160–161.
[93] HH Touma, *The music of the Arabs,* trans. L Schwartz, Amadeus Press, Portland, 1996, p. 96.
[94] Touma, *The music of the Arabs*, p. 144.
[95] Touma, *The music of the Arabs*, p. 149.
[96] Electronic communication with Abdullah Ali, 15 July 2013.
[97] See DC Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, African Minds, Somerset West, 2013, pp. 119–120.
[98] Desai, "The musical context of the Ratiep performance in relation to South African Islamic and Cape Malay music", p. 28.
[99] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.

you know ... I think gospel the same, you know. Everything is not necessarily, Ok, about ... It needs to have a good message."[100] Indeed, according to Martin, *kasedas* "straddle the domains of religious and entertainment music: they aim at providing music that can be legitimately enjoyed by Muslims outside the framework of religious rituals."[101]

A number of musical characteristics of *kasedas* can be inferred from the research of Achmat Davids and Desai: in the 1980s, *kasedas* constituted a repertoire of popular religious songs sung in an Arabic altered through oral transmission, with instrumental accompaniment consisting of drums and string instruments. In a recent source discussing Cape Town musics as shaped by creolization, Denis-Constant Martin argues that the advent of the recording industry "affected repertoires that had been preserved through oral transmission."[102] He argues that an influx of secular and sacred recordings from Middle Eastern and Egyptian origin gave rise to the "*qasidah* orchestras" in the 1980s that absorbed diverse modern influences and eventually performed a varied modern repertoire in which "modal ornamentations and polyphonic songs, a capella singing, synthesizers and beatboxes co-exist".[103] However, in various newspaper articles, Taliep describes a South Africa in the late 1990s in which the repertoire of *kasedas* was still sung in a specific, and to his thinking, very conservative way. His treatment of this repertoire on *Tribute* would eventually result in his claim that he initiated a move towards modern *kasedas*, something that Martin concedes: "He may in fact have given legitimacy to a general trend towards the modernization of *qasidahs* that gained momentum after 1990."[104]

Taliep stated in a 1997 newspaper interview that he had come across *qasidahs* on his travels through Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt but that, in contrast to their South African manifestation, they are "updated to the modern musical form."[105] Taliep also asserted that the rest of the Arabic world accepts the use of orchestras when Allah and the Prophet Muhammad are praised in song, whereas in South Africa there are still opposing schools of thought. Indeed, Taliep's subsequent treatment of *kasedas* resulted in a confrontation with a segment of the South African Islamic community who accused him of breaching local

[100] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[101] Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, pp. 118–119.
[102] DC Martin, "Cape Town: The ambiguous heritage of creolization in South Africa", in D de Lame & DC Rassool (eds), *Popular snapshots and tracks to the past: Cape Town, Nairobi, Lubumbashi,* Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, 2010, p. 193.
[103] Martin, "Cape Town: The ambiguous heritage of creolization in South Africa", p. 193.
[104] Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, p. 278.
[105] Y Fakier, "Petersen pays tribute to his roots", *Cape Times*, 24 December 1997.

Islamic conventions. In describing *Tribute*, journalist Yazied Fakier wrote, "He's taken several of the traditional chants and embellished them with an orchestra, complete with violins and viola."[106]

As Taliep's daughter, Jawaahier, would later state: "The radio stations were very reluctant to play it because it was too modern. It was too modern, it was too western but the rest of the world is doing it," prompting her to conclude, "that was my father – he was years ahead of his time."[107] Rejecting that he violated Islamic beliefs, Taliep claimed to have obtained "expert guidance" from theologians at the Al Azhar University in Cairo before proceeding, stressing that nowhere does the Qur'an expressly pronounce music as haraam or halaal: "It was an ambition for me to take our Malaysian music – which is the traditional 'kasedah' music I grew up with – and update it. There's nothing like it in Jo'burg or Durban."[108] In modernizing this music, Taliep's goal was partly to reach the youth, and in this case, to present them with an alternative to what he was increasingly calling "bump 'n grind, I wanna sex you up" contemporary musical culture.[109]

In a newspaper report that appeared in *Muslim Views*, journalist Gairoonisa Paleker claimed that Taliep refused to trust other musicians to produce the exact sounds that he desired. Thus, Paleker writes, "Petersen ends up playing all of the instruments himself, except the percussion."[110] The reality, however, was perhaps slightly less impressive, as the "orchestra" on *Tribute* is computer generated, a decision that collaborator Ismail Davids ascribes to budgetary constraints, as well as to the considerable effort involved in writing out the parts and asking someone to play it.[111] Although Davids doesn't necessarily enjoy the resultant sound, he remembers that Taliep was satisfied with it for his target market.[112] Discussing *Tribute* and other projects, Kramer remarks that Taliep enjoyed the "plastic sound" that computer generated music gave him and that he "couldn't seem to hear that a real banjo compared to a keyboard banjo just didn't cut it."[113] Kramer also ascribes this to an issue involving control over the final musical product: "He loved the technology, and he loved being in control of it, and he loved in a way not having to give it to somebody else."[114]

[106] Fakier, "Petersen pays tribute to his roots", *Cape Times*.
[107] Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2013.
[108] Fakier, "Petersen pays tribute to his roots", *Cape Times*.
[109] Fakier, "Petersen pays tribute to his roots", *Cape Times*.
[110] Paleker, "Explorations of spirituality", *Muslim Views*.
[111] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[112] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[113] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2013.
[114] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2013.

Taliep's decision to evoke an orchestral medium on *Tribute* (albeit synthesized) was perhaps partly due to his own recent experience of singing with orchestras. In the 1990s, Taliep performed at least six times with the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra (CTSO) in the City Hall, first under the baton of Gerry Bosman, and later under Allan Stephenson. Taliep's involvement during the 1991 concerts included performances of "You are the days of my life", written by Yusuf Allie and recorded by Taliep on a seven-inch single in the late 1970s, "Queen of hearts" from *District Six: The musical* and "As time goes by" from the film *Casablanca*, a song he had reportedly learnt from his mother who used to sing it while she was doing the washing.[115] Taliep also had the opportunity to hear his own music arranged for orchestra by Gerry Bosman: at more than one concert during that year, the CTSO played a medley drawing on nine different songs from *District Six: The musical*.[116] Besides being Taliep's first time performing with a full orchestra, the 1991 concert also gave him his first opportunity to perform in the Cape Town City Hall without a permit, his last performance in this venue having been his childhood performance as soloist with a Malay choir called the Boarding Boys.[117]

In his description of Cape Malay *kasedas*, Achmat Davids asserted as early as 1985 that their style is "essentially Arabic and Moorish".[118] These influences can also be heard on *Tribute*. According to Ismail Davids, this sound was enhanced partly by his Middle Eastern background and Spanish flamenco training, particularly as Spanish gypsy music betrays an Arab influence.[119] Shiloah points out in this regard that the Moorish Muslim occupation of Spanish soil for over seven hundred years, starting with the Marwānad kingdom in the eighth century and ending with the fall of the Nāṣarite kingdom in the fifteenth century, created on the Iberian Peninsula "the scene of one of the most fascinating examples of cultural interchange".[120] Flamenco, which originated in the centre of Islamic rule, Andalusia, was partly a product of this cultural exchange and as such, has observed discernible features from the Arab world.[121] Ismail Davids notes that Cape Town musicians, particularly those formerly classified as Cape Malays, have an affinity with this music and tend to specialize in one of two sounds, the coon sound or the flamenco sound, meaning that they are "Spanish melody influenced", although they frequently do not have formal training in this style.[122]

[115] Seale, "Beyond the impossible dream", Taliep Petersen Archive.
[116] *Symphonic rock! With the Cape Town Symphony Pops Orchestra*, programme, CTSO, Cape Town, 11 August 1991.
[117] Seale, "Beyond the impossible dream", Taliep Petersen Archive.
[118] Davids, "Music and Islam", p. 38.
[119] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[120] Shiloah, *Music in the world of Islam: A socio-cultural study*, pp. 72-73.
[121] See P Manuel, "Andalusian, Gypsy, and class identity in the contemporary flamenco complex", *Ethnomusicology*, vol. 33, no.1, 1989, pp. 47–65.
[122] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.

Figure 57: Taliep performing with Gerry Bosman and the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra, mid-1990s.
SOURCE: Taliep Petersen Archive

According to Davids, Taliep belonged to the first group: "Ghoema and klopse was what makes him, I mean, he used to do that with this eyes closed".[123] Belonging more fully to the second group, Davids contributed a different sound to *Tribute*, discernible both in the melodic lines and the chord progressions he chose to employ. Sometimes he changed what Taliep had written: "He's used to that major sound, man. And I would come with my harmonic minors and my ... because my ears are like that."[124] It is possible that the *Tribute* sound is a case of retrospective influences, or simply a connection that arose when a trained flamenco guitarist with experience of Arab music turned his hand to a South African repertoire that shares common roots with flamenco. Nonetheless, Davids notes that *Tribute* retained a sound distinctive from related genres in the Arab world. This distinctive sound could be ascribed to Taliep's Arabic accent and to his arrangements, something Davids believes was influenced by Taliep's work in the Malay choirs and the coon troupes: "The Arabs have got a specific sound, when they do their strings, it is octaves apart. They wouldn't harmonize their strings. Cape Town would harmonize their ... like, Taliep does it."[125]

[123] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[124] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[125] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.

As was the case with when working with Kramer, Taliep's musical collaboration with Davids did not follow a formula, although Davids states that they were usually first and foremost excited by a particular rhythm.[126] On some occasions, they would sit together and write the melodies and harmonies, while at other times Taliep worked on his own at home and brought Davids a song that he had written to the particular rhythm. Once they had completed the music, the third partner, Khan, would join them in the writing of an Arabic text. The resulting album would, according to Taliep, contain twelve originally composed songs and four traditional songs that had been arranged for *Tribute*.[127] In keeping with the nature of traditional *kasedas*, not all of the tracks on *Tribute* were sacred in nature, but all of them were sung in Arabic and conformed to the ideal of expressing a positive message. There is evidence to suggest that, in reacting negatively to *Tribute*, the Cape Town Islamic community did not react to the use of music per se, but to the use and adaptation of traditional material. As Achmat Davids remarked in 1985: "I conclude therefore that neither music nor musical instruments are forbidden in Islam".[128] A number of the "composed" tracks were strongly influenced by existing *kasedas* or *dhikr* chants. Ismail Davids remembers that Taliep, who at the time was involved in Sufism, used to attend *dhikr* prayer meetings. During these meetings *dhikr* chants, defined as "spiritual hymns" by Achmat Davids, would be sung without accompaniment by a group of Muslim men.[129] Taliep would return from these meetings excited by the harmonies that he had heard, resulting in some of these *dhikr* chants being used as a basis for the creation of the *kasedas* on *Tribute*. Other "composed" tracks derive from traditional *kasedas*, although they were retexted and only a part of the melody may have been used.

The tracks that can be considered traditional on *Tribute* are "Sala waat", "Ashrakal", "Arachmaniragheem" and "Salaam ya salaam", though they were all altered in the sense that they were harmonized by the collaborative team and orchestrated by Taliep.[130] Translated as "Prayers",[131] "Sala waat" is a traditional prayer praising the Prophet Muhammad, and although the text is known internationally, Davids notes that the melody is unique to the Cape Town Islamic community and used in *dhikr* prayer meetings when the Prophet is praised. In recording "Sala waat"

[126] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[127] Toffar, "Islamic songs for Talieb's solo album", *Athlone News*.
[128] Davids, "Music and Islam", p. 38.
[129] Davids, "Music and Islam", p. 38.
[130] Information used for the discussion of individual musical tracks on *Tribute* has been taken from an interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[131] The poor quality of the transliteration of the Arabic texts, as contained in the CD liner notes, makes these titles difficult to translate directly into English. Where possible, approximate translations are given. In other cases the song's general content is explained. T Petersen, *Tribute,* CD liner notes, Sapphyre Communications, Cape Town, 1998.

for *Tribute*, the traditional melody and text were retained. Also known in the international Islamic world, "Ashra-kal" is a traditional prayer sung in praise of the Prophet Muhammad that uses the image of the full moon rising. On *Tribute*, Davids and Taliep retained the melody traditionally sung to this text in the Cape Town Islamic community at *dhikr* prayer meetings, although an original introduction and bridge were added. According to Davids, "Salaam ya salaam" (Peace oh peace), is a traditional South African *kaseda* typically sung when a bride is fetched from her home and taken to her new husband. The melody and text were retained on *Tribute*, although Taliep inserted a section of English text that has a different meaning to the Arabic, as well a number of bars of musical material that depart from the original melody. The fourth of the traditional songs, "Araghmaniragheem" is a traditional *dhikr*, in its original form addressed to Allah. In recording this number, the collaborative team retained the melody but changed the entire text to avoid any direct mention of God, in so doing creating the conditions to record this number with instruments. However, as Davids points out, the title of this song is in itself one of the names of God.[132] As such, this particular *kaseda* is one that may have precipitated more contemporary criticism from the South African Islamic community than the rest of the album.

"Moulud lina" is sung to an original text written by the collaborative team that addresses a newly-born child. Although considered an original composition, it was inspired by a *dhikr* that Taliep heard at a prayer meeting. A number of the other tracks on *Tribute* were influenced by traditional melodies, namely "Tar-i-finur", "Yaa Madina" and "Ouliyaa Islam". The first of these, "Tar-i-finur", translated by Davids as "Road of light", draws on a melody of a traditional Cape Malay folk *kaseda*, although it has been substantially altered, for example through the addition of a bridge. The text is an original creation and deals with the Prophet Muhammad, although his name is not mentioned. "Yaa Madina" (Oh city), refers to the Prophet Muhammad's city of Medina and likewise derives from an existing song, though in this case not from a *kaseda*, but from a love song called "Sureya". Davids explains that "Ouliyaa Islam", is a song directed at the spirit of a person buried in a *kramat*, i.e. someone regarded as an Islamic saint, or *wali*. This number takes its melody from a traditional *kaseda* called "Salaam, muni salaam", though with the addition of a bridge. Ismail Davids notes that the melody of the *kaseda* was retexted primarily because, being an oral repertoire, the meaning in the Arabic of the original could no longer be discerned. He comments on this process as follows, explaining that a number of the texts were changed for this reason:

[132] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.

> So a lot of the words ... if you look at the traditional Malay songs were influenced by Arabic, Malay, Java and Indian and Dutch. Some of those words for me, personally, you know ... I mean, my grandmother used to say "tabbachie" for tupperware, you know? "Go fetch the tabbachie." "What's a tabbachie?" But it's a tupperware. We've changed the words a lot, in a lot of the songs.[133]

The tracks on *Tribute* that were not informed by traditional *kaseda* melodies or *dhikrs* and represent original compositions with original texts are "Mugta-rallah", "Ahlan yaa shabaab", "Umi salaam", "Ardi yaa", "Naam ya albibnaa", "Yaa rijal yaa rijal", "Yaa ghuyu" and "Yalla yaa ghambibna". The texts of these *kasedas* vary in content, some of them overtly religious songs addressed to the Prophet Muhammad, such as "Mugta-rallah" (God's chosen) and "Yalla yaa ghambibna" (Oh my love). Others are directional songs offering guidance to man, such as "Yaa rijal yaa rijal" (Men, oh men), "Ahlan yaa shabaab" (Welcome to youth) and "Yaa ghuya" which, according to Davids, is a song offering guidance to one's brother. "Ardi yaa" is a *kaseda* addressed to the earth and "Naam ya albinaa", translated by Davids as "Sleep my baby", is a lullaby. The last *kaseda*, "Umi salaam", is described by Davids as having been a very personal song for Taliep, and one that he worked on largely by himself. According to Davids, its text constitutes a farewell to Taliep's mother, and a wishing of peace upon her.[134] However, as both Taliep's mother and paternal grandmother had died in the mid-1980s, this *kaseda* could conceivably be regarded as addressed to both of these figures, particularly since he had a considerably more intimate relationship with his grandmother.

The three-way collaboration that gave rise to the music is not reflected on the cover of *Tribute*. Indeed, the considerable contribution of the other two artists was reduced to a credit as a member of the "choir" for Ismail Davids and a credit as translator and percussionist for Mamadouh Khan.[135] A possible answer lies in the fact that Taliep and Ismail Davids had been working collaboratively on another album that never got made, one that Ismail Davids more properly regarded as his own. According to him, his album would have had a sound that could "compete with the Arabs", and his reason for "laying off" *Tribute* was motivated by a desire not to let it influence the sound that he wanted to be associated with.[136] Perhaps also, in the midst of collaborative projects with Kramer, Taliep was eager to record an album that he would take the sole credit for. A desire for control over and ownership of a creative project is perhaps also reflected in Taliep's decision to

[133] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[134] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[135] Petersen, *Tribute,* CD liner notes.
[136] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.

record the musical arrangements that he had created on his computer without mediation by other musicians.

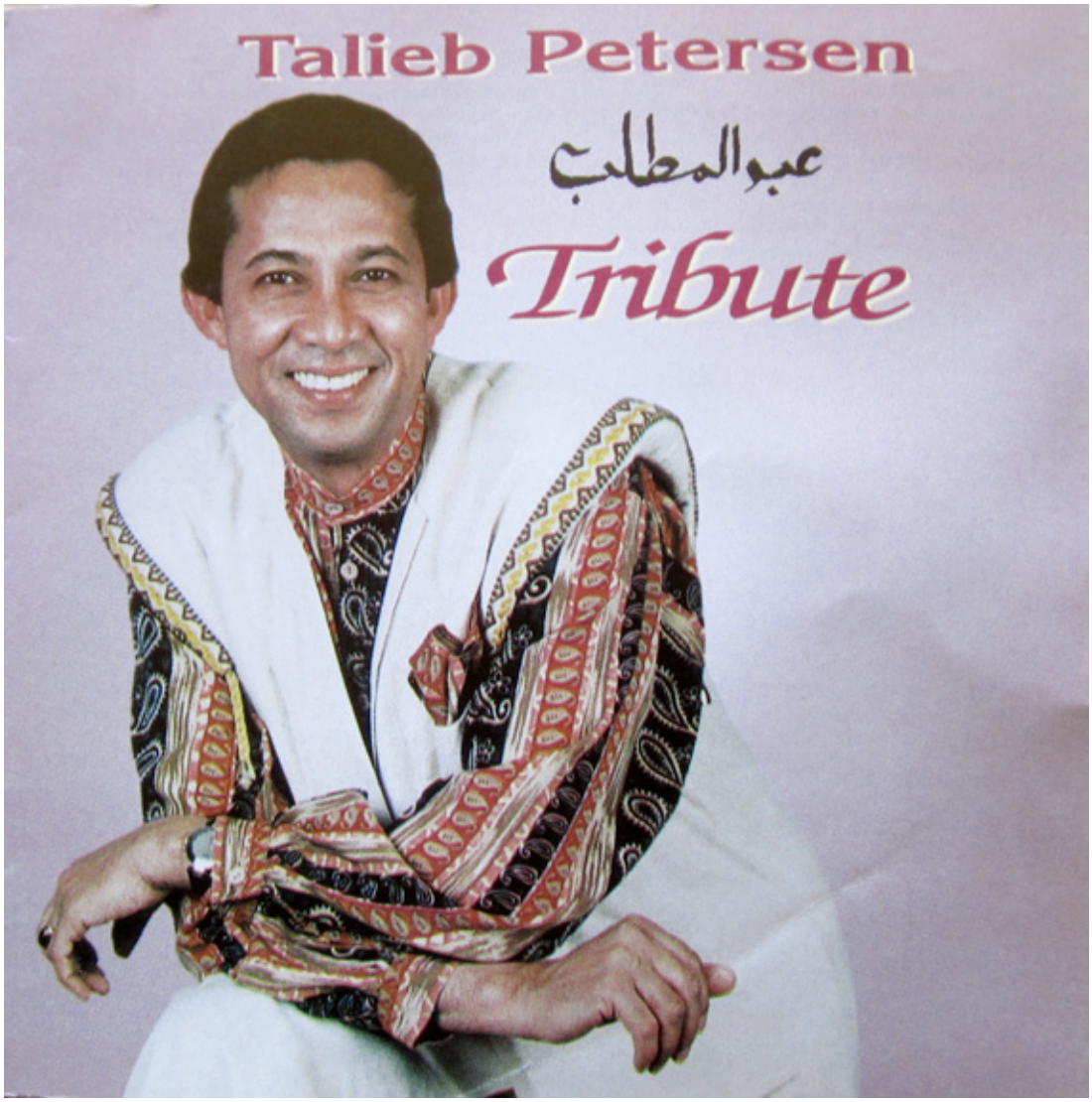


Figure 58: The cover of Taliep's 1998 album, *Tribute*.
SOURCE: Sapphyre Communications

Tribute represents both a continuation of trends in Taliep's previous work, as well as an acknowledgement of themes that were increasingly becoming important to him. In some ways, this project was not unlike *Rosa* of the early 1980s: an attempt to take a repertoire of music that he had grown up with, to modernize it in the hope of making it commercially viable and accessible to the young people in his community. As can be seen from the discussion above, this project was

not motivated by a desire to preserve a particular heritage. In this regard the decision to rewrite the text of the traditional *kaseda*, "Salaam, muni salaam", is important. In the majority of cases, Taliep opted for relevance and an attempt at textual clarity at the cost of effacing the history of an orally transmitted repertoire. Consisting of directional songs, one of which warns the youth against drug abuse, *Tribute* also facilitated Taliep's engagement with the community, a concern that reflected as early as his composition "Save our children" in the late 1970s and of which *Poison* was the most recent manifestation. It is also possible that Taliep was eager to broaden his musical reach, having previously focused on Cape coon and Cape Malay repertoires, together with his ever present engagement with contemporary American music. *Tribute* enabled him to forge connections with the international Islamic world and to investigate alternate personal identities that were not rooted in experiences of apartheid, the Group Areas Act or District Six, but in a heritage of slavery.

Indeed, Ismail Davids notes that *Tribute* was a very important project for Taliep in the 1990s: "I think, Taliep has always been an Islamist in his heart. He did klops, he did all those things but it wasn't only him. He had a part which, a lot of his later part of his life he publicly wanted that to come across far stronger than it was in the past."[137] Similarly, a newspaper article that was published after the release of this album reports that, with *Tribute*, Taliep found an "ideal artistic medium to explore and express his religious and cultural identity and affiliation. He is first and foremost a Muslim."[138] Taliep, for the first time with *Tribute*, claimed the "correct" Arabic pronunciation of his name, Talieb with a "b".[139] Abdulmutalib Petersen, who would be known to the South African government as Abdulmoe Taliep Petersen, called himself Taliep Petersen for the majority of his life, barring his Taliep Peters and Taliep Peterson phases in the 1970s and 1980s. In his forty-seventh year, he claimed Talieb Petersen as his name. This project was clearly very personal to Taliep, as he writes in the CD liner notes:

> Tribute is ... a celebration of my faith and religion and affirmation of my belief in the concept of family, country and tradition, a dedication to my slave ancestry and community and association of cultures and sentiments, a personal exploration to the horizon of professional integrity.[140]

[137] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[138] Paleker, "Explorations of spirituality", *Muslim Views.*
[139] Despite the fact that many Afrikaans-speaking Muslims spell, and also pronounce, their Arabic names with a "p" instead of a "b", the sound "[p]" does not in fact occur in the Arabic language. This development is partly due to the isolation of early South African Muslims from the rest of the Islamic world, their reliance on oral transmission for communicating Arabic names, as well as the influence of the Afrikaans language on these names. Electronic communication with Ismail Davids, 10 October 2013.
[140] Petersen, *Tribute,* CD liner notes.

Also during the period of working on *Tribute*, Taliep continued building bridges with Malaysia to further explore his history. Writing in a document known as *Two worlds – One heart (Satu hati) concept,* a rough draft pitch for a possible future project, Taliep indicates that his travels to Malaysia facilitated a search for his roots: "Unlike my forefathers who come to the shores of Africa by sea, did I find myself traveling on wings of steel in search of my "True Slave Identity".[141] It was reportedly also the beginning of his "Two worlds – One heart" journey, a reference to the supposed shared heart of the South African Cape Malays and the Malaysian population, though they inhabited vastly different worlds.[142] Ismail Davids claims that "Two worlds – One heart" was a concept that Taliep "had in his head for years", but that it was a very wide concept that was never realized: "It could be a play, it could be a musical, it could be a movie, it could be a book, it could be a love story. But that was the main thing in his head."[143] In his obituary to Taliep, Binge would write about this project, stating that it was to be co-produced with Malaysia, a stage production during which Taliep planned to investigate the origins of the *karienkel*, as sung in the *nederlandslied*, in the Malaysian *kroncong*.[144] In 2005, Taliep wrote the concept pitch mentioned above, unfortunately only developing this idea up to the point where he suggests bringing Malaysian singers to South Africa. This document asserts that, on his return from America in 1992, Taliep visited his great uncle, Osman Behardien, to enquire after his family's origins. He was told that Behardien was actually spelt "Boeganoedien" in Malay, and that his family had roots in Malaysia. This document also indicates that Taliep had reportedly already known at that stage that his mother's family had come from Java, being linked to the "Boerhaan" family.[145]

Despite claims that this concept never crystallized into its definitive form, in 1998 Taliep performed in Malaysia at a concert entitled *Two worlds - One heart*.[146] Also called "Two worlds – One heart", was a duet between Taliep and Malaysian singer Fauziah Latiff, included near the end of the programme. During this concert, Taliep and fellow South African Maree Kim Louis, who had also starred in a number of Kramer/Petersen musicals, performed alongside Malaysian singers. Taliep had chosen his repertoire from Kramer/Petersen musicals, including the songs "Lagunya" and "My broertjie, my bra", but also sang a number of Malaysian songs, such as "Aku pulang". After opening his part of the programme with this particular Malaysian song, Taliep addressed the audience as follows:

[141] Petersen, *Two worlds – One heart (Satu hati) concept,* Herman Binge Archive.
[142] Petersen, *Two worlds – One heart (Satu hati) concept,* Herman Binge Archive.
[143] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[144] H Binge, "Taliep Petersen: Sy unieke bydrae tot Afrikaans op televisie", *Litnet*, 2006, available on http://www.argief.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=cause_dir_news_item&news_id=7646&cause_id=1270, accessed on 12 May 2013.
[145] Petersen, *Two worlds – One heart (Satu hati) concept,* Herman Binge Archive.
[146] *Two worlds – One heart concert,* DVD video recording, 1998, Howard Links Archive.

> I happen to be the ninth generation of Malay slaves. It took me exactly ... it took us 307 years to come back home. My forefathers was taken from here as slaves, exactly 307 years ago. I came in search of my roots in the year 1994, because as you know, we could not come to your country before that, nor could you come to my country. I was very proud and honoured to discover that, from my father's side, are we from an area called Malacca, and my father's surname, the family surname is Boeganoedien. From my mother's side, we're from an area in Indonesia, and their surname is Boerhaan. So, I can say proudly, I'm fully-fledged Malayu.[147]

Stating that there are great similarities between Cape Malay and Malaysian culture, Taliep continued to say that it was important for both parties to know "what has happened to the brethren over 307 years".[148] During the course of this concert, Taliep would sing "Marahaben", a Kramer/Petersen creation that would later find a life in their last musical, *Ghoema*. This song, as he explained, concerns the experience of having one's heart broken by being taken as a slave and having to leave half of it behind in one's own country. It also touches on the eventual return to freedom and recovering a true sense of belonging. However, despite Taliep's sincere attempt to establish common ground with this audience and to emphasize points of cultural connection, his use of humour belies this attempt, locating him more fully in South Africa than anywhere else. For example, where Taliep noted in an on-stage aside that bass player Howard Links has gold teeth that he hasn't paid for yet, the deafening silence from the audience was accentuated by Taliep's doubling over in a fit of exaggerated laughter.

His portrayal of South African cultural manifestations is also vaguely reminiscent of the Alfred Herbert variety shows. When introducing a song from the Kramer/Petersen musical, *Kat and the Kings* ("Lagunya"), he calls *mbaqanga* something that the "tribes" do, explaining his use of English lyrics as follows: "unfortunately, most of us don't speak that dialect, we speak Afrikaans or we speak English, but at the end of the day we speak one language when it comes down to the music!"[149] He also asks his fellow South African artists (both coloured) to demonstrate how "they" dance at home, ululating while he dances in his own fashion (lifting his feet in the air and hunching his back) alongside commercial caricatures of Zulu dance. Seen in the light of Taliep's willingness to learn

[147] *Two worlds – One heart concert,* DVD.
[148] *Two worlds – One heart concert,* DVD.
[149] *Two worlds – One heart concert,* DVD.

Malaysian songs for this concert, his explanation perhaps suggests a greater willingness to engage with cultural manifestations of his supposed ancestral home than those in his home country where he was as much a victim of apartheid as the "tribes" with which he could only identify in a superficial way.

It is surely no coincidence that Taliep's acknowledgement of his slave history took place around the time of South Africa's transition to democracy. Indeed, the need for a personal exploration of particular identities increased after 1994, as Nigel Worden writes: "The most striking result of the advent of democracy was that the need for unity against apartheid dissolved."[150] Worden traces several developments in South African post-apartheid that sought to emphasize slave heritage, such as the 1 December Movement launched in 1996 as well as the renaming of the former South African Cultural Museum (situated in a building that had been used to house government-owned slaves) as the Slave Lodge in 1998. Referring to public reaction to the emphasis on the Slave Lodge as a site of cultural rediscovery, Worden states: " ... by the late 1990s, the topic of slavery could also be used to mobilize and support new identities in contemporary South Africa and suggest the extent to which public awareness of slave heritage had grown."[151] These and other developments stimulated the interest of slave descendants in tracing their own ancestry.

A case in point is Ebrahim Manuel, a participant in an National Research Foundation community slave research project who, on the basis of questionable evidence, finally traced his own ancestry to an imam of high rank and finally to the sultan of Sumbawa, Indonesia. Reflecting on Manuel's claim, Worden states: "The desire to associate with a heritage of princes and sultans reflects an elitist view of the Asian roots of Cape history which neglects the realities of slavery."[152] According to Binge, Taliep certainly believed that his Malaysian ancestors had passed on good genes to him. It is not impossible that Taliep could have entertained fantasies about a royal lineage. Mitch Adams, with whom Taliep would later collaborate on a television series called *Alie Barber*, describes a storyline that he and Taliep had devised for a possible future project, also for television. In this story, a man who designated Cape Malay by the apartheid government, visits Malaysia for the first time. One day, while bending over, his green ID card falls out of his pocket and is picked up by the locals, who then realize that he is a descendent of Malaysian royalty.[153]

[150] N Worden, "The changing politics of slave heritage in the Western Cape, South Africa", *The Journal of African History*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2009, p. 27.
[151] Worden, "The changing politics of slave heritage in the Western Cape, South Africa", p. 33.
[152] Worden, "The changing politics of slave heritage in the Western Cape, South Africa", p. 36.
[153] Interview with Mitch Adams, 8 November 2012.

Although tracing and claiming a slave heritage was becoming increasingly common in South Africa around the turn of the century, Taliep was a forerunner, having reportedly started his investigation into his slave origins already in 1994.[154] According to Binge, Taliep did the bulk of his research into his slave heritage at the state archives in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.[155] As noted previously, the designation "Cape Malay" had a linguistic origin rather than an ethnic one: after Malayu-Portuguese and before Afrikaans, Malay had become a commonly spoken language amongst the slave population at the Cape.[156] Nonetheless, despite a popular narrative that designates "Cape Malay" as a misnomer on the basis that very few slaves actually came from Malaysia, Desai had already concluded in 1983 that a larger proportion of slaves known as Malays "must have been linked to the Malay Archipelago" than had previously been thought.[157] As noted in Chapter 2, Robert Shell cites written accounts of colonial Cape Town that indicate that a number of slaves had indeed come from Malacca in Malaysia, a Dutch colony from 1641 to 1825.[158] Taliep's travels to Kuala Lumpur, his shape-shifting "Two worlds – One heart" concept and his claiming of a Malay identity were all rooted in a belief that his father's family hailed from Malacca. And although Ismail Davids claims that Taliep had a stronger sense of "home" when he was in Indonesia,[159] from whence his mother's ancestors hailed, his activities in Malaysia (facilitated and often financed by his friend, Datuk Ishak Ismail) were more prominent.

The projects dealt with in this chapter, *Poison*, *Tribute* and *Two worlds – One heart* represent a different direction in Taliep's artistic production. For the first time in *Poison*, the Kramer/Petersen collaboration turned its gaze to the results of the Group Areas Act and the challenge of living on the Cape Flats, instead of focusing on the trauma of leaving a romanticized District Six. With *Tribute*, Taliep expressed an Islamic identity, in the process reaching out to an international community of Muslims, something that was difficult during apartheid. Through his activities in Malaysia, he publicly articulated his slave heritage for the first time, thereby acknowledging a history of slavery. In doing so he was beginning to erase the "silent inscription of shame" accruing to the postcolonial coloured subject, as argued by Wicomb in her 1998 essay.[160] For, as Wicomb writes, the " ... inability to represent our history in popular forms and consequently the total

[154] *Two worlds – One heart concert,* DVD.
[155] Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2013.
[156] RCH Shell, *Children of bondage: A social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1952–1838,* Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1994, p. 63.
[157] Desai, "*Cape Malay" music and its application in the school*, p. 13.
[158] Shell, *Children of bondage: A social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1952–1838,* pp. 60–62.
[159] Interview with Ismail Davids, 10 May 2013.
[160] Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", p. 94.

erasure of slavery from the folk memory presumably has its roots in shame ... ".[161] In the same year that Wicomb lamented the "myth of our collective birth in Cape Town's District Six in the early 1960s",[162] an answer was beginning to come from the same place that had engendered her plea.

Taliep's engagement with Islamic music and his Malaysian slave heritage did not mean that he forgot about District Six. As will be discussed in the last chapter, he would return to it again and again. As he had done with the cast of *District Six: The musical*, in subsequent years Taliep would also take his children to visit the site of the old District Six. Apart from showing them what used to be familiar landmarks, such as the seven steps, he also pointed out where individual houses used to stand. His daughter, Jawaahier, speaks about these visits as follows:

> He showed me where his house was and, on an open piece of land, he said, "Round about that is where so and so lived", "Round about there is where so and so lived". It was quite sad to watch this man walk, walk this empty piece of land and have so many memories attached to them. All I see is gravel and grass and stones.[163]

There were also further Kramer/Petersen projects in the 1990s that dealt with District Six, in the form of *Kat and the Kings* in 1995 and, at the end of the following year, *Klop klop*, staged as a commemoration of their ten-year partnership.[164] Kramer describes *Klop klop* as a "celebratory concert" that consisted of songs taken from the musicals they had written together.[165] *Kat and the Kings*, however, was a fully fledged musical and arguably their most commercially successful one. Throughout these years, the collaborative team also continued to revise their existing musicals and stage them in various theatres. As Kramer notes: "Every time I had an opportunity for a re-staging, I would want to introduce a rewrite because I felt something was missing, you know, in terms of the story or the character, or whatever."[166] *Poison*, for example, was restaged in 2000 in the Tricycle Theatre in London with a cast consisting of young black British actors. However, as this production was to be set in North London, at the request of the artistic director of the Tricycle Theatre, it was adapted by British writer Jenny McLeod.[167]

[161] Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", p. 100.
[162] Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", p. 94.
[163] Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2013.
[164] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 257.
[165] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[166] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[167] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 251.

Kat and the Kings opened at the Dock Road Theatre in September 1995 with Kramer as director, Taliep as musical director and a cast consisting of Salie Daniels, Jody Abrahams, Junaid Booysen, Mark Fransman, Loukmaan Adams and Giempie Vardiem.[168] Based partially on the life experience of actor Daniels as a young singer in District Six, this musical traces the travails of singer Kat Diamond and his vocal harmony group, The Cavalla Kings. This is done through a narrative device that positions both the reminiscing old Kat and the young Kat as storytellers, together with the three other members of the group and, in a subsequent reworking, their "honorary" female member. Performing in various venues in District Six, The Cavalla Kings specialize in imitations of American music of the 1950s and 1960s, eventually entering a wider arena of performance and having to contend with the challenges of trying to succeed in a world aligned around white concerns. The life of this production is documented comprehensively in de Villiers and Slabbert and will not be explored more fully here, beyond mentioning that *Kat and the Kings* was staged in the West End and on Broadway in the late 1990s.[169]

1999 was an important year for Taliep, both on a personal and professional front. His and Najwa's first and only child, Zaynab, was born on 21 February. She was Taliep's sixth and last child. *Kat and the Kings* was also awarded two Laurence Olivier Awards, one for Best New Musical and the other for Best Performer, awarded to the entire cast as a group. Perhaps most significant for the collaborative team, *Kat and the Kings* had pipped Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Whistle down the wind* to the post for the performance award.[170] During their celebration held on Camps Bay beach, however, Taliep's worlds connected in an unexpected way: photos appeared in the press where he was shown holding a champagne glass alongside the rest of the company, prompting some members of the Muslim community to assume that he had been consuming alcohol.[171]

During the era of Kramer/Petersen collaboration, even while staging musicals rooted in District Six, questions of slave roots were always present. According to Kramer, ever since they met in the 1980s, he and Taliep had frequent discussions about ancestral origins and what it meant to have a coloured identity.[172] As such, Kramer believes his challenges to Taliep contributed to opening him up to the type of questions he would increasingly begin to ask

[168] "Another winner from Kramer, Petersen", newspaper article of unknown origin, 2 October 1995, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[169] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, pp. 254–269.
[170] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 264.
[171] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 264.
[172] Interview with David Kramer, 10 May 2013.

Figure 59: Taliep and David Kramer photographed in London at the opening of *Kat and the Kings* on the West End, 1998.
SOURCE: David Kramer Productions

himself. Kramer remembers having similar conversations with the casts they were working with, particularly with the international cast of *Kat and the Kings:*

> I spent three days with the actors, saying, "Who are you? What's your history? Where do you come from?" And beyond their grandparents, they knew nothing. They had no idea how they got here, where ... they had no idea what coloured ... I said, what does it mean to be a coloured? Because people overseas are going to say to you, "Oh, you're a mixture between black and white, but are you? But are you? Do you really know your ... can you tell me where your particular family comes from? Are you a product of a black man and a white man ... uh, black man and a white woman or black woman and a white man? Is that who you are? No!"[173]

This chapter runs the risk of proposing Taliep's journey towards a new identity as superior to or deeper than his District Six explorations. It could be read as positing a "roots" identity reached at a certain point during a developmental trajectory. Although tempted towards this interpretation by Taliep's enthusiastic claiming of his slave identity and his "roots", I want to argue that this identity did not constitute a point of arrival for Taliep, nor necessarily a primary source of rootedness. In contesting this notion, I would like to invoke Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's rhizome, a concept that provides an alternative way to think about roots.[174] As a regenerative botanical structure that runs underground, sprouting roots and aboveground offshoots at intervals, this understanding acknowledges multiple connections and a non-hierarchical approach towards rootedness.

Returning in conclusion to the matter of creolization, discussed in Chapter 3, it is important to note that Glissant acknowledges the influence of the rhizome in his own work: "Rhizomatic thought is the principle behind what I call the Poetics of Relation, in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other."[175] Here, relation is facilitated by the fluidity and multiplicity of rhizomatic connections. Keeping in mind that processes of creolization are ongoing and render impossible a fixed creole identity (or a "creoleness"), interacting with the rhizome is interesting, conceptualized as it is as a map with multiple entry points instead of a fixed tracing. As Deleuze and Guattari note, "The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting,

[173] Interview with David Kramer, 10 May 2013.
[174] See G Deleuze & F Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, trans. B Massumi, Continuum, London, 1987, pp. 3-28.
[175] É Glissant, *Poetics of relation*, trans. B Wing, The University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1997, p. 11.

reworked by an individual, group, or social formation."[176] Replacing the model of the tree with a grassland, Taliep's diverse projects and self-identifications become an interconnected, non-linear map, marked by unexpected connections and "lines of flight" with no fixed beginning or destination.[177] Following this line of thinking, Taliep's exploration of his "roots" and "True Slave Identity"[178] is not the location of a tap-root, the totalitarian source of all things. Rather, it is the exploration of a tuft of grass in a field, constantly expanding, always changing and connected to other tufts via underground rhizomes that facilitate a multiplicity of relationships between places of belonging.

[176] Deleuze & Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, pp. 13-14.
[177] Deleuze & Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 23.
[178] *Two worlds – One heart concert,* DVD.

Descendants

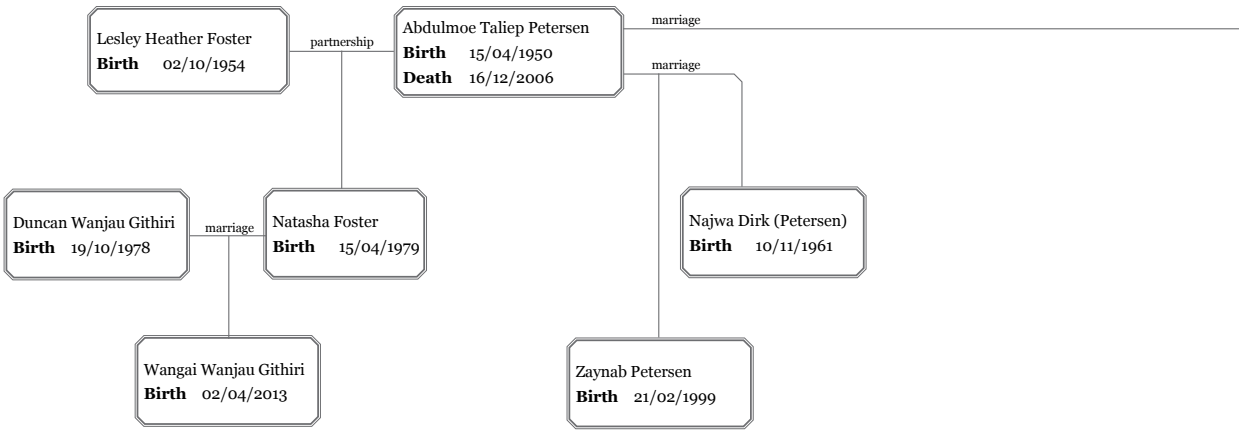
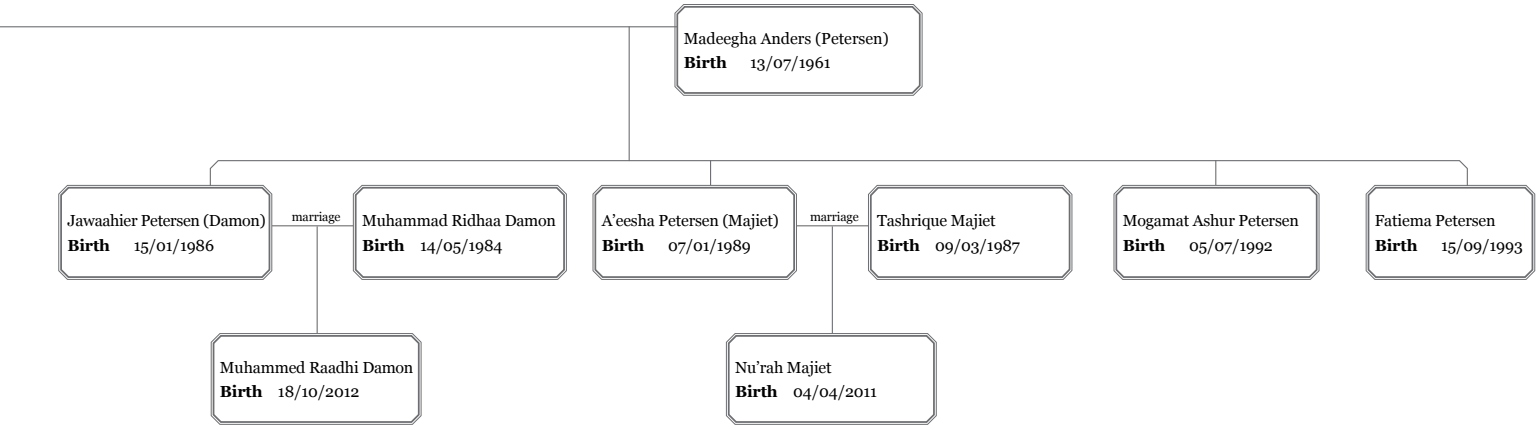


Figure 60: A family tree depicting Taliep's descendants as in 2013.
SOURCE: Compiled from interviews with family members, design by Julia Eccles



4 May 2012 – *Kat and the Kings*, Fugard Theatre, Cape Town

Tonight I am attending a performance of *Kat and the Kings*, my first opportunity to see a Kramer/Petersen musical live. Staged in the Fugard Theatre, this production is also the first to play in District Six. The Fugard Theatre opened its doors early in 2010 and is located within the Sacks Futeran building on the corner of Buitenkant and Caledon Streets, using the erstwhile facade of the Congregational Church Hall as its entrance.

By the time I enter the foyer, people are already taking their seats and I squeeze through the crowd to move up to the gallery. There are two empty places next to me, on my right-hand side, virtually in the centre of the gallery. As the lights dim, two figures move through our already seated row to take their places next to me: the vocal coach Alistair Izobell and the director David Kramer. Having house seats at the Fugard means that I have ended up right next to them, and my pattern of running into David continues. I greet him as he walks past and he says hello with no trace of recognition, strange, considering that he greeted me by name the last time I ran into him, at the launch of his biography at the Waterfront. Of course, I had introduced myself formally the first time we ran into each other in the Baxter Theatre Complex last year. Alistair sits next to me and as I take off my coat, we exchange polite words about the strange weather, how we are either frying or freezing.

Likewise, Alistair does not seem to recognize me from the *Some like it vrot* cast party that I stumbled into last year. I am sitting next to two men who I desperately want to interview, and I am instantly edgy and nervous. Can I speak to them about my project? I will not be able to forgive myself if I do nothing. As the cast launches into the first scene, David takes out a notebook and writes in big letters at the top of the page: “Friday”. As they settle down to watch the performance and to take notes, I realize that, in the past, it would have been Taliep and David sitting side by side in the house seats. And I would have been sitting next to Taliep.

Figure 61: A poster advertising the 2012 revival of *Kat and the Kings* stationed at the entrance of the Fugard Theatre, Cape Town.
SOURCE: Photograph by Paula Fourie

On stage are old Kat, (played by Danny Butler), young Kat (played by Dean Balie), and three young men (played by Zak Toerien, Grant Peres and Carlo Daniels) that, during the course of the musical, form the vocal harmony group, the Cavalla Kings. As the first half of the production plays out on stage, they are joined by the only female character, Lucy Dixon (played by Amy Trout). After the

young men decide to start their vocal group, Lucy (who with her brother, Magoo, are from a different socioeconomic group and who are playfully referred to as 'supercoloureds') decides to help them and in the process use the opportunity to have her own songs performed. Throughout all of this, Old Kat is sitting in his corner, polishing shoes and reminiscing about the old days, occasionally joining the singers on stage for a song and a dance. Danny Butler's voice is incredibly impressive and I find myself enthralled by his warmth – he has made me instantly comfortable, the way a good storyteller does.

Kat and the Kings draws very strongly on the American influence in District Six, not only in its subject matter, but naturally also in its musical language. The characters mention the likes of Chubby Checker and the Platters as important influences. Although I know that it is in the tradition of musical staging, I am immediately morbidly fascinated by the fact that the character of Lucy Dixon regularly imitates playing piano on stage, and not very convincingly either. At one stage, a saxophonist, a drummer and two guitarists make their way to the back of the stage. As far as I can tell, the saxophone player is the only one truly playing his instrument, the drummer, for instance, seems to be bringing his hands down a fraction of a second too late. And all the while at the front of the stage, Lucy Dixon is happily faking her way on the piano. I realize that I simply have to buy into the illusion on stage, that I should have abandoned my own preconceptions about performance at the door. After this, it is easier. Other jarring features in the first half is a song entitled "Mavis", during which the Cavalla Kings sing about a lot of women, all of which are

described as being loose (images of parking meters and bicycles recurring) or overweight or in some other way flawed. I realize of course, that this is set in 1950-60s District Six, and that women may have had a rather raw deal then. As a "period piece", this may be accurate, but I certainly do not feel like laughing along with the rest of the audience.

At the start of interval I decide to talk to David. Alistair has already left his seat and I turn to David, asking him if he remembers me. He looks at me blankly. I remind him that I am writing about Taliep and he suddenly remembers, noting that we met in the Baxter last year. After we exchange pleasantries, I tell him that I am nearing the part of my research where it would be beneficial to talk to him. He agrees that I can send him an email and helps me put my heavy coat on before we exit the theatre, a small gesture that makes me optimistic that the interview will happen. When we take our seats again after interval, I am confronted with the pervasive smell of smoke emanating from Alistair. I should have tried to approach him while he was taking his break outside. Now is not the time – the second half is about to begin, and after all, they are working tonight. Besides, still flushed from my encounter with David, I have had enough for one night. I still have Alistair's email address and make a note to write to him after the performance.

The second half of the performance is marked by energetic singing describing the rise of Cavalla Kings as a vocal group, and the difficulties that they encounter as a coloured group trying to make a living in apartheid South Africa. Under permit, they sing at

white hotels where they have to work as bellhops as well. Eventually they record their own album, which is removed from airplay when their racial classification becomes known. Finally, they lose both their producer (Mr. Smittie) and their coach (Lucy Dixon) to a romantic relationship that is discovered to be a contravention of the Immorality Amendment Act. They leave the country together, and this is the beginning of the end, so to speak. The band slowly disintegrates as Ballie leaves the Cavalla Kings with his new wife, Magoo joins his sister in Canada and the last two remaining members decide to part ways. However, Ballie's decision to get married doesn't happen without a song and a dance. During "The last thing you need" the band members, and Young Kat in particular, try to convince Ballie that he should not get married, on the grounds that his wife will never be "one of the guys", will tie him down and interfere with his work in the band.

All of this has remarkable resonance with the stories that Paul Hanmer has told me about Sapphyre. Like the setup in *Kat and the Kings*, there was only one female performer in Sapphyre, namely Madeegha Anders. Like the Cavalla Kings, Sapphyre toured the country, performing at various hotels to white audiences. Naturally, there are important differences between the two stories: in contrast to the members of Sapphyre, the Cavalla Kings have to wait on tables as part of their duties. Still, a lot of *Kat and the Kings* reminds me of Paul's stories. For instance, Paul had been the only band member of Sapphyre who had had his wife with him during their tours. Before

he had gotten married, however, Taliep had had a talk with Paul, reminding him what marriage was going to be like. Despite this, Paul had persevered and married. This resonates strongly with the conversations between Ballie and the other band members about his marriage. However, in Sapphyre's case, Taliep had eventually given Paul an ultimatum: either he send his wife away or he and his wife leave together. She was, Taliep said, coming between the band members and turning people against Paul. Eventually he quit the band and Onyx Philips took his place. Paul did not seem to harbour any ill feelings towards Taliep because of the ultimatum, and, in fact, got a divorce some time thereafter.

Also uncanny are the teasing references to Magoo as a supercoloured', the same word that Taliep had occasionally used in reference to Paul Hanmer. Throughout the musical, this character is regarded as someone with more book-learning and he also frequently wears a school blazer, in contrast with the more casual clothes of the other members who are all residents of District Six. Paul was one of the only members of Sapphyre who had ever attended university. Indeed, in one of our interviews he repeated the words directed at him by Taliep:"Ek sê ou Curly, djy ... djy's mos van die skool af, né? Jy's mos van die supercoloureds af, né ... maar hier is jy in die skool, verstaan djy?"[1] There seems to be a lot of Taliep's life experience in *Kat and the Kings*, not only with regard to Sapphyre, but also referencing his activities in a more remote past, for example in the variety shows hosted by white comperes such as

[1] Interview with Paul Hanmer, 29 November 2011.

Alfred Herbert. The problematic representation of performers that was a feature of these shows is echoed here when the white compere of a Cavalla King's performance introduces them as follows: "And if they weren't performing here tonight, they would probably be breaking into your cars!" Then, of course, there is the question of interracial love and the threat of prosecution under the Immorality Amendment Act, something that Taliep was no stranger to in his younger years.

Throughout the performance I notice that Alistair and David clap their hands after each number, something that is perhaps surprising considering the number of times they must have watched the action on stage by now. I know from my own work with performing groups that I tend to stop applauding after a while because I recognize myself as an insider partly responsible for what is happening on stage. It is refreshing for me to see them regarding the events on stage with appreciation, laughter and applause, as if it were their first time. Near the end of the performance, we finally get to see the band, a group of men consisting of Donveno Prins on saxophone, Darren English on trumpet, Nathan Carolus on guitar, Trevino Isaacs on Keyboards, Franco Manual on bass and Keith De Bruyn on drums. I realize that they have been playing backstage all along, and very well too. Remembering my earlier discomfort at all the miming on stage, I wonder why the band could not have been more integrated with what happened on stage from the very beginning.

Throughout *Kat and the Kings*, musical numbers are strongly influenced by American pop idioms. However, especially in the final scenes of the musical, specific well-known songs are actively referenced. They go beyond merely evoking these songs, for they incorporate fragments of them in their introductions, in some cases following a similar harmonic pattern. Well known pop songs referenced in this way include Solomon Linda's "Mbube", Ritchie Valens's "La bamba", and the Beach Boys' "Barbara Ann". Since *Kat and the Kings* is all about the Cavalla Kings (in their words)"doing our American thing" in District Six in the middle of the century, Taliep's drawing on of models from the 1950s and 1960s is no doubt intentional. As such, this musical is a strong portrayal of the pervasiveness of American musical culture in District Six, something that the rest of the world seems to have been largely oblivious to for a long time, preferring to imagine Cape coloureds singing *ghoemaliedjies* and *nederlandsliedjies* in the streets. There is a very poignant moment near the end of the musical, when Old Kat disillusions Young Kat, telling him that he is going to end up polishing shoes next to the side of the road one day. But still, the old man hasn't lost faith in his "lucky day" yet. Nonetheless, when the performance ends, and the audience applauds with a standing ovation, I realize that I have been watching the performance like an academic. I have not at all been swept away by what appears to be a wave of happiness, crowned when Old Kat jumps out of a huge Cavalla Kings cigarette box, designed by Saul Radomsky. I somehow feel cheated. Can I even write about this musical if I have not experienced it in this way? Perhaps next time.

Figure 62: A poster advertising the 2012 revival of *Kat and the Kings* outside the District Six Museum's Homecoming Centre in Buitenkant Street, Cape Town.
SOURCE: Photograph by Paula Fourie

The performance ends and I embark on the drive back to Stellenbosch. I am preoccupied, my thoughts focused on what I have seen tonight. The musical language employed in *Kat and the Kings* is certainly apt to the period and place in question, illustrating the overwhelming influence of American culture in District Six. It also illustrates the processes of musical borrowing and appropriation that underlie much of the music associated with this iconic suburb. I am reminded wryly of my tentative musings while I was writing the Sapphyre chapter: how easy is it to develop an original compositional voice when you have been playing covers for so long, copying what others have done? And to what extent does this strict musical diet influence whatever comes out of your guitar, your larynx or your pen for the rest of your life? My thinking on this issue has certainly developed since then. Kat and the Kings is a powerful demonstration of the creativity at work during these processes, and a reminder of how something new can be created as a result. As luck would have it, my musings send me on a wrong turn, straight into the heart of District Six.

Chapter 6

Celebrating the creole, positioning an identity

At the end of the twentieth century the African National Congress (ANC) entered its second term as ruling party of South Africa.[1] In 1999 Thabo Mbeki succeeded the charismatic Nelson Mandela as president, soon showing that he was unable to establish a similar rapport with the South African public. Mbeki's most lauded achievement during his presidency lay in the introduction of an economic policy that resulted in a rate of economic growth that was unparalleled in South Africa during the previous thirty years. However, he was also was heavily criticized for what was seen as a mismanagement of the HIV-Aids pandemic sweeping through the continent and the country. In addition to this, as Herman Giliomee points out, during Mbeki's presidency, "the perception developed that crime, particularly violent crime, had escalated out of control, and that he was unable to face up to the magnitude of the crisis."[2]

Under Mbeki's stewardship, the programme of transforming the political, social and economic landscape of South Africa continued unabated. Important in this transformation was the creation of a centralized system under ANC control. To this end, political appointees entered key positions not only in the country's political structure, but also in the constitutional court, police service, correctional services, the Reserve Bank and in the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).[3] On the grounds that they were hostile to transformation, government made the removal of white civil servants a priority.[4] Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policies and the passing of the Employment Equity Act put the private sector under pressure to follow suit and implement affirmative action to accelerate the economic empowerment of formerly oppressed racial groups.[5] While this served to address the inequalities fostered by the apartheid state, it also resulted in white disenfranchisement and the loss of skills as more white South Africans took early retirement or left the country. Still others felt that transformation was not happening quickly enough. South Africa's educational system was also reformed in an attempt to provide equal opportunities for all, something that proved very challenging. In response to the performance of the education system from 1993-2004, analysts began regarding it as a crisis on the same level as HIV-Aids, unemployment and crime.[6] Giliomee describes early twenty-first century South Africa, with its persistent inequalities, crime and

1 Information in this paragraph is taken from H Giliomee, "The Mbeki presidency", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa,* Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, pp. 417–423.
2 Giliomee, "The Mbeki presidency", p. 419.
3 Giliomee, "The Mbeki presidency", p. 420.
4 Giliomee, "The Mbeki presidency", p. 422.
5 W Gumede, "Pursuing growth and redistribution", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, p. 427.
6 L Schlemmer & M Bot, "Trying to fashion educational equality", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, pp. 430–431.

struggling educational system, as follows: "But the past still bore down heavily on the present. South Africa remained a challenging, perplexing, bewildering country".[7]

The position of the coloured community in post-apartheid South Africa was, as it was during apartheid, an ambiguous one. This situation was foreshadowed by the fact that the majority of coloureds in the Western Cape voted for the National Party in the 1994 election, a development that sparked renewed discourse about coloured identity politics, as discussed in the previous chapter. As noted in chapter 1, the political and social position of individuals classified by the apartheid government as "coloured" was characterized by the fact that they were treated as second-class citizens, above the third class citizenship of black Africans. This resulted in a position that was simultaneously one of being advantaged and disadvantaged. As Zimitri Erasmus writes, "For me, growing up coloured meant knowing that I was not only not white, but less than white; not only not black, but better than black."[8] Besides illustrating the fragility of an identity constructed out of not being either white or black, in other words based on not belonging to either one of the dominant racial groups in South Africa, it also paves the way for Erasmus's call to view coloured identity as an original creation shaped by processes of creolization.

This ambiguous positioning has been carried into the new South Africa, as is reflected in the title of Mohamed Adhikari's 2005 publication, *Not white enough, not black enough: Racial identity in the South African coloured community.*[9] A perception of being once again assigned a liminal position outside of the broader black experience has resulted in tensions in the South African political landscape between the coloured population and the ruling ANC and, by extension, to the black population. As noted by Cheryl Hendricks in 2005: "Many coloureds have indicated that they feel marginalized in the post-apartheid dispensation, and are especially resentful at what they perceive to be a preferential allocation of resources to Africans in the Western Cape, when their needs are just as great."[10] Pal Ahluwalia and Abebe Zegeye point out that racial tension between black and coloured was held in check by the liberation movement but has come increasingly to the fore in the new political

[7] H Giliomee, "A final word: a perplexing, challenging country", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, p. 433.

[8] Z Erasmus, "Introduction: Re-imagining coloured identities in post-apartheid South Africa", in Z Erasmus (ed.), *Coloured by history shaped by place: New perspectives on coloured identities in Cape Town*, Kwela Books in association with South African History Online, Cape Town, 2001, p. 13.

[9] M Adhikari, *Not white enough, not black enough: Racial identity in the South African coloured community*, Double Storey Books, Cape Town, 2005.

[10] C Hendricks, "Debating coloured identity in the Western Cape", *African Security Review*, vol. 14, no. 4, 2005, p.117.

dispensation, where coloureds are now "engaged in simultaneously trying to be a part of the new South Africa whilst somehow retaining the particularity of their colouredness."[11] It is against this backdrop that there have been calls for an investigation into coloured identity and culture.

The literature cited above outlines a challenge to rethink this racial category and instead of defining it terms of deficit and excess in relation to other racial categories, to conceptualize coloured culture as an original creation born out of processes of creolization, and coloured identity as something fluid that can be made and remade by individuals. Significantly, Taliep Petersen's final years were concerned with addressing this question. The emphasis of his work discussed in this chapter was to demonstrate that the cultural forms traditionally associated with the coloured community were original creole creations with substantial histories, created as they were from diverse cultural elements with long histories in these particular communities. Taliep sought to find cultural elements that would unite the coloured community and make them proud of their history and, in so doing, define their place in the broader history of South Africa. This also involved the reclaiming of the Afrikaans language, not in its standardized form, but as *Kaaps*, the language Taliep had learned to speak as a little boy. Moreover, he sought to emphasize the similarities between South Africa's coloured and white communities, in so doing attempting to break down racial boundaries to create a new community based on the Afrikaans language.

In the early 2000s, Taliep and David Kramer had various musicals on a number of international and local stages.[12] However, the duo had last written a fully fledged musical, *Kat and the Kings*, in 1995.[13] During the years when they were not writing any new material together, both Taliep and Kramer branched out beyond the partnership. Kramer increasingly pursued his exploration of marginalized South African folk musics and histories, amongst other projects, writing and staging a musical theatre piece called *Die ballade van Koos Sas.*[14] He also presented a programme on the guitar players of the Karoo as part of the documentary series entitled *Langpad*, something that was a step towards his

[11] P Ahluwalia & A Zegeye, "Between black and white: rethinking coloured identity," *African Identities*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2003, p. 277.

[12] Poison, adapted for the British stage by writer Jenny Mcleod, was restaged in 2000 in the Tricycle Theatre in London. A reworked *District Six: The musical* was revived at the Baxter Theatre in 2002, and *Kat and the Kings* continued to tour internationally and locally until its final performance in 2005. D de Villiers & M Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2011, pp. 251, 269; J Battersby, "The spirit of District Six is resurrected", *Sunday Independent*, 29 December 2002.

[13] Their most recent project, *Klop klop*, staged in 1996, had been a concert comprising of existing Kramer/Petersen material. Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.

[14] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 278.

Karoo kitaar blues and *Kalahari kitaar blues* projects.[15] Kramer describes his collaboration with Taliep during those years as follows:

> But you must also remember that there was a big gap, a creative gap from after the writing of *Kat and the Kings*. After writing *Kat and the Kings* in '95 we were busy with that with ten years, touring with that around the world, which kept us quite busy, and we didn't create a new musical until *Ghoema*, so ten years went by. But you must understand Taliep moved towards television, and I wasn't interested in following him there.[16]

Taliep was approached in the late 1990s by fellow musician Mynie Grové regarding his possible participation in the first series of a television programme called *Liriekeraai*, for which she at the time acted as musical advisor.[17] Although Taliep had met Grové already in the 1970s at a recording session for conductor and arranger Gerry Bosman, their friendship and professional engagement began in earnest in the mid-1980s when Taliep began working with Kramer, who was friends with Grové.[18] During the 1990s, Grové and Taliep performed together at, in her estimate, nearly a hundred "We care" shows presented at the Wynberg Luxurama in aid of needy organizations, such as schools or the South African Police Widows and Orphans Fund.[19] One of these shows, held in November 1994, raised funds for Ragmaniyeh Primary,[20] a Muslim school housed in the red brick building formerly occupied by the George Golding Primary School that Taliep had attended in District Six. Grové recalls that she expended considerable energy in trying to convince Taliep to participate in South African television programmes: "I made him understand that *only* his community knows he's a singer as the greater South African public only saw him as David Kramer's sidekick."[21] The result of these conversations was Taliep's participation in the first series of *Liriekeraai*, produced by Herman Binge and directed by Gavin Wood.[22]

This wasn't Taliep's first encounter with Binge.[23] Their association went back to the late 1980s at the end of the run of *District Six: The musical*. According to Binge, he had contacted Kramer and Taliep for permission to use fragments of its soundtrack in a documentary on the forced removals in District Six. He was creating the documentary for SABC 2, one of the three television channels

15 De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 287.
16 Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2011.
17 Interview with Herman Binge, 17 December 2012.
18 Questionnaire completed by Mynie Grové, 27 May 2013.
19 Electronic communication with Mynie Grové, 30 May 2013.
20 "Taliep to the rescue ... ", *Sunday Times Cape Metro*, 20 November 1994.
21 Questionnaire completed by Mynie Grové, 27 May 2013.
22 Electronic communication with Herman Binge, 12 December 2012.
23 Information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.

operated by the South African Broadcasting Corporation. Perhaps fearing that the documentary would attempt to justify the government's actions, the collaborative team rejected his request, something that Binge also ascribes to their reservations about a white South African who had not lived in the District attempting to tell its story. Despite denying Binge permission to use material from *District Six: The musical*, Taliep decided to help in another way, namely by supplying the names and contact numbers of possible interviewees. A sustained dialogue developed around the documentary, resulting in the start of a friendship sustained by Binge's visits to Athlone when he was filming in the area and Taliep's visits to Binge's office, then in Mouille Point, after he had paid his weekly Friday visit to the Meerstraat Mosque in the old District Six. Binge remembers that, when the documentary was finally aired, both Taliep and Kramer told him that they agreed with the sentiments expressed therein, apologizing for having denied him the use of their music.[24]

Screened by South Africa's only exclusively Afrikaans television channel, KykNET, *Liriekeraai* is a musical game show hosted by Soli Philander; essentially an adaptation of the Irish game show, *The lyrics board*.[25] In each episode, four contemporary Afrikaans pop singers are invited as guest artists. They team up with *Liriekeraai*'s two resident team leaders to outsmart one another in remembering the lyrics of songs and performing them live in front of a studio audience. Invited as a guest artist on the 1999 *Liriekeraai* season, Taliep was subsequently invited back in 2000, 2001, 2005 and 2006.[26] Because of his association with the Cape Coon Carnival, Taliep was often invited to perform alongside coon troupes for the New Year's episode.[27] Binge recalls that Taliep always managed to develop a strong rapport with the audience and to bring them to tears whenever he sang: "Hy kon regtig die sentiment uit ... uit 'n liriek uitmelk, jy weet?"[28] Binge notes that through *Liriekeraai*, Taliep time became acquainted with Afrikaans artists and the Afrikaans music scene for the first time. Before the turn of the century, he had not been singing in Afrikaans, even though he

[24] Binge describes his 1980s documentary as an attempt to purge his own conscience about the destruction of District Six. As a boy, he had become acquainted with this suburb, accompanying his grandfather on Saturday mornings to buy fresh fish directly from the fishermen of the District. Binge also watched the Cape Coon Carnival and even then, had been aware of Taliep, who was three years his junior, as a sort of "boy-wonder prodigy." Once he entered Jan van Riebeeck High School in 1968, the forced removals were well under way, and although he remembers being worried about this, he was partially comforted by what he later recognized as government propaganda telling him that the residents of District Six would receive new houses and would be better off. As he grew older, Binge's lingering concern – why were the residents so unhappy if they were indeed going to be better off – grew into what he describes as anger and shame. Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.

[25] Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

[26] Electronic communication with Herman Binge, 12 December 2012.

[27] Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.

[28] "He could really milk the sentiment out of ... out of a lyric, you know." Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.

had been raised in a dialect of Afrikaans known as *Kaaps*. Reflecting on his engagement with Taliep during the years of their collaboration, Kramer describes Taliep's use of language as characterized by code switching:

> So you can put on your sophisticated face, and you can speak English or you can speak so-called "proper" Afrikaans, and then you can put on your other face and you can talk the language of the streets. And, within the rehearsal room, you talk that language, that so-called Kaapse ... Kaapse Afrikaans, right? Plat [flat] Afrikaans as opposed to university, kind of language. Now, he was conflicted about that. Taliep, when he was interviewed in those years on television, always tried to put forward a sophisticated Taliep. He couldn't just talk the way ... and then he would get stuck on Afrikaans, he ... in interviews he would always switch into English. He would, and yet ... when I rehearsed with him and in the rehearsal rooms and working, he only spoke Afrikaans.[29]

Binge also recalls that Taliep initially spoke to him in English, though he frequently spoke *Kaaps* to his wife and to his children.[30] On other occasions, Binge and Taliep had playful conversations where each would try to make a point in the dialect they chose to employ: Taliep would try to speak in extremely formal and "proper" Afrikaans and Binge would endeavour to respond in *Kaaps*. This situation needs to be understood against the backdrop of the history of the Afrikaans language. Closely related to Dutch, Afrikaans was created in colonial Cape Town through the intermix of different languages spoken by settler, slave and native Africans.[31] However, the extent to which Afrikaans is a creolized language is contested, as Giliomee stated in 2003: "Afrikaans was, in its essence, a dialect of Dutch that had over time undergone a limited measure of creolization or deviation from the basic Dutch structure."[32] Nonetheless, as pointed out by Michael le Cordeur, the perception of Afrikaans as a language shaped through processes of creolization and bearing the traces of intercultural and linguistic contact, is increasingly preferred in the discourse.[33]

[29] Interview with David Kramer, 10 May 2013.
[30] Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.
[31] CS van der Waal, "Creolisation and purity: Afrikaans language politics in post-apartheid times", *African Studies*, vol. 71, no. 4, 2012, p. 449.
[32] H Giliomee, "The rise and possible demise of Afrikaans as a public language", *Praesa Occasional Papers,* vol. 14, 2003, p. 4, cited in Van der Waal, "Creolisation and purity: Afrikaans language politics in post-apartheid times", p. 449.
[33] M le Cordeur, "Die variëteite van Afrikaans as draers van identiteit: 'n Sosiokulturele perspektief", *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2011, p. 762.

One of the important role-players in the creation of Afrikaans was the Cape slave population, if only because they were forced to learn Dutch to communicate with their masters and because they could only buy their freedom if they were competent in this language.[34] Afrikaans, the language that would spontaneously begin to take form in the service of communication, slowly replaced Malay as the lingua franca of the slave population. The predominantly Muslim slave population used Afrikaans as a medium of Islamic instruction, and in 1862 formed the first school where children were taught in this language.[35] It was also first used as a written medium in the Muslim community, reflected in the fact that the first Afrikaans book, dating from 1856, was written in Arabic script.[36] However, in the late nineteenth century, this contribution was minimized together with the appropriation of Afrikaans by white Afrikaners as a core symbol of their identity. C.S. van der Waal writes with reference to the work of Barbara Bosch and Julia de Kadt: "...it became the main symbol of being an Afrikaner socially, culturally and politically. The mythology around Afrikaans emphasised the continuity with Dutch and de-emphasised the dialect spoken by coloureds."[37]

During this process the Afrikaans language was institutionalized and standard Afrikaans formulated as a symbol against the "hegemony of English," but also as a "racial and class boundary inside the larger category of Afrikaans-speakers."[38] Other dialects, as spoken for example by the Cape Malay population or the Khoi descendants of the Northern Cape, were invalidated and regarded as inferior. When the apartheid government came into power, they sought to establish the widespread use of standard Afrikaans as an exercise in cultural hegemony, but were met with harsh opposition in the form of the Soweto uprising of 1976, when schoolchildren protested against the use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction.[39] Afrikaans was increasingly regarded as the language of the oppressor, and speakers of different races gradually distanced themselves from the language, particularly as alignment with English signified an affiliation with black South Africans and an identification with the world beyond the borders of the country. This history explains why Taliep and other members of the Cape coloured community would be reluctant to use their particular brand of *Kaaps* in conversation with white Afrikaners raised in white Afrikaans schools and taught to speak standard Afrikaans. White Afrikaners were perceived to own the language

[34] Le Cordeur, "Die variëteite van Afrikaans as draers van identiteit: 'n Sosiokulturele perspektief", p. 764.
[35] H Giliomee, "Religious and cultural states", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa,* Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, p. 101.
[36] Giliomee, "Religious and cultural states", p. 101.
[37] Van der Waal, "Creolisation and purity: Afrikaans language politics in post-apartheid times", p. 450.
[38] Van der Waal, "Creolisation and purity: Afrikaans language politics in post-apartheid times", p. 449.
[39] See K Shubane, "The Soweto uprising of 1976", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, pp. 362–366.

in its internationally recognized form. It is exactly this construction that Binge and Taliep eventually sought to combat, as Binge explains:

> Jy vat die taal terug. Jy't dan gehelp om hom te maak [...]
> En só bemagtig jy jouself, verstaan jy? [...] Moenie nou gaan
> Engels praat en sê, "ja, maar ek is 'n slaaf, ek kan mos nou
> nie Afrikaans praat nie, want dis net ... dis net vir die Boere."
> Nonsens! Jy't die taal gehelp maak, vat hom terug.[40]

This quest of reclaiming Afrikaans, and specifically promoting *Kaaps*, is very much part of the language politics of South Africa. In fact, it is central to the struggle for Afrikaans after the end of apartheid – white Afrikaans-speakers, who had long held themselves apart from other racial groups, realized that if their politically-compromised language was to survive the transition to democracy, they would need the help of formerly oppressed and marginalized communities who shared a love of the language. However, even within campaigns to unify Afrikaans speakers of different races, and specifically in the language debate at Stellenbosch University, there remained resistance to different dialects of Afrikaans and an identification of Afrikaans with processes of creolization.[41] Nonetheless, as van der Waal points out, as white and coloured Afrikaans-speakers grappled for common ground, "a new leadership emerged in the public debate about Afrikaans and multilingualism."[42] He points to a number of initiatives, including the Roots conference and cultural festival hosted in 2009 at the University of the Western Cape (initially founded as an institute for the tertiary education of coloureds) that sought to celebrate the diverse creole forms of Afrikaans. Another initiative was *Afrikaaps*, a stage show that focused on the origins of Afrikaans and the public reclaiming of *Kaaps* by formerly marginalized communities.[43]

Binge and Taliep's projects are an earlier manifestation of this sensibility, and perhaps further proof that "the tendency of Afrikaner language activists to lament the expected death of Afrikaans, inspired by a history of nationalism, was not shared by coloured Afrikaans-speakers."[44] Binge notes that Taliep became increasingly enthused in this quest during the early 2000s, encouraging his children to speak more Afrikaans, and beginning to speak his own dialect of

[40] "You take the language back. You then helped to make it [...] And that is how you empower yourself, you understand? [...] Don't now go and speak English and say, "yes, but I am a slave, I can't now speak Afrikaans, because it's only ... it's only for the Boere." Nonsense! You helped to make the language, take it back!" Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.

[41] Van der Waal, "Creolisation and purity: Afrikaans language politics in post-apartheid times", p. 445.

[42] Van der Waal, "Creolisation and purity: Afrikaans language politics in post-apartheid times", p. 456.

[43] Van der Waal, "Creolisation and purity: Afrikaans language politics in post-apartheid times", p. 458.

[44] Van der Waal, "Creolisation and purity: Afrikaans language politics in post-apartheid times", p. 457.

Kaaps more freely in a variety of situations.[45] As Binge states: "Ek dink hy't dit vir homself uitgewerk en toe't hy regtig begin brûe bou vir Afrikaans".[46] Instrumental in this process were the many Afrikaans television shows that Taliep became involved in during the 2000s as presenter, co-author, or producer, all of which in some way addressed the theme of music.[47] Equally important, as will be demonstrated at the end of this chapter, was *Ghoema*, the last musical that Taliep wrote together with Kramer.

In 2000, Marinda Swanepoel, the programme coordinator for KykNET, saw Taliep performing on *Liriekeraai* and decided to approach him in connection with a documentary about District Six. According to her, Taliep had initial misgivings about the fact that it would be screened on an Afrikaans channel.[48] In an interview published on 26 July 2001, Taliep elaborated on the somewhat ironic other reservation that he had had: "Ma' ek het gedink District Six is mos veels te serious vir 'n chat show."[49] However, confronted with his children's questions about his former home, Taliep realized that most of the information about District Six existed in an oral form that was in danger of disappearing, stating: "Ma' die mense gaan oek so vinnig dood – wat meen die storie gaan ook dood."[50] Taliep had long emphasized the value of oral history: "I strongly believe if you want books, you must talk to the people because they are the books, this is like walking libraries, you see?"[51] This idea extended specifically to District Six, exemplified by the following statement first mentioned in Chapter 1: "Because the story of District Six is the history of the mind ... look, the books are outside there – mense soos my pa-hulle wat nog lewe – die boeke is daar!"[52] This conception of the value (and impermanence) of oral history finally led to Taliep's considerable involvement in this project.

The result of these conversations was *O'se Distrik 6*. Launched in August 2001, this documentary was co-produced by Taliep, Plexus Productions and Bobby

[45] Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.
[46] "I think he worked it out for himself, and then he really began to build bridges for Afrikaans." Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.
[47] As pointed out by Lisba Vosloo, it is unfortunate that the majority of the television programmes that Taliep made in these years were screened on DSTV's Afrikaans channel, KykNET. As this is a subscription-funded channel, a large part of the coloured community (and often those who participate in the cultural activities that were televised) would not have had access to it. Questionnaire completed by Lisba Vosloo,20 June 2013.
[48] W Brümmer, "Waarheid kom nou oor Distrik 6 – Taliep", *Die Burger*, 25 August 2001.
[49] "But I thought District Six is of course much too serious for a chat show." W Brümmer, "Dokumentêr oor Distrik 6 'pynlike reis' vir Petersen", *Die Burger*, 26 July 2001.
[50] "But the people are also dying so quickly – which means that the story also dies." Brümmer, "Dokumentêr oor Distrik 6 'pynlike reis' vir Petersen", *Die Burger*.
[51] Taliep Petersen interviewed by Denis-Constant Martin, 15 November 1994.
[52] "Because the story of District Six is the history of the mind [...] look, the books are outside there – people like my father and them who are still alive – the books are there!" P van Noord, "Distrik Ses se Taliep", *Insig*, 31 May 2001.

Heaney, who was also the documentary's director.[53] Besides co-producing, Taliep also acted as presenter and musical director of *O'se Distrik 6,* providing original compositions and arrangements of folk and pop music for use in the programme, such as its *ghoema* and saxophone dominated theme music. Heaney recalls that he and Taliep were responsible for casting the ideas resulting from brainstorming sessions with the other members of the main team, Micky Redelinghuys and Lauren Groenewald of Plexus Productions, into a workable product for television that would be both documentary and musical entertainment.[54] However, he stresses that Taliep's role was instrumental in this process: not only did Taliep play a leading role in determining the themes addressed in the documentary, he was also the main driving force behind selecting interviewees. As Heaney notes: "Taliep's influence cannot be underestimated. He had access to everyone in a way that nobody else could hope for."[55]

Less than ten years after the end of apartheid and following in the wake of important developments in the on-going land restitution process aimed at enabling former District Six inhabitants to return to the area, this documentary could not be made without political considerations. In a letter sent by Heaney to KykNET's Swanepoel on 25 May 2001, he indicated his satisfaction that, in including only three whites, the production team had satisfied her request to "involve the community" – the researchers, production manager, production secretary, production runner and trainee cameraman were all coloured.[56] Heaney had also encountered a certain possessiveness around the topic of District Six, writing in his letter as follows: "This project is unbelievably sensitive to all the parties involved. It is extraordinary how many people claim the subject matter as their own, so we are really pleased that so far we have been able to balance everything and keep everybody happy with what we are doing and covering."[57] One of the strategies in involving the community was the role of the District Six museum in the making of this documentary. Not only was it used as a studio space, but the museum also provided archival footage and assisted the production team with their research. In turn, KykNET pledged to donate copies of *O'se Distrik 6* to the museum in order to make it accessible to the broader public.[58]

[53] When he was approached to participate in this documentary, Taliep expressly requested the involvement of Heaney, whom he had already known through the latter's role as director of a 1980s staging of *District Six: The musical*, as well as the filming of productions of both *Klop klop* and *Kat and the Kings*. Telephonic communication with Bobby Heaney, 8 June 2013.

[54] Questionnaire completed by Bobby Heaney, 8 June 2013.

[55] Questionnaire completed by Bobby Heaney, 8 June 2013.

[56] B Heaney, "Letter to Marida Swanepoel", correspondence, 25 May 2001, Taliep Petersen Archive.

[57] Heaney, "Letter to Marida Swanepoel", Taliep Petersen Archive.

[58] "Distrik Ses op KykNET", *Kwana*, 6 September 2001.

Figure 63: Taliep and band performing in *O'se Distrik Ses,* 2001.
SOURCE: KykNET

O'se District 6 consists of thirteen hour-long episodes that alternate between archival footage (some of which was drawn from Binge's research for his 1980s documentary), filmed interviews with former inhabitants and the studio sessions that involve group discussions between key District Sixers that are moderated by Taliep.[59] Several themes are discussed in relation to District Six, such as childhood games, gambling, sport, religious diversity, protest, gangsterism, bioscopes, gay culture, fashion, and, receiving significant attention, the cultural activities of the people of District Six. This includes the work of filmmakers, visual artists, poets, and novelists, but focuses especially on musical manifestations such as the Cape Coon Carnival, the Cape Malay choirs, *langarm* dances, the Eoan Opera Group, and the myriad of performing artists that came out of the area, some of whom, such as singer Yusuf Williams, dancer Johaar Mosavel, jazz pianist Mervyn Afrika and film composer Trevor Jones, no longer reside in South Africa. Marketed as part-documentary, part entertainment, each episode showcased artists who perform in front of the studio interviewees in the District Six museum. Artists included the Christian Explainers Gospel Choir, Zayne Adams, the vocal harmony boy-band JAG, opera singers Ruth Goodwin and May Abrahamse, a Cape Malay choir, a group singing *moppies*, a band playing *langarm* music and ad hoc groups or solo singers performing Kramer/Petersen material.

[59] *O'se Distrik 6*, KykNET television documentary in thirteen episodes, Plexus Productions, copyright KykNET, Cape Town, 2001.

More than two hundred interviewees contributed to the making of *O'se Distrik 6*.[60] As such, it can be regarded as a filmed oral history project. In allowing former inhabitants to tell their own stories about District Six, the documentary facilitated the collective creation of meaning. This was enhanced by the inclusion of nearly-forgotten home-video footage made available by certain interviewees.[61] Ultimately, Taliep's fears regarding the transitoriness of oral testimony was not overstated – by the time the team was halfway through filming, four interviewees had already died.[62] In illustrating social history through lived experience and the diverse stories of numerous individuals, *O'se Distrik 6* was markedly different from *District Six: The musical*, a story with fictionalized characters developed by two individuals who, in the process, ran the risk of fashioning a "totalizing colouredness" located in a romanticized District Six.[63] In contrast to this, the strength of *O'se Distrik 6* was the fact that it facilitated the collective creation of District Six, allowing multiple voices to speak simultaneously in the creation of an important historical document.

At the official launch of *O'se Distrik 6* on 24 August 2001, Taliep stated: "Ek wil vanaand vir God dankie sê dat ons for once die waarheid kan vertel oor Distrik Ses. Ek is moeg van hoor Die Ses was 'n slum – want ek kóm nie uit 'n slum nie."[64] This tempts the interpretation that *O'se Distrik 6* avoided portraying the run-down infrastructure of the suburb in favour of painting a romanticized District Six. I would argue against this interpretation. The documentary contains extensive footage of the dilapidated buildings of District Six, and does not shy away from portraying perhaps its less savoury aspects – people urinating off the bioscope balconies, or an occasion where a gangster threw a jagged glass bottle at Zayne Adams while he was performing. However, in presenting ordinary (and extraordinary) District Six inhabitants reminiscing about the area, the documentary succeeds in giving them each an individual life with individual personalities, aspirations and experiences, and then ties them together in a mythologized community.[65] In the process, their collective memories, shaped by the pain of loss, irrevocably transform the negative aspects historically attributed to the area. The transformation of the slum into a homely community is not unrealistic or historically invalid, but reflects a personal truth shaped by the power of myth.

60 "Distrik Ses op KykNET", *Kwana*.
61 "Distrik Ses op KykNET", *Kwana*.
62 "Distrik Ses op KykNET", *Kwana*.
63 See Z Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", in D Attridge & R Jolly (eds), *Writing South Africa: literature, apartheid and democracy*, 1970–1995, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. 95.
64 "Tonight, I want to thank God that for once, we can tell the truth about District Six. I am tired of hearing The Six was a slum – because I do not come out of a slum." Brümmer, "Waarheid kom nou oor Distrik 6 – Taliep", *Die Burger.*
65 See Chapter 1 for a discussion of the mythologization of District Six.

Already *with O'se Distrik 6*, Taliep was committed to the idea of presenting *Kaaps* on national television. This is immediately reflected in the title of the documentary, carefully and very specifically chosen by Taliep. Musing on the title, Heaney reflects on Taliep's decisions as follows: "'O'se'. 'Our', not 'my' or 'their'. And the colloquial way of saying it, the Afrikaans spelling of 'Distrik', the use of the numeral '6', which can be both English and Afrikaans, or indeed, any language."[66] *Kaaps* is not only spoken by the vast majority of interviewees, it is used on voice-overs and is also spoken by Taliep on the set, for example in the very first episode where he states: "Ek is Taliep Petersen en sal julle host wees op hierdie journey deur onse geskiedenis vir die next dertien wieke. Deur die jare het Distrik Ses 'n symbol geword van die forced removals wat dwarsdeur Suid-Afrika ge-happen het in die sixties en seventies."[67] Taliep's use of *Kaaps* in this sentence is characterized by code switching between English and Afrikaans, but also contains a number of other features that Le Cordeur, with reference to the work of Hester Dreyer, associates with *Kaaps.*[68] Examples of this are Taliep's addition of a "ge", indicating past tense in Afrikaans, to English words (ge-happen), the use of inflected possessive pronouns (onse), and the unrounding of vowels (wieke). However, Taliep clearly articulates consonants at the end of words, and also pronounces "j" in a manner associated with the standard Afrikaans [j], and not the [dʃ] associated with *Kaaps*,[69] perhaps revealing that he is at this stage slightly modifying his Afrikaans to be more palatable to the majority of KykNET's viewers.

Binge notes that, while he was working on *O'se Distrik 6*, Taliep became increasingly concerned with the visibility of the coloured community on national television. His argument, as relayed by Binge, was the following: "As julle ons nie wys nie, is dit so asof ons nie bestaan nie."[70] Binge's advice was that Taliep should come up with a concept and write something, and that Binge would fight very hard to make it happen: "Ons kan nie net aanmekaar kla nie. Jy moet iets doen ... En so het hy gaan sit en toe, uhm, *Alie Barber* begin skryf."[71] The origins of *Alie Barber* are subject to contention. Binge notes that Taliep had attended a performance of Oscar Petersen, David Isaacs and Heinrich Reisenhofer's theatre piece set in a barber shop, Joe Barber, and had returned enthused and inspired.[72] He remembers that Taliep was reminded of the 1980s *District Six:*

66 Questionnaire completed by Bobby Heaney, 8 June 2013.
67 "I am Taliep Petersen and will be your host on this journey through our history for the next thirteen weeks. Through the years, District Six has become a symbol of the forced removals that happened throughout South Africa in the sixties and seventies. *O'se Distrik 6*, KykNET.
68 Le Cordeur, "Die variëteite van Afrikaans as draers van identiteit: 'n Sosiokulturele perspektief", p. 766.
69 Le Cordeur, "Die variëteite van Afrikaans as draers van identiteit: 'n Sosiokulturele perspektief", p. 764.
70 "If you don't show us, it's almost as if we don't exist." Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.
71 "We can't just constantly complain. You have to do something ... And so he sat and then, uhm, started writing *Alie Barber.*" Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.
72 Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.

The musical that had featured the "Jetset gents" barbershop, where people would come together not only to have their hair cut, but also to socialize and sing, and was inspired to explore this idea further.[73] Although this concept of the barbershop is associated with District Six (as is reflected in its inclusion in an episode of *O'se Distrik 6*), the similarity between *Joe Barber* and *Alie Barber* remained something that Taliep was criticized for.[74]

In the early 2000s, Taliep approached an old family friend, Mitch Adams, to ask him if he wanted to be a collaborator for what would become *Alie Barber*.[75] An architect by trade, Adams states that he did not see himself as a writer before becoming involved in this project, "But before that, I never, I wasn't involved with writing or anything like that. I didn't even write a love letter ... what I'm doing is architecture."[76] Nonetheless, at some stage, possibly in the early 1980s, Taliep had been involved in the coaching of the Buccaneers Malay choir, reportedly the last choir to leave District Six. Adams had been a founding member of the choir and recalls that Taliep saw potential in him and urged him to write the text for the *moppie*s they sang each year. After Taliep had convinced him to become a part of the project, Adams came up with the name "Alie Barber",[77] which was meant to be a play on *Ali Baba and the forty thieve*s of medieval Arabic literature. Conscious of the contention surrounding the conceptual similarities between *Joe Barber* and *Alie Barber,* Adams stresses that, in order to avoid being influenced, he never attended a performance of the former.

Binge, who would become the show's producer, relates that Taliep came up with each plot for the episodes of *Alie Barber*, but then involved Adams in writing the actual text and coming up with the "silly, snaakse lyntjies"[78] that became an integral part of the sitcom. Especially in the first series, Binge was involved in shaping the structure of episodes, though he was careful not to interfere with its language or its inherent spontaneity.[79] For one of the most salient features of *Alie Barber* would be the use of thick *Kaaps*, reflected not only in the pronunciation of words, code switching between English and Afrikaans, but also

[73] Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.
[74] H Binge, "Taliep Petersen: Sy unieke bydrae tot Afrikaans op televisie", *Litnet*, 2006, accessed on 12 May 2013, http://www.argief.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=cause_dir_news_item&news_id=7646&cause_id=1270.
[75] Information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Mitch Adams, 8 November 2011.
[76] Interview with Mitch Adams, 8 November 2011.
[77] In 2004, a Namibian newspaper reported on a barber shop in the Khomasdal township called "Ali Barber". It is not certain if it was named after Taliep and Adams's show, or vice versa, or if it is a coincidence entirely. U Ngava, "BEE Yes. But what about BEA?", *New Era*, 2 September 2004.
[78] "silly, funny lines". Interview with Herman Binge. 17 December 2012.
[79] Interview with Herman Binge, 17 December 2012.

in the use of words such as "kanala" (please) and "motjie" (spouse) that Achmat Davids associates with Malay-influenced Afrikaans.[80] Although he was primarily responsible for writing the text of *Alie Barber*, Mitch Adams would occasionally get stuck on a word, and then Taliep would help him.[81] For this reason, he only received 50% royalties for the text: "If you contribute one word in that ... you are, you have, it's 50/50 on the lyrics, you now, because why, if that one word wasn't there, the whole thing wouldn't start rolling, you know?"[82] The text of *Alie Barber* was usually written while Taliep and Adams were both present, and once the lyrics and script had been completed, Taliep set the text to music that he had already begun work on. As Taliep composed all the songs, he also received all the royalties for this contribution. Judging from Adams's explanation, rewriting the text was sometimes necessary to fit the final lyrics to the music.

The result of this collaborative process was a musical sitcom set in a barber shop in Salt River, Cape Town, the suburb where Taliep spent his teenage years.[83] Each episode is thirty minutes long and typically includes three songs, pre-recorded by the actors and a live band, that were played back and lip-synched to during the filming.[84] *Alie Barber* has four main characters in the first series, namely the old Barber, Alie (played by Cyril Valentine), his employee Mr Min (played by Luqmaan Adams), the flamboyant Margie (played by Gail Reagon), and Lovebite the newspaper seller (played by Emraan Adams, also known as Emo Adams). They are joined in the second season by Alie's son, Computer (played by Roderick Jaftha). Throughout the entire series a secondary character, Karamonkie (played by Junaid Booysen), hawks his wares outside the shop and comes in for frequent haircuts that never seem to take place. The main characters are joined by various guest artists in each episode, playing clients, robbers, gangsters, musicians, visiting family members, *bergies*[85] and occasionally, lone wanderers seemingly out of place in Salt River.

[80] A Davids, *The Afrikaans of the Cape Muslims from 1815 to 1915,* H Willemse & SE Dangor (eds), Protea Boekhuis, Pretoria, 2011, p. 250.
[81] The remainder of the information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Mitch Adams, 8 November 2012.
[82] Interview with Mitch Adams, 8 November 2012.
[83] *Alie Barber series I*, KykNET television series in 13 episodes, FremantleMedia, copyright KykNET, Cape Town, 2003. *Alie Barber series II*, KykNET television series in 13 episodes, FremantleMedia, copyright KykNET, Cape Town, 2004.
[84] Interview with Herman Binge, 17 December 2012.
[85] Originating from the Afrikaans word for "mountain", this term was originally used to refer to Cape Town's homeless who sheltered on the slopes of Table Mountain. This term has since evolved to refer to a subsection of Cape Town's homeless, whether they live on the mountain or in the city.

Figure 64: The characters of *Alie Barber* on set – Emraan Adams as Lovebite (front), Cyril Valentine as Alie (second row), Luqmaan Adams as Mr. Min, Gail Reagon as Margie (third row), and Junaid Booysen as Karamonkie (at the back), 2003.
SOURCE: KykNET

Typical of the genre of musicals, the characters in *Alie Barber* frequently burst into song.[86] In the majority of cases, songs are sung as a sort of comment on or illustration of happenings in the barber shop. Unlike musicals, however, the songs in *Alie Barber* do not necessarily develop the story. They stop the dramatic action for reflection, not unlike operatic arias. Stylistically diverse, they incorporate a wide variety of musical influences, clearly illustrating Taliep's facility in working with different styles and evoking different contexts. Whenever called for by the script, the music alludes to different cultures via musical signifiers, for example the minor key "Oppie boekie", (On the book), that attempts to conjure up India with melismatic singing and use of a synthesized sitar in a song about the "bhabi" or trader that allows the characters to purchase on loan. Another example is "Hy praat karate" (He speaks karate), sung about Mr Min's karate prowess. With its staccato accompaniment relying on the top three notes of a pentatonic scale harmonized in parallel sixths, it attempts to conjure up the exotic east in a manner immediately reminiscent of Foo Fighter's "Kung Fu fighting" and, as such, a popular reference to Eastern martial arts fighting. Likewise, there is "Doen net my job" (Just doing my job), with its 1950s rock and roll piano accompaniment and electric guitar solos, sung by the local sheriff at the barber shop (which doubles as a karaoke bar in the second episode) at their '50s night.[87]

Songs in episodes that do not script reference to any specific culture outside of South Africa frequently, though not always, incorporate local influences. Examples are "Die spoek" (The ghost) and the "*Alie Barber* theme music", both of which are sung to a strong *ghoema* beat (played on a drum kit) and banjo accompaniment, as well as make prominent use of saxophones and electric bass. The combination of these elements suggests that these tracks could be considered examples of *sopvleis,* as discussed in Chapter 4. Another example of a track that consciously incorporates a "South African" sound is the anti-gambling song titled "Tata ma chance" (Goodbye, my chance), a play on the South African National Lottery's English and Zulu slogan, "Tata ma chance, tata ma millons". Both in beat and orchestration (its use of saxophones and a penny whistle in the chorus), this track is composed in the style of 1960s *mbaqanga*. It also opens with synthesized marimba, perhaps an attempt to reference "Africa" in a modern way. Other songs in *Alie Barber* are arrangements of traditional *moppies*, such

[86] A soundtrack containing songs from the first series of *Alie Barber,* as sung by the actors, was released in 2003. *Alie Barber,* CD audio recording, FremantleMedia in association with Bowline Records and KykNET, Cape Town, 2003.

[87] "Oppie boekie" is sung in Episode 15, "Hy praat karate" in Episode 11 and "Doen net my job" in Episode 16. *Alie Barber series I*, KykNET; *Alie Barber series II*, KykNET.

as "Gums kawielie", or represent other repertoire associated with the Cape Coon Carnival, like the senior sentimental, "Net een lied" (Just one song).[89]

Binge remembers that Taliep had a great facility for playing any given song through the lens of different styles, something that he demonstrated on demand in the studio when the creative team would ask for an Elvis or a Beatles song, for example. He could also translate pop music into a Cape Town sound that, according to Binge, he called *eichikelei*, an onomatopoeic word imitating the *ghoema* beat as played on an acoustic guitar: "Hy sou vir jou 'n liedjie kan speel en dan sê hy, maar in Kaaps klink dit so, en dan sal hy hom oorspeel [...] As Elvis daai song in die Kaap geskryf het sal hy so klink."[90] Taliep's ability to employ different styles had a lot to do with his work as a cover musician (discussed in Chapter 3), though it also points to the culture of imitation that featured so strongly in District Six. Binge remarks in this regard: "Dit was amper die mees revered talent gewees om iemand te kan namaak."[91] Although Taliep never styled himself as an imitator of any particular singer, he also developed the ability to imitate, something that he liked to showcase. Taliep's second eldest daughter, Jawaahier, would later state in connection with Taliep's solo performances at the Wynberg Luxurama: " ... and he'd never sing a full song, only stukkie-stukkie [bit-bit], but just to show that's how versatile and that's how talented he was. He could sing opera, he could do some Elvis, he could do ... 'that's how talented I am.'"[92] Binge is quick to point out though, that despite Taliep's facility in imitating different styles, he was deeply committed to a unique Cape Town sound: "Taliep was so oortuig van eichikelei. Dit was vir hom ononderhandelbaar, die styl van die musiek. Dit was maar half vir hom 'n lewenstaak ... "[93]

As was the case with a number of subsequent television projects, one of the goals of *Alie Barber* was to present manifestations of Cape Town coloured culture on national television, and this included episodes that portrayed the Cape Coon Carnival and the Cape Malay choral culture. Because of the history of cultural encounter that has shaped these cultural manifestations, the episodes contain elements that, at least to the uninitiated, now appear incongruous. Considering

[89] "Die spoek" is sung in Episode 8, "Tata ma chance" in Episode 20, and "Gums kawielie" and "Net een lied" in Episode 6. *Alie Barber series I*, KykNET; *Alie Barber series II,* KykNET.

[90] "He would be able to play you a song and then say, but in *Kaaps* it sounds like this, en then he would play the song again [...] If Elvis wrote that song in the Cape it would sound like this." Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

[91] "It was almost the most revered talent to be able to copy someone" Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

[92] Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2013.

[93] "Taliep was so convinced of eichikelei. It was non-negotiable, the style of the music. It was, sort of, a lifelong ambition for him ... " Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

the fact that there is still very little awareness in Gauteng about this culture,[94] its broadcast on national television would have held some surprises for viewers. This would have included some of the texts of Afrikaans *moppies* (demonstrated below in the discussion of *Joltyd*), but also the repertoire frequently sung for the solo categories of both the Cape Coon competitions and the Cape Malay choir competitions. There is one particular moment in *Alie Barber* that, in contemporary post-apartheid South Africa, could arguably not appear on television in any other context without suffering ridicule. In Episode 6 of *Alie Barber*, Alie is doing haircuts in the packed barber shop while telling Mr Min and Margie about the repertoire of the *Hollandse* Team or Malay choir that he was involved in. He is asked to demonstrate the senior solo, "Net een lied" and after a slow sentimental introduction featuring synthesized harp playing broken chords, he launches into an Afrikaans ballad sung in an "operatic" style strongly reminiscent of Afrikaans singer Gé Korsten. Immediately, Alie's *Kaaps* turns into standard Afrikaans with crisp articulation as he belts out: "Net een lied vir al my lewe/ Net een lied vir al my drome/ Net een lied vir al my liefde/ My liefde, my hart is vir jou."[95]

A particular feature of this song is Alie's sustaining of climactic notes as he walks around the barber shop singing to an attentive audience of friends and children waiting for haircuts. At the end of his solo, he gets a round of applause and the episode continues without comment on what the viewers have just seen. All of this suggests that this moment is not intended as an ironic comment on culture, nor is it an attempt to satirize sentimental Afrikaans singers like Korsten. Binge cautions that this was simply the style in which Cyril Valentine (the character who plays Alie) sang in, warning that every creative decision taken in the making of *Alie Barber* was not necessarily motivated: "Daar was, ons het nie vreeslik gefilosofeer oor dinge nie, ons het nou maar die eerste die beste ding gevat, jy weet? Ons was onder soveel druk jy kan dit nie glo nie."[96]

Time pressure is also reflected in the songs of *Alie Barber*. Taliep had to compose songs very quickly, as Binge remembers: "Ek sal hom die middag groet en dan die volgende oggend sou ons mekaar elfuur vir tee sien, dan't hy nog 'n song

[94] Consider the fact that the Tuks Camerata, one of the choirs associated with the University of Pretoria toured to Cape Town in 2011 with repertoire that included a "Cape Malay medley" consisting of Christian hymns and gospel tunes.

[95] "Just one song for all my life/ Just one song for all my dreams/ Just one song for all my love/ My love, my heart is for you." *Alie Barber series I*, KykNET.

[96] "There was, we did not philosophize about things terribly much, we just took the first best thing, you know? We were under so much pressure, you won't believe it." Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

Figure 65: A screenshot from Episode 6 of *Alie Barber* featuring Cyril Valentine as Alie singing "Net een lied", 2003. SOURCE: KykNET

geskryf."[97] According to Binge, the sound engineer, Dirk van Straaten, would frequently make suggestions to Taliep in the studio regarding the addition of rhythms or effects and Taliep, pressed for time, would often agree. Binge comments on the result of this as follows: "Baie keer sou ek die eerste een wees om te erken dat dit is obviously nie goed deurdag nie, jy weet. Dit is letterlik spur of the moment goed wat nie, uhm ... kyk, we were having fun but we also had to rush."[98] However, despite the speed at which Taliep could compose, Binge points out that lyrics frequently held him back, and that he was cautious about writing text: "Taliep was vreeslik bang vir 'n mislukking."[99] Taliep's previous collaborations, starting in the 1970s with Paul Petersen and Dave Bestman and leading to David Kramer in the 1980s, Ismail Davids in the 1990s and now Mitch Adams, to a large extent reflected this insecurity. However, Binge notes that, as time went on, Adams contributed less and less to the lyrics of the *Alie Barber* songs because Taliep drew confidence from the fact that Adams, an architect by trade, could comfortably incorporate *Kaaps* into the script.[100]

[97] "I would greet him in the afternoon and then the next morning we would see each other at eleven o'clock for tea, then he'd have written another song." Interview with Herman Binge, 17 December 2012.
[98] "Many times I would be the first one to acknowledge that it was obviously not well thought-out, you know? It was literally spur of the moment stuff that didn't, uhm ... look, we were having fun but we also had to rush." Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2012.
[99] "Taliep was terribly afraid of a failure." Interview with Herman Binge, 17 December 2012.
[100] Interview with Herman Binge, 17 December 2012.

Adams describes enjoying work on *Alie Barber*, and recalls that Taliep used to jest that, because they always came out of the studio laughing, anyone who saw them might incorrectly assume that they had been smoking *dagga* (marijuana) together.[101] Humour was an important aspect of the sitcom, and the collaborative team tried to make it as funny as possible, though this wasn't always easy: "Because, why ... being funny, or writing funny things, it's actually a serious business, you know, it's not a funny business, you know?"[102] Adams explains that they never used humour that didn't belong in a family programme, and that they always tried to bring across a positive message, or teach the viewer something. Indeed, a very important aspect of *Alie Barber* is its moralistic tone. In this manner, the sitcom campaigns against, for example, gambling, illegal money-making scams, abalone poaching, robbery, superstitious beliefs, and drug abuse.[103] These issues are frequently addressed through racial profiling – the moneymaking scheme is invariably run by a Nigerian, and the Chinese are always smuggling abalone. However, the family-orientated sermonizing in *Alie Barber* allows for a number of exceptions, most notably in the fact that Margie works as a prostitute. In addition to this, in a number of episodes (which usually revolve around the issue of money), the gang of main characters engage in a sort of civilian justice, robbing back the robbers, blackmailing a lawyer who defrauded Alie, and pouring bleach over the Nigerian who sold them fake dollars.[104] In this particular episode, Margie (dressed in a black leather dominatrix outfit) whips the wrong-doer while Mr Min and Lovebite join her in a performance of "O's is vannie Kaap" (We are from the Cape), which includes the lyrics, "Djy kom van vêr om vir o's te kom wys/ Ma' wat o's lankal wiet sal jou hare lat rys/ Djy lag vir my wan' my tanne is uit/ Ma' my gums is soe skerp, ek kan vir jou nou byt".[105]

Another salient feature of *Alie Barber* is the sense of community that it illustrates, a culture of sharing and taking care of others. This is perhaps best demonstrated in the lyrics of "Deur dik en dun" (Through thick and thin), the theme song of the second series of *Alie Barber*, which has the following chorus: "Hier staan ons almal saam, deur dik en dun/ Try maar altyd wat ons kan, deur dik en dun."[106] The main characters of *Alie Barber* frequently make sacrifices

[101] Interview with Mitch Adams, 8 November 2012.
[102] Interview with Mitch Adams, 8 November 2012.
[103] Gambling is addressed in Episode 2, money-making scams in Episode 9, abalone poaching in Episode 14, robbery in Episode 15, superstitious beliefs in Episode 8 and drug abuse in Episode 11. *Alie Barber series I*, KykNET; *Alie Barber series II,* KykNET.
[104] These scenarios occur in Episodes 9, 11 and 12 of *Alie Barber series I*, KykNET.
[105] "You come from far to come and show us/ But what we already know will make your hair stand on end/ You laugh at me because my teeth are all out/ But my gums are so sharp I can bite you right now." This occurs in episode 9 of *Alie Barber series I*, KykNET.
[106] "Here we all stand together, through thick and thin/ Trying everything we can, through thick and thin." This song is first sung in Episode 14 of *Alie Barber series II*, KykNET.

to help each other, for example, when the roof of Margie's wendy house blows off, Lovebite threatens his Malay choir captain with his withdrawal as *moppie* soloist unless the captain, who happens to be a builder, fixes Margie's roof.[107] This is reminiscent of the culture of *kanala*, or of generosity and sharing that is frequently associated with District Six in popular memory.[108] In *Alie Barber*, *kanala* is not limited to the main characters, but extends to the strangers that occasionally enter the barber shop in need of help. An example of this is when a white Afrikaner from Pretoria stumbles into the barber shop after having been robbed with even his shoes stolen off his feet. Mr Min lends him a pair of shoes that are lying around in the shop, though eventually, through Lovebite's accidental purchase of the stolen goods at a roadside stall, the man gets all of his possessions back.[109] Perhaps this feature of *Alie Barber* stands in the service of demonstrating that the sense of community that was destroyed alongside District Six could be rebuilt in areas that people were relocated to, like the Salt River of Taliep's teenage years.

Significantly, *Alie Barber* incorporates political commentary that addresses issues pertaining to the position of coloureds during the transition between the so-called old and the new South Africas. This is particularly strong in Episode 8, when a neatly-dressed coloured woman called Phylis Windass enters the barber shop and, in an exaggerated, posh English, asks for an "ethnic" hairdo that will leave her hair "frizzy".[110] Throughout the action, the four main characters of *Alie Barber* speak *Kaaps* to one another, convinced that Ms Windass cannot understand them. The language barrier between them is illustrated by Mr Min's nervousness about answering Ms Windass in English when she asks him what he is cooking. The only way he can articulate that he is making *koolbredie* or cabbage stew, is by saying, "Mêrrem, you know, dat food I'm cooking is cole food." Ms Windass's status as an outsider is accentuated by her fear and distaste when confronted with the two *bergies*, Spirits and Scraps, an attitude that stands in sharp contrast to the other characters' familiarity with them. The *bergies* then sing a sentimental song called "Die strolers" (The strollers), in which they explain their situation and troubled family background, having been born into a situation where their parents were either drunk or incarcerated.[111] Ms Windass reacts perhaps the way an outsider would: with excessive emotion and by digging into her pockes to give a donation.

[107] This occurs in Episode 13 of *Alie Barber series I,* KykNET.
[108] See Chapter 1 for a more comprehensive discussion of *kanala* in District Six.
[109] This occurs in Episode 15 of *Alie Barber series II,* KykNET.
[110] This occurs in Episode 8 of *Alie Barber series I,* KykNET.
[111] In sentiment, this song is not unlike Kramer's "My broertjie my bra" from *District Six: The musical*, serving to illicit emotion and understanding from an audience presumed not to understand the reasons for poverty and social decay.

Figure 66: A screenshot from Episode 8 of *Alie Barber* featuring (from left to right) Emraan Adams as Lovebite, Gail Reagon as Margie, Cyril Valentine as Alie and Nazli George as Phylis Windass, 2003. SOURCE: KykNET

Eventually, the main characters, still speaking *Kaaps*, begin make comments about Ms Windass. Addressing Alie, Margie says, "O'se vroumense, o's spend 'n fortune [...] om ons harre so blond en straight te maak, ma' die vrou vra vi jou om hare so gekroes en gekrikkel te maak, dit maak nie sense nie,"[112] wherupon Mr Min and Lovebite begin to reflect on the different races that want to be like each other. This is when Ms Windass reveals that she has understood every word of their exchanges, indeed, speaks *Kaaps* as well as they can. After a near confrontation between Margie and Ms Windass, the latter explains her command of the language and alternative persona as follows:

> Afrikaans, ja, want ek kom van die Bishop Lavis. Ma daai tyd was die jobs vi whites only en wat o's 'n bietjie lig van kleur was het o's mos vi o's gereclassified as wit, toe trek ons sommer Goodwood toe. Maar nou werk die affirmative action mos weer in reverse. Dis hoekom ek my hare nou weer daai way moet kam.[113]

[112] "Us women, we spend a fortune [...] to make our hair so blond and straight, but this woman asks you to make her hair all frizzled and crinkly, it doesn't make sense." *Alie Barber series I*, KykNET.

[113] "Afrikaans, yes, because I come from the Bishop Lavis. But that time, the jobs were for whites only and because we were a bit light of colour we had ourselves reclassified as white, then we simply moved to Goodwood. But now affirmative action is of course again working in reverse. That's why I now have to comb my hair the other way." *Alie Barber series I*, KykNET.

As Ms Windass prepares to leave the shop after her haircut, Alie remarks, "So, jy's all the time Gam. Mavis van Bishop Lavis."[114] Upon hearing that Ms Windass married a white man from England, Margie wants to know if her husband would divorce her if he found out she had been coloured all along. Lovebite reprimands her, saying that they must have married for love, not for colour, but Ms Windass disillusions him swiftly – because not all of her family had light skins, she kept her husband away from them. She leaves the shop, proclaiming, "Kyk hie, as ek weer kô, dan wil ek koesusters hê, hô?"[115] After her departure, the characters sit, dumbfounded. Mr Min, whose skin is considerably darker than Ms Windass's, then asks if the other characters think he could also be re-classified, Alie answers with a metaphor: "Mr Min, die voëltjies kan ma so hoog vlie soes hulle wil. Ma' af grond toe, moet hulle kom vir hulle kos."[116]

This scene, as it played out in the barber shop, illustrates the complexity and perplexity of race relations during (and after) apartheid. Normative beauty standards in the coloured community are linked to beautification practices that exist "in the shadow of the colonial encounter",[117] and hair emerges as a key factor in determining race. This situation has its roots in the scientific racism of the nineteenth century, and more specifically, in apartheid's Population Registration Act of 1950, discussed in the first chapter. During the process of classification, the notorious "pencil test" was one of the tools used to examine physical markers of race. Here, a pencil was pushed through a person's hair to determine how easily it would come out again, thereby determining a "European" or "African" hair texture.[118] *Alie Barber*'s preoccupation with categorization by virtue of hair texture is perhaps most clearly reflected in the sign that hangs in the shop throughout all the episodes advertising its pricing structure: "Stylhare R20/ Kroeshare R25/ Half jacks R30/ No jokes!!"[119] In the first episode, Alie explains the pricing of haircuts as follows: "Styl hare kan ek 'n paadjie in kam, kroeshare moet ek 'n paadjie in sny, en 'n half jack is 'n ou met net 'n halwe bles,"[120] further implying that semi-bald heads cost the most because he has to be so careful to make sure the parting doesn't become to big.

[114] "So, all along you've been Ham. Mavis from Bishop Lavis." *Alie Barber series I*, KykNET.
[115] "Look here, if I come again, then I want koesusters, hear?" *Alie Barber series I*, KykNET.
[116] "Mr Min, the birds can fly as high as they want to. But they must come down to the ground for their food." *Alie Barber series I,* KykNET.
[117] Z Erasmus, "Hair politics", in S Nutall & C Michael (eds), *Senses of culture: South African culture studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 388.
[118] As pointed out by Wicomb, the fear of being classified by means of this test is vividly portrayed in D Mattera, *Memory is the weapon"*, African Perspectives, Johannesburg, 2009, pp. 24–45.
[119] "Steep hair R20/ Frizzy hair R25/ Half jacks R30/ No jokes!!" *Alie Barber series I*, KykNET.
[120] "Steep hair I can comb into a path, frizzy hair I need to cut into a path and a half jack is a man with only half a bald patch." *Alie Barber series I*, KykNET.

Ms Windass's reclassification of herself as white is rooted in the real-life experience of numerous individuals during the apartheid years who felt that they would be better off if they "tried for white".[121] Her attempt to reverse this decision comes in the wake of democracy – now that the tables have turned, she has to abandon her white persona (largely through hairstyling practices) and realign herself with formerly oppressed communities. In her discussion of "Hair politics", Erasmus argues against a binary conception that identifies black women who straighten their hair as "aspiring to whiteness", and those who wear their hair "naturally" as being progressive and embracing their "authentic" blackness, stating that this thinking "misses the complexity of black experience."[122] Although Erasmus notes that "hair-straightening as a practice has been shaped by colonialist-racist notions of beauty",[123] she also recalls how she experienced straightening and styling her own hair: "It was a ritual of affirmation for me as a young black woman."[124] Erasmus deals with this ambiguity by recognizing black hairstyling practices as manifestations of creolization and by evoking Édouard Glissant's concept of entanglement: "It entails reclaiming and living with fragments of origins and entanglements with whiteness in the process of creating new cultural forms and practices, which do not have to be coherent and/or complete."[125]

However, the scene that plays out in Alie's barber shop does not acknowledge this complexity and seems to embrace a binary mode of thinking about hair and race. This seems largely to do with the fact that Ms Windass's hair politics do not so much have to do with a statement of identity in a postmodern society, but with survival. In this scene, race is presented as (still) having an incisive influence on one's livelihood in the so-called new South Africa. By locating Ms Windass as potentially belonging to different formal racial categories, this scene accentuates the position of the coloured individual as liminal in South Africa's racial spectrum. One is reminded here of Lovebite's statement from the previous episode: "Ons was eers te swart om wit te wies. Vandag nou te wit om swart te wies."[126] As discussed earlier, this sentiment has long stood in the centre of coloured identity discourse post-1994, and perhaps best illustrates the difficult position of the coloured individual in the South African political landscape.[127]

[121] See H Giliomee, "Racial classification and human tragedy", in H Giliomee & B Mbenga (eds), *New history of South Africa*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007, p. 317.
[122] Erasmus, "Hair politics", p. 385.
[123] Erasmus, "Hair politics", p. 385.
[124] Erasmus, "Hair politics", p. 386.
[125] Erasmus, "Hair politics", p. 388.
[126] "We were first too black to be white. Today, now too white to be black." *Alie Barber series I,* KykNET.
[127] See Erasmus, "Introduction: Re-imagining Coloured Identities in Post-Apartheid South Africa"; see also Ahluwalia & Zegeye, "Between black and white: rethinking coloured identity".

What can be read into Mr Min's question regarding his own reclassification is that there may still be a benefit in post-apartheid South Africa to be seen as white, illustrating the frequently slow rate of transformation that has frustrated the country. Alie's metaphorical reply to Mr Min's question relates to the fact that, for some, racial classification is entirely outside of their control. The fact that this metaphor deals with flight and discusses white experience as height and coloured experience as the ground below, suggests a hierarchical structure to matters of race.

The fact that the writers of *Alie Barber* use a number of serious concerns as material for light-hearted jokes must be seen in the context of the *moppie* tradition, historically associated with the coloured population in Cape Town. In this repertoire, serious matters were frequently couched in humorous lyrics that, at least superficially, did not necessarily make obvious the seriousness of the material.[128] As mentioned in Chapter 2, humour was instrumental in this strategy in Taliep's *Carnival a la District Six part two* of the late 1970s and in Kramer/ Petersen musicals, for example in the energetic song, "Friday night", from *Poison*, where the issue of illegally bottled liquor containing unsafe ingredients is sung about in a light-hearted manner.[129] Discussing this aspect of *Alie Barber*, writer Adams states that people from different races frequently do not understand this coloured sense of humour, failing to see that even though one can joke with a matter, there is a message underneath the joke:

> Nobody likes, uhm, VAT, maybe, or ... they used to call it GST, you know, but then the people would make songs about these things, you know, uhm, comical songs about these things. Like I say, they would make ... jokes out of tik maybe or ... for that matter, you know. And its actually a serious business, you know [...] But the whole moral of the story, at the end you'll find, ne, he actually tells you, "you shouldn't be using these types of things", you know?[130]

The scene from Episode 8 discussed above clearly demonstrates language as a marker of identity, as noted by John E. Joseph, " ... we read the identity of people with whom we come into contact based on very subtle features of behaviour, among which those of language are particularly central."[131]

[128] See AM van der Wal, *The Cape Malay Choir Board & their moppies: Governing a culture and community, 1939-2009*, African Studies Centre, Leiden, 2009.
[129] D Kramer & T Petersen, *The Kramer Petersen songbook*, CD audio recording, Blik Music, Cape Town, 2008.
[130] Interview with Mitch Adams, 8 November 2012.
[131] J Joseph, *Language and identity: National, ethnic, religious*, Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke, 2004, p. 39.

Preferring to communicate in English, Ms Windass is regarded as an outsider. Her insider status is finally revealed through her command of *Kaaps*, alongside her knowledge of traditional Cape Malay cuisine in the form of *kopkoolbredie*, (cabbage stew) and *koesisters*. Here Alie's incredulous: "So, jy's all the time Gam,"[132] is a reference to the biblical Ham, whose son Canaan was cursed by Ham's father, Noah. Already in medieval and modern Europe, slaves were referred to as Ham's descendants, though eventually this term came to be associated with blackness in the seventeenth century.[133] Possibly due to various biblical interpretations of the original sin (which include incest and adultery) that warranted the curse on Ham's offspring,[134] it also has overtones of sexual licentiousness.[135] This term found its way to South Africa, where it was used by the Dutch Reformed Church as a theological justification for the racial superiority of whites, as Binge notes: "Die NG kerk het vreeslik hard gesoek vir, jy weet, justification ... dat die Here moet nou help om hierdie beleid nou te verkoop aan die wêreld, jy weet?"[136] Binge states that, as far as Taliep and Adams were concerned, this term was used to denote colouredness, and its self-referential use not considered derogatory. Nonetheless, in its application to colouredness, this sexually loaded phrase is reminiscent of Erasmus's argument that, in being unable to draw on either whiteness or blackness, the "defining terms of coloured experience" become respectability and shame, particularly with respect to sexuality.[137]

Discussing their use of Kaaps in *Alie Barber*, Adams states that Taliep always told him that it was no use using one language on stage and using a different one as soon as you walked off. Therefore, as Adams notes, "We did the stories, as, as, you know, as we would speak ..."[138] This aspect of the sitcom was one that Binge used to sell his concept pitch of *Alie Barber* to KykNET. In a letter addressed to Jan du Plessis and Marida Swanepoel, Binge wrote as follows: "Dit sal 'n vars, eerlike en outentieke Afrikaanse dialek met die gehoor deel. Dis eintlik so maklik om daarmee te identifiseer en lief te word daarvoor, dat die kommersiële vatbaarheid daarvan vir ons amper vanselfsprekend is."[139] In his

[132] "So, all along you've been Ham." *Alie Barber series I,* KykNET.
[133] H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people*, 2nd edn, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2009, p. 14.
[134] See FW Bassett, "Noah's nakedness and the curse of Canaan, a case of incest?", *Vetus Testamentum*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1971, pp. 232–237.
[135] Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people*, p. 14.
[136] "The NG church searched terribly hard for, you know, justification ... that the Lord must now help to sell this policy to the world, you know?" Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.
[137] Erasmus, "Introduction: Re-imagining Coloured Identities in Post-Apartheid South Africa", p.13.
[138] Interview with Mitch Adams, 8 November 2012.
[139] "It will share a fresh, honest and authentic Afrikaans dialect with the audience. It's actually so easy to identify with and to begin to love, that its commercial viability is virtually a given." H Binge, "Letter to Jan du Plessis and Marida Swanepoel", correspondence, n.d., Herman Binge Archive.

letter, Binge also stressed the fact that *Alie Barber* would draw a new audience to KykNET and increase the public's perception of this channel as inclusive.[140] KykNET's desire to be seen as inclusive, as well as Binge's emphasis on the use of *Kaaps* in *Alie Barber,* indicated a concrete manifestation of the shift in power in the post-apartheid struggle for the Afrikaans language to formerly marginalized speakers who were not white Afrikaners.

According to Binge, Taliep felt that the marginalized coloured community had very little that they were openly proud of.[141] The Afrikaans language was therefore identified as one of the things that could give the community a sense of identity rooted in pride: "En hy't gevoel dat die werk moet daarop gemik wees om hulle daarop te herinner – hierdie is joune, reclaim dit."[142] However, their aim with the sitcom was not to address only the coloured community, but to speak to the white Afrikaans community as well. By demonstrating the commonalities between the two communities, it was their hope that a new community could form around the Afrikaans language. Binge explains Taliep's premise behind this idea as follows:

> Hoe meer die bruinmense hulle vervreem begin voel van die regerende party, en hoe meer die Afrikaners bedreig is, hoe nader gaan hulle aan mekaar beweeg en daar ... en dat jy amper kan praat van iets soos 'n taalgemeenskap wat ook 'n politieke gemeenskap, maar ook 'n sosiale gemeenskap word. Want, want daar is gelykwaardige waardes.[143]

This statement clearly betrays racial tension in post-apartheid South Africa and the perceived position of both white Afrikaners and the coloured community in a political dispensation within which they felt increasingly marginalized. It also posits the ominous creation of a unified enclave of Afrikaans in a sea of Africanness. In its embrace of diverse dialects and its goal to draw together people of diverse political and social backgrounds, Taliep and Binge's stated goal could be discussed by employing Glissant's concept of Relation. Glissant differentiates between a "root identity", based on claims of legitimacy and founded in "a myth of the creation of the world" and a "Relation identity" by stating that the latter "is linked not to a creation of the world but to the conscious and contradictory experience of contacts

[140] Binge, *"Letter to Jan du Plessis and Marida Swanepoel",* Herman Binge Archive.
[141] Information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.
[142] "And he felt that the work should be aimed at reminding them – this is yours, reclaim it." Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.
[143] "The more the coloureds begin to feel estranged from the ruling party, and the more the Afrikaners are threatened, the closer they will move to one another and there ... and that you can almost speak of something like a language community that also becomes a political community, and a social community. Because, because there are equivalent values." Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

among cultures."[144] Glissant argues against the idea of a fixed identity, proposing rather that Relation opens up discrete identities and offers multiple positions in relation to the other. In this, as discussed in Chapter 3, Glissant differentiates between creoleness (a reified identity characterized by content) and creolization (a fluidity characterized by its processes), arguing for the latter:

> We are not prompted solely by the defining of our identities but by their relation to everything possible as well – the mutual mutations generated by this interplay of relations. Creolizations bring into Relation but not to universalize; the principles of creoleness regress towards negritudes, ideas of Frenchness, of Latinness, all generalizing concepts – more or less innocently.[145]

Binge and Taliep were not interested in establishing a new normative standard for the Afrikaans language, nor were they interested in universalizing or fixing a shared identity for all speakers of this language. This is clearly manifest with respect to their emphasis on commonalities alongside the awareness of the co-existence of diverse cultural manifestations, demonstrated most clearly in the celebration of different dialects. Of relevance to this argument, Glissant also addresses the question of language: "Linguistic multiplicity protects ways of speaking, from the most extensive to the most fragile. It is in the name of this total multiplicity and in the function of it, rather than of any selective pseudo-solidarities, that each language must be defended."[146] For Glissant, this diversity is a prerequisite for Relation between communities, and does not increase cultural seclusion as has in the past been supposed. However, despite a celebration of Relation between coloured and white Afrikaans speakers, it cannot be denied that the ideal of setting up an Afrikaans community as separate from other communities in South Africa, suggests a creeping cultural seclusion and reification of identity constituted in opposition to the other. In other words: an embrace of creoleness as opposed to creolization, and a negation of Relation.

Binge identifies Afrikaans as the recurring theme in his and Taliep's work, not only with respect to *Alie Barber* but also in their other projects, such as *Joltyd*, a fifteen series coon troupe competition screened in 2003.[147] Produced by Binge and Lindsay Reid-Ross, Taliep acted as presenter and musical director of the show, also playing with the resident band that included stalwarts Howard Links and Paul Petersen.[148] Judged by Zayne Adams, Sophia Foster and Isa

[144] É Glissant, *Poetics of relation,* trans. B Wing, The University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1997, p. 144.
[145] Glissant, *Poetics of relation,* p. 89.
[146] Glissant, *Poetics of relation,* p. 96.
[147] *Joltyd*, KykNET television series in fifteen episodes, FremantleMedia, copyright KykNET, Cape Town, 2003.
[148] Electronic communication with Herman Binge, 12 December 2012.

Mohammed, sixteen different troupes competed against each other in four different categories, the Afrikaans *moppie*, the English *moppie*, the senior solo and the junior solo. In this, they stood to win a cash prize and a record deal.[149] In a bid to sidestep the politics of the Cape Coon Carnival scene, they decided not to use the real names of the coon troupes who decided to participate, but to assign each of them fictitious names devised by Taliep.[150] In this manner, the African Zonks became the Protea Minstrels, the Santam Seawind Entertainers the Happy Boys Crooning Minstrels and the Starspangles the District Six Minstrels.[151] Even though the production team had approached the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival Association in connection with *Joltyd*, this did not prevent them from eventually attempting to suspend six of these troupes from participating in the Cape Coon Carnival as well as in their yearly competitions, on the allegation that they participated in the television series without permission.[152] It later appeared that the attempt to suspend these teams was caused by unhappiness from certain troupes that they had not been selected to participate in *Joltyd*.[153] Reactions such as this one prompted Binge to comment as follows: "Jy kan in elk geval nie 'n kultuur besit nie en hulle sê hulle besit die Kaapse klopse. En Taliep sê, hoe besit jy kultuur? Jy kan nie kultuur besit nie. Dis almal s'n. En hy sal daarmee maak wat hy bleddie wil."[154]

Besides presenting *Kaaps* on national television as spoken by members of the coloured community, *Joltyd* had another important function in that it showcased the Cape coon tradition to viewers who might never previously have experienced it. Simultaneously, it was hoped that the assertion of tradition would perhaps combat the old apartheid perceptions of coloured individuals as lacking a unique culture of their own. Binge notes that the Cape Coon Carnival tradition distinguishes this community from any other in the world, and points out that most South African cultural manifestations are much younger than the coons: "Dis 'n ou tradisie, met ander woorde, dit is 'n gevestigde gemeenskap wat gevestig is in daai kulturele exercise en wat, wat die volhoubaarheid van 'n sekere kulturele exercise kon sustain, hulle kon dit volhou vir oor 'n eeu."[155]

[149] M Gwatyu, "Klopse in TV-reeks gehuldig", *Die Burger*, 21 October 2003.
[150] Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.
[151] H Binge, *"Joltyd" contact list new & old names*, typed document, 2004, Herman Binge Archive.
[152] F Schroeder, "Court sets aside suspension of minstrel teams", *Cape Times*, 12 November 2003.
[153] "Threat to New Year minstrel show", *Cape Argus*, 5 November 2003.
[154] "You can anyhow not own a culture and they say they own the Cape coons. And Taliep says, how do you own culture? You can't own culture. It's everyone's. And he will do with it what he bloody wants to." Interview with Herman Binge, 3 December 2012.
[155] "It's an old tradition, in other words, it is an established community that is established in that cultural exercise and that, that could sustain the longevity of a certain cultural exercise, they could maintain it for more than a century." Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

Mitch Adams was also involved in *Joltyd* in the sense that he helped choose the Afrikaans *moppie* that each troupe would sing, for although all the other repertoire was chosen independently by each troupe, Taliep wanted to avoid more than one troupe choosing the predictable *moppie*s, such as "Daar kom die Alibama" (There comes the Alibama).[156]

The result is a collection of older *moppie*s, the texts of which reveal the complex history of cultural encounter that have formed this repertoire, for example in the choice of "Abdol, Abdol ek gaan jou mama sê" (Abdol, Abdol, I am going to tell your mama), with the lyrics "Ola my mama, wie gaan saam met die ossewa"[157] for the Happy Boys Crooning Minstrels and "Abassie is 'n wonderlike ding" (Abassie is a wonderful thing) for the Protea Crooning Minstrels, containing the lyrics "Die meide sê hy lyk maar dom."[158] With the reference to the ox wagon, a symbol traditionally associated with white Afrikanerdom, and the use of "meide", a term derived from the Dutch word for "girl" that, in South Africa, became a derogatory reference to black or coloured women, these choices may have seemed just as incongruous as Alie's Afrikaans solo from *Alie Barber*. It is remarkable in positing a South African context where one could sing about the *ossewa* in a celebratory fashion, or hear the word "meide" stripped of its negative connotations. In the mouths of a community formerly marginalized by these symbols, perhaps ironic points of contact are emphasized, as is an awareness of the background and sheer longevity of the Cape Coon Carnival tradition. The success of this endeavour is demonstrated by a fan letter that Taliep received asking for a book containing the lyrics of these *moppie*s, as well as backtracks so that people can sing this music at home. The letter concludes with the following: "Klops is nou wel deel van die Kleurling kultuur, maar dit is dan ne soveel deel van die Blanke Afrikaanse kultuur, en ons kan dit nie laat verlore gaan nie."[159]

[156] Interview with Mitch Adams, 8 November 2012.
[157] "Ola my mama, who is going with the ox-wagon?" This occurs in Episode 15 of *Joltyd,* KykNET.
[158] "The *meide* say that he looks stupid." This occurs in Episode 15 of *Joltyd,* KykNET.
[159] "Admittedly, Coons is part of coloured culture, but it is then just as much a part of the white Afrikaans culture, and we cannot afford to lose it." "Joltyd fanmail", correspondence, 7 May 2004, Herman Binge Archive.

Figure 67: A screenshot from the final episode of *Joltyd* featuring the Happy Boys Crooning Minstrels performing their Afrikaans moppie, "Abdol, Abdol, ek gaan jou mama sê", 2003.
SOURCE: KykNET

Figure 68: A screenshot from the final episode of *Joltyd* featuring the Protea Crooning Minstrels performing their Afrikaans moppie, "Abassie is 'n wonderlike ding", 2003.
SOURCE: KykNET

Binge notes that he and Taliep had a surplus of ideas for new projects.[160] Every year, Taliep would drive his wife Najwa to Namibia to close the books of the family business, Dirk Fruit, and during these trips he would brainstorm and come up with a number of concepts. Binge wryly reflects that Taliep's ideas did not necessarily come across well in his written explanations, but that they would come alive when he stood in front of Binge, brimming with excitement and explaining what he saw in his mind's eye.[161] In 2001 Taliep had performed together with Stef Bos, Laurika Rauch, David Kramer, Ray Phiri, Frank Boeijen, Denise Jannah and Koos Kombuis at the *Ons kruis paaie* (We cross paths) concert, held at the Oude Libertas theatre in Stellenbosch.[162] This line-up included five artists from South Africa (Rauch, Kramer, Kombuis, Petersen and Phiri) and three from the Netherlands (Bos, Boeijen and Jannah, a slave descendent of Surinamese origin).[163] An initiative by Bos, *Ons kruis paaie* had involved a ten day preparation period during which these artists rehearsed together in preparation for their collaborative performances. The goal of *Ons kruis paaie* was to show the differences and similarities between the cultures represented on stage, as noted by journalist Rafiek Mammon: "The night was not just about cross-cultural exchange and finding common ground. It was about inter-cultural discourse and a celebration of differences.[164] This was perceived as facilitated by the historic role of the cultures represented on stage, as Hannelie Booyens writes in a rather essentializing vein: "Die nageslag van slawe (Petersen en Jannah) kry hier die geleentheid om hul stemme te laat hoor op gelyke voet met die nageslag van koloniseerders (Bos, Boeijen), onderdrukkers (Rauch, Kombuis en Kramer) en die tot onlangs onderdruktes (Phiri)."[165]

Taliep was so enthused after this experience that he discussed the possibilities with Binge of using a similar concept in a television programme.[166] Binge then introduced him to the established Dutch programme, *Vriende van Amstel*, in which local artists perform together in a relaxed cafe atmosphere, not only singing their own compositions, but also collaborating with the other studio artists.[167] As the Dutch *Vriende van Amstel* was produced by FremantleMedia, the company that Binge worked for at the time, Taliep and Binge had originally planned to franchise the show in South Africa. Eventually, these conversations

[160] Interview with Herman Binge, 8 July 2013.
[161] Interview with Herman Binge, 8 July 2013.
[162] H Booyens, "Kulture maak oop en musiek kom in", *Die Burger*, 8 December 2001.
[163] Booyens, "Kulture maak oop en musiek kom in", *Die Burger*.
[164] R Mammon, "Celebrating differences", *Tonight*, 7 December 2001.
[165] "The descendants of slaves (Petersen and Jannah) get the opportunity here to have their voices heard on equal footing with the descendants of colonizers (Bos, Boeijen), oppressors (Rauch, Kombuis and Kramer) and the until-recently oppressed (Phiri)." Booyens, "Kulture maak oop en musiek kom in", *Die Burger*.
[166] Unless otherwise indicated, the information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.
[167] FremantleMedia, *Vriende en familie – "Musiekmix": Motivation*, typed document: concept pitch, 2003, Herman Binge Archive.

resulted in a single episode called *Musiekmix*, featuring South African artists Laurinda Hofmeyr, Valiant Swart and The Rockets who were then required to each perform a song originally sung by one of the other artists. Taliep finished off the programme with "Welcome to Cape Town", a song that he and Kramer had written for the 2003 Cricket World Cup. The goal behind *Musiekmix* was to give television coverage to local musicians, but also to encourage musicians who come from very different backgrounds and sing in different styles, to encounter each other musically. Another goal of *Musiekmix* was to give exposure to lesser-known coloured artists and to establish contact between them and their white counterparts. Once again, however, the focus was on the Afrikaans language, as Binge states:

> Die idee daarvan was 'n nice warm feeling, maar dit was weer eens rondom die taal. So, ons sing almal in Afrikaans, Ok, ja, dit is die twee teenpole van style van sing, maar daar moet iets in gemeen hê dat altwee hierdie ouens het 'n behoefte om hulleself in musiek in Afrikaans uit te druk, so, bring hulle bymekaar.[168]

However, the majority of Taliep and Binge's ideas remained unrealized. These include a programme that had the provisional title of either *Kombuistaal* or *Moppies*.[169] This programme would centre on a large collection of recorded *moppies* that were in Taliep's possession. A number of years earlier, Taliep had bought his newly retired and restless father, Mogamat Ladien, a portable tape recorder and had commissioned him to record community members singing old *moppies* and *nederlandsliedjies* before they disappeared from folk memory. One of the men that Mogamat Ladien worked closely with was Ebrahiema Davids, or Boeta Warty, the brother of Cape historian Achmat Davids. Boeta Warty was blind and rumoured to know all the *moppies* ever sung in the Cape. However, he took the last ten *moppies* to his grave, having died on the day that this initiative was to be completed. The main thrust of Taliep and Binge's documentary was to preserve this collection and to make it accessible to the community. The television programme had not crystallized into a definite form. However, according to the concept pitch presented to the SABC, it would have involved Taliep singing a number of these *moppies* with the help of a Malay choir, a Coon troupe and a contemporary vocal ensemble. Binge relates that he had also envisaged working with this collection of *moppies* in a more academic fashion.[170] He points out that

[168] "The idea of it was a nice warm feeling, but it was once again around the language. So, we all sing in Afrikaans. Ok, yes, it is the two opposite poles of styles of singing, but there must be something in common that both of these guys have a need to express themselves in music in Afrikaans, so bring them together." Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

[169] The information contained in this paragraph is taken from FremantleMedia, "*Kombuistaal*", typed document: concept pitch, 2003, Taliep Petersen Archive.

[170] Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

every year when the *moppies* are written (some of them originally composed and others consisting of popular tunes with newly written texts), contemporary events are included in the lyrics. As such, the *moppies* tell the history of Cape Town.[171] Once again, the preoccupation in this project was on demonstrating the contribution of the coloured community to Cape Town's past, and on giving exposure to their particular use of Afrikaans. Binge states:

> So, as jy dan daai lirieke gaan analiseer dan weet jy waar hy vandaan kom, watter era hy uit kom ... wat die gebeurtenisse daarontom wat dit, wat hom afgegee het, en ek wou 'n program maak daarvan, van die verskillende milestones in die geskiedenis van Kaapstad wat in die moppies se lirieke vasgevang is.[172]

Besides a number of other uncompleted projects, some of them talent competitions and others sitcoms,[173] there was the concept of *Rough diamond*, a televised competition arising out of work Taliep was doing in South African schools under the patronage of Naspers, a powerful South African mass media company that specializes in print and electronic media. Binge revealed that, as early as the 1980s, the top brass at Naspers, given its main interest in news and media, made a practice of identifying so-called "opinion formers" in South Africa and inviting them for a meal: "Sodat 'n mens ten minste mag ... die telefoon kon optel en met mekaar mag praat oor goed, jy weet? En natuurlik, dit is waardevolle inligting vir 'n goeie koerantman."[174] Those that Naspers reached out to in this

[171] For a similar approach to *moppies*, see Van der Wal, *The Cape Malay Choir Board & their moppies: Governing a culture and community, 1939-2009*.

[172] "So, if you then go and analyse those lyrics then you know where it comes from, and which era it comes from ... what the happenings around it that, that led to it, and I wanted to make a programme of that, of the different milestones in the history of Cape Town that are captured in the lyrics of the moppies." Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

[173] Other possible projects included *Djou ma*, a sitcom based on the Australian sitcom, *Mother and son*, during which the main character moves back in with his mother after having lived independently for a number of years. For the writing of *Djou ma*, Binge and Taliep once again planned on involving Mitch Adams as screen writer. Adams was also involved in the writing of *La mammas*, a musical sitcom about a retirement home in Salt River turned karaoke bar. Then there was *Wrong place at the right time*, a musical drama written by Isaac Mars, Taliep and Binge about Joe Smith, a famous singer who is framed for a crime he didn't commit, is released from prison and subsequently attempts to pick up the fragments of his life. Another possible project was *Forgotten idols*, inspired by the Buena Vista Social Club, during which talented singers who had never achieved commercial success (partially due to the lack of opportunities for coloured performers during apartheid) are given the chance to perform. A similar sentiment was also behind another concept called *Mr Entertainment*, which would have been aimed at older singers who had not necessarily "made it" in the entertainment world. Binge notes that this concept drew strongly on the tradition of singing competitions in the coloured community, amongst others the Mr Entertainment competition that Taliep won in 1968. As many of the contestants would have come out of Cape Town's copycat culture, they would be allowed to sing the American covers that they specialized in, but also encouraged to sing covers of contemporary Afrikaans songs. FremantleMedia, *Brief 10: Afrikaans sitcom – "Djou ma",* typed document: concept pitch, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive; FremantleMedia, *Brief 10: Afrikaans sitcom – "La mammas": Daar's geld in karaoke!,* typed document: concept pitch, n.d., Taliep Petersen Archive; FremantleMedia, "*Wrong place at the right time": The story of the rehabilitation of Joe Smith – "Mr. Entertainer"*, typed document: concept pitch, 2005, Taliep Petersen Archive; Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

[174] "So that one may at least ... pick up the telephone and may talk to one other about things, you know? And, of course, it is valuable information for a good pressman". The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

way included Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and Thabo Mbeki, names that are significant considering the company's history of affiliation with the apartheid government.[175] Naspers reached out to Taliep as well. Ton Vosloo and Koos Bekker had heard Taliep speaking Afrikaans on television and, as Binge recalls, "Hulle het definitief Taliep gesien as 'n brugbouer en hom by 'n klomp van hulle projekte begin betrek."[176] One of these initiatives involved Taliep going to various schools, identifying musical talent with a view to assembling a group of youths who then received musical training. His most important role, however, was as patron of these activities. Binge notes that Naspers had begun to realize that their initiatives with formerly oppressed communities were viewed with a certain amount of suspicion, and Taliep presented the ideal personality to legitimize their efforts.

Finally, possibly the biggest project that failed to materialize was the duo's slave documentary, a single episode production that they were planning on distributing internationally.[177] For Binge this was another manifestation of Taliep's "Two worlds – One heart" idea, as discussed in the previous chapter.[178] The basic premise behind this documentary would have been to trace South African cultural manifestations to similar phenomena in the rest of the world, perhaps thereby pointing to their origins. In this way, Taliep wanted to trace the *karienkel*, the vocal embellishment found in the Cape Malay *nederlandsliedjies*, back to the Indonesian *kroncong*.

[175] Established in 1915 as De Nasionale Pers, Naspers started out publishing one newspaper, *De Burger* (forerunner of *Die Burger*) with D.F. Malan as its first editor. In the same year Malan, who started out as a clergyman, became leader of the Cape National Party, the start of his rise to the position of prime minister of South Africa which he held from 1948 to 1954. Malan's work as editor and politician were not separated, as Giliomee notes, "The newspaper *De Burger*, which became the most important intellectual influence over Afrikaner nationalists, gave Malan the pulpit to develop his ideas." The company's association with apartheid would be sustained through most of the 20th century – it was only in 1985 that *Die Burger* began to lose its reputation for being the government's mouthpiece after the retirement of editor Piet Cillié. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people*, p. 384.

[176] "They definitely saw Taliep as a bridge-builder and started involving him many of their projects." Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

[177] During the early 2000s Taliep and Binge conceptualized their first documentaries, *Recollections of New Year/ Nuwe Jaar!* and *Recollections of minstrel magic!*, which were broadcast in 2008 on SABC 2. The first programme offered a historical overview of this phenomenon and detailed the musical forms associated with it, while the second programme explored the different aspects involved in taking part in the Cape Coon Carnival as a series of recollections. This programme contained a considerable amount of footage of Taliep sharing his own recollections of being a young solo singer in his father's Darktown Strutters coon troupe. As Taliep passed away before these programmes were finished, he could not act as narrator as initially planned. During these years they also conceptualized what would eventually be known as *Kaapse jol*, broadcast on KykNET in 2010. Consisting of seven episodes that focused on the three legs of Cape Town's music making in the days leading up to the New Year (the Cape Coon Carnival, the Cape Malay choirs and the Christmas choirs) this documentary went behind the scenes of these phenomena and reported on the preparations leading up to the end of each year. Although Taliep was not involved in the making these documentaries, they nonetheless are a part of his legacy in that they propagate the use of *Kaaps* and endeavour to give prominence to musical traditions that are arguably not widely known outside of Cape Town, and therefore represent an assertion of culture. *Recollections of New Year/ Nuwe Jaar,* SABC television documentary, Pearson TV, Cape Town, 2008. *Recollections of minstrel magic!,* SABC television documentary, Pearson TV, Cape Town, 2008; *Kaapse jol*, KykNET television documentary in seven episodes, Waterfront Television, copyright KykNET, Cape Town, 2010; Questionnaire completed by Lisba Vosloo, 20 June 2013.

[178] The information in this paragraph is taken from an interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

Besides their preoccupation with music, Binge and Taliep had also planned to investigate the Eastern origins of Cape cuisine and architecture. The filming of this documentary would have been divided between South Africa and the international sites that were identified as possible connections to the past.

In 2004, Binge and Taliep wrote a stage show about the origin of Afrikaans from a coloured perspective, performing it at the *Jannewales* Arts Festival hosted by the Jan van Riebeeck High School, Binge's alma mater.[179] For this production, Binge acted as narrator while Taliep provided music with his guitar and with the help of a coon troupe. This show was also about creolization, as Binge describes it: "'n Program wat die punt maak dat ons is eintlik maar net almal een mixed bunch."[180] At the start of this show, Binge spent five minutes reading a list of the names of Afrikaner families who had slaves among their early progenitors. Binge remarks that there were so many names on that list that nearly all the audience members must have identified with what was happening on stage.[181] The show advocated for an understanding of Afrikaner heritage that was the exact opposite of the myth of racial purity that Afrikaner nationalists had been propagating during apartheid. Instead, it encouraged white Afrikaner audience members to reckon with their own past of cultural encounter and miscegenation, to realize that those who styled themselves as Afrikaners in the early twentieth century were not as "pure" as they had wanted to believe. Moreover, it did so in a manner that encouraged open identification with this past, a Relation, to employ Glissantian terminology, that was worthy of celebration.

With Binge's approval, Taliep took the script for this screen show to his long-time musical collaborator, David Kramer. Kramer recalls that, ever since the start of their collaboration in 1986, he and Taliep had been discussing the idea of a musical about slavery.[182] Indeed, with the recording of the album *Cape Town* in 1988, the collaborative team had written two songs that dealt with this topic, "Distant colony" and "Blue sky".[183] However, according to Kramer, Taliep had never been actively interested in the idea before the 2000s, he "never really wanted to go there,"[184] perhaps evincing a reluctance to identify with this aspect of history. However, as is clearly demonstrated by the slave-orientated projects that Taliep embarked on during the 1990s and 2000s, for example his concerts in Malaysia discussed in Chapter 5, or the slave documentary discussed in this

[179] "Jannewales lok voorste kunstenaars", *Die Burger,* 30 August 2004.
[180] "A program that makes the point that we are actually all just one mixed bunch" Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.
[181] Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.
[182] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.
[183] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 236.
[184] Interview with David Kramer, 8 August 2012.

chapter, one can safely assume that his identification with slavery started well before he and Kramer embarked on the project of writing their final musical together. Kramer and Taliep proceeded to develop the Binge/Petersen show that was staged at *Jannewales*, eventually coming up with *Ghoema!*, which, according to Binge, incorporated nearly the entire text of his and Taliep's stage piece into their musical.[185]

Ghoema! played at the *Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees* (KKNK) in March 2005 as a seventy minute stage piece that sought to explore the origins of Afrikaans, as well as the contribution of former slaves to Afrikaans folk music.[186] After a highly successful staging at the festival, Taliep and Kramer reworked the show, extending it to two hours and changing its name to *Ghoema*.[187] Under the direction of Kramer and the musical direction of Taliep, the reworked version opened in Cape Town's Baxter Theatre on 16 November 2005, starring Luqmaan Adams, Munthir Dullisear, Zenobia Kloppers, Gary Naidoo, Carmen Maarman and Danny Butler, with a band consisting of Butler, Gammie Lakay, Howard Links, Solly Martin and Charlie Rhode.[188] Set design was done by Kramer, lighting design by Kramer together with Gert du Preez, and costume design by Jesse Kramer.[189] The following year, *Ghoema* played at the University of Johannesburg's Arts Centre, as well as at Stellenbosch's HB Thom Theatre.[190] *Ghoema* received very positive reviews, and was hailed as "undoubtedly the best collaborative piece by the David Kramer-Taliep Petersen creative team so far"[191] and praised for engaging with the early history of the Cape in a production that was as educational as it was entertaining.[192]

Reflecting Taliep's growing concern with Afrikaans, *Ghoema* was the first Kramer/Petersen musical written predominantly in this language. In interviews published during the run of this musical, Taliep frequently iterated his concerns over Afrikaans, stating in a November 2005 interview: "There is a huge misconception among people that Afrikaans is the oppressor's language. But they don't understand that the slaves also used the language and made a major contribution to this country."[193] *Ghoema* was also something of a milestone

[185] Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.
[186] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 269.
[187] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 269.
[188] M Malan, "'Ghoema' stuur jou met lied in die hart huis toe", *Die Burger,* 18 November 2005.
[189] G Brand, "'Ghoema' kraai koning by Fleur du Cap-teaterpryse", *Beeld,* 8 March 2006.
[190] "A new take on the history of our liedjies: Show reveals enormous impact slaves had on the Cape", *Weekend Argus*, 5 November 2005; P Feldman, "Ghoema has voema", *The Citizen*, 18 July 2006; "Ghoema run extended", *Cape Times*, 9 August 2006.
[191] J Mayne, "Theatre", *Business Day,* 30 November 2005.
[192] B Eveleigh, "'Ghoema' sparkles with sharp comedy, song." *The Herald,* 2 December 2005.
[193] "A new take on the history of our liedjies: Show reveals enormous impact slaves had on the Cape", *Weekend Argus*.

Figure 69: Actor Munthir Dullisear as Achmat Samsodien in *Ghoema*, Baxter Theatre, Cape Town, 2005.
SOURCE: David Kramer Productions

for Kramer, who described the musical as the fulfilment of a lifelong ambition, stating that both he and Taliep had been led back to the roots of Afrikaans and Afrikaans folk music after having once turned away: "Taliep grew up in District Six with this tradition and in some ways rejected it and I grew up rejecting Afrikaans for political reasons and then having to reinvestigate that."[194] However, *Ghoema* was not only about Afrikaans or embracing folk music, nor merely about emphasizing the importance of the slave population on the development of early South Africa. *Ghoema* was also about creolization, and about exploring the identity of slave descendants. In 2005, Ebrahim Rassool stated in praise of *Ghoema*: "For as long as we don't speak about our history in slavery, we will only seek our ancestors among the Dutch, the French and the British [...] Our children need to be proud of where they come from. There is nothing to be ashamed about."[195] In this respect, *Ghoema* joins Taliep's *Two worlds – One heart* concert (discussed in the previous chapter) in answer to Zoë Wicomb's plea for the erasure of shame over a history of slavery.[196]

The agenda of exploring the past with an eye on the present is reflected at the very start of the musical when two of the narrators, Hot and Tot introduce themselves to the audience as follows: "Ja o's is twee laaities, o's kom vannie Kaapse Flats/ O's is so-called coloureds but there's more to us than that/ So sit back, relax, switch off your cell/ Is 'n storie vannie ghoema wat o's nou gaan vetel."[197] With the help of four other actors, Hot and Tot proceed to sketch the history of Cape Town, beginning with the spice trade and the establishment of a refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope. Themes that are touched upon are the arbitrary renaming of new slaves, the creation of Afrikaans, the role of slaves in the formation of Cape cuisine and architecture, the emancipation of slaves by the British in the nineteenth century and the role that this played in the Afrikaners' decision to embark on the *Groot Trek*. Throughout this history, music dominates. *Ghoema* addresses the import of musical forms, such as the Indonesian *kroncong*, into the Cape, the role of slaves in providing musical entertainment to the colonists, the hidden messages contained in the folk songs the slaves sang at picnics, the continued import of Dutch songs, as well as the influence of blackface minstrelsy on the repertoire that slave descendants would

[194] L Byram, "Kramer returns to his roots with Ghoema: Taking traditional Cape music to UK audiences is hi next big challenge", *Cape Times*, 22 June 2006.
[195] "New focus on Cape's history of slavery", *Cape Times,* 15 December 2005.
[196] See Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", p. 100.
[197] "Yes, we are two youths, we come from the Cape Flats/ We are so-called coloureds but there's more to us than that/ So sit back, relax, switch off your cell/ It's a story of the *ghoema* that we are going to tell." D Kramer & T Petersen, *Ghoema*, DVD video recording, David Kramer Productions, Cape Town, 2006.

continue to sing up to the present day in the Malay choirs and the coon troupes. Although focusing on the experience of slaves imported to the Cape, *Ghoema* connects with the broader experience of colonization, exemplified by Hot and Tot's words:

> Jan van Riebeeck, VOC lat ek vertel van o's history/ Hollanders kô van oorie see/ That affected you and me/ Hulle bring vir o's die Here/ Bou die castle, sluit die deure/ Steel die land met groot gewere/ For human rights voel hulle vere/ Hulle land hie, hulle plant hie/ Hulle dek vir elke antie.[198]

Perhaps more so than with any of Taliep's previous musical endeavours, the music of *Ghoema* embraces forms traditionally associated with coloured slave descendants. This has to do both with style and instrumentation of original compositions, as well as with the inclusion of a number of traditional folk songs. Only some of its songs are sung to the *ghoema* beat, but the *ghoema* drum is used in nearly every musical number. Although an electric bass guitar is employed throughout, the use of acoustic instruments in the form of drums, tambourines, guitar, banjo and piano-accordion combine to give *Ghoema* a folk music feel. In discussions of Taliep's musical endeavours throughout this life, as discussed in previous chapters, it has been possible to identify a certain duality between an embrace of music traditionally associated with the Cape coloured and Cape Malay communities, and an engagement with Western, and in particular, American musical forms that abounded in District Six. In this respect the following pronouncement by Taliep is of particular significance:

> "We need to be proud of it and unless we showcase it with pride, commitment and dignity won't happen. If a jazz musician from America comes here and we play him jazz, he'll say: 'But I have jazz where I come from.' But if you play him a *Nederlandse lied* or a something unique to us which he has never heard before, you earn his respect."[199]

In telling its story, *Ghoema* includes original Kramer/Petersen compositions, such as "Ghoema", "The old spice trade", "Achmat Samsodien" and "Marhaban", the song that the collaborative team had already written in the 1990s and that Taliep had performed in Malaysia. Some of these songs are aimed at illustrating

[198] "Jan van Riebeeck, VOC let me tell about our history/ Hollanders come from over the sea/ That affected you and me/ They bring the Lord for us/ Build the castle, lock the doors/ Steal the country with big guns/ For human rights they feel nothing/ They land here, they plant here/ They mate with every auntie." *Ghoema*, DVD.
[199] "A new take on the history of our liedjies: Show reveals enormous impact slaves had on the Cape," *Weekend Argus*.

particular musical influences on the Cape, such as the Portuguese fado in "Down at the harbour", or African American gospel in "Welcome home" (the introduction to "Swing low, sweet chariot") sung to illustrate the experiences of Orpheus McAdoo and the Virginia Jubilee Singers on their tour to South Africa. Arguably the only identifiable contemporary musical genre included in *Ghoema* is rap, sung by Hot and Tot in a number of songs such as "The old spice trade", "VOC history" and "Hie kommie British rap" (Here come the British rap). In *Ghoema*, the use of rap aids storytelling, and perhaps because it is sung primarily to acoustic instruments, doesn't come across as jarringly anachronistic. Rather, by intertwining contemporary Afrikaans Western Cape rap with traditional *ghoemaliedjies*, it serves to connect the old with the new and the past with the present.

Although *Ghoema* also includes Cape Malay choral repertoire, such as the *nederlandslied* "Rosa", as well as original compositions that use *nederlandsliedies* as their basis, such as "Blue skies", a significant portion of the musical material is taken from the body of *pieknieklied*jies or *ghoemaliedjies* traditionally sung by slave descendants at the Cape. There are also original compositions that incorporate traditional *ghoemaliedjies*, such as "Nuwe naam" (New name) that makes use of the folk song, "Januarie Februarie Maart" (January February March) for its chorus. As mentioned previously in this dissertation, there is a body of folk music repertoire that is shared between the coloured community of Cape Town and white Afrikaners. However, this overlap has not always been recognized by white Afrikaners, and part of *Ghoema*'s power lies in demonstrating that a number of these songs were created by the slaves themselves, who embedded hidden messages, often of a sexual nature, in the lyrics. These include the folk songs "Daar kom die Alibama" (There comes the Alibama), "Solank as die rietjie in die water lê" (As long as the reed is lying in the water), "Vanaand gaan die volkies koring sny" (Tonight the folk will cut corn) and "Die trane die rol oor jou, Bokkie" (The tears are rolling over you, my darling), songs that are all included in the *F.A.K.-sangbundel* where they are presented as South African folk songs arranged by Afrikaner composers like Dirkie de Villiers.[200] Taliep's stance to this perceived cultural appropriation is illustrated by his comments in a 2006 interview. These comments suggest that the problem is not merely with the credit on the manuscript, but with the fact that these songs were presented as part of a collection by an institution historically associated with Afrikaner nationalism, always at the cost of other racial groups in South Africa:

[200] DJ de Villiers et al (eds), *Nuwe F.A.K.-sangbundel*, Nasionale Boekhandel, Cape Town, 1961, pp. 457–486.

> Baie van ons goete (Kaaps-Maleise liedjies) is daarin. Ons het dit niks gelaaik nie. Dis die hele ding van vat wat nie aan jou behoort nie. Ek het al boeke gesien met die naam Bóére sangbundel, dan wemel dit van Maleise musiek. My mense het wég gevoel daarvan. Ons is nié FAK nie.[201]

The following story relayed by Mitch Adams shows the continued effect of this lack of recognition, and the stance of a deprived community who feel the need to protect their cultural forms from white appropriation. In the 1970s when Adams was secretary of the Cape Malay Choir Board, he was approached by David Kramer for permission to use traditional *moppie*s in his own work: "And we would tell him, no, you can't use our comic songs. For the simple reason because I.D. du Plessis also used our things and he wouldn't give credit to the, actually to who the guys was, he would ... it's written as it if it's his ones, his things, you know?"[202] As mentioned earlier in a discussion on the documentary *O'se Distrik 6*, the need to assert ownership is also very strong when it comes to District Six subject matter. Under these circumstances, it is perhaps not surprising that Adams expresses dismay that Kramer claims to have written the script of *District Six: The musical*. His specific concern is the slang employed in the dialogue: "You don't come from District Six, you come from Worcester, man!"[203] Kramer's response to allegations such as these is as follows: "Well, Rice and Weber wrote about Jesus Christ, they never met him!"[204] I would argue that Adams's attitude denies that work based on research in the form of retellings can be original. It also points to an attitude that regards ideas and localized settings as subject to ownership, and not necessarily what the creative artist does with them.[205] However, as stressed by Herman Binge, these attitudes are a product of the inequalities of the past:

[201] "A lot of our things (Cape Malay songs) are in it. We didn't like it at all. It's that whole thing of taking what doesn't belong to you. I have seen books before with the name, Boere songbook, then it is full of Malay music. My people felt away from that. We are not FAK." H Retief, "Afrikaans deur dik en dun", *Rapport*, 26 February 2006.

[202] Interview with Mitch Adams, 8 November 2011.

[203] Interview with Mitch Adams, 8 November 2011.

[204] Interview with David Kramer, 1 November 2011.

[205] Composer Robert Davids asserts that Taliep plagiarized the storyline of his play, *Goodbye District Six* in the 1970s for use in both *Carnival a la District Six* and *District Six: The musical*. It is not clear whether there are actual similarities in the respective storylines or whether Davids is merely objecting to the fact that, subsequent to *Goodbye District Six,* Taliep was involved in writing two productions that are also set in District Six against the backdrop of the forced removals. Further investigation into the productions in question is needed to answer this question. Interview with Robert Davids, 7 September 2011.

> As jy niks het nie en jy het nooit iets gehad nie dan wil jy die, desperately die klein bietjie wat jy het, wil jy … gee vir jou status, gee vir jou 'n reg om te bestaan. Maak jou, uhm, 'n mens met opinies, jy weet, en dis joune daai en jy willie hê iemand anders moet 'n deel daarvan he nie, jy weet?[206]

In celebrating slave heritage and cultural forms created in the early Cape, *Ghoema* is about creolization, how the Cape "became a melting pot of cultures and traditions," as journalist Rafiek Mammon notes, "the power of assimilation and integration – that ultimately leads to transformation."[207] In particular, this has to do with the creation of new musical forms, as the character Miena states: "En net soos'ie taal oppie skepe en innie kombuis ontstaan het, word nuwe ritmes vannie ooste met die Hollandse straatliedjies, die Portugese fado, die Malayu se kroncong-musiek gemeng."[208] The musical's engagement with creolization is also embodied in its title, *Ghoema*. This is a reference to the *ghoema* drum, an instrument made by stretching animal skin over a wooden brandy barrel. This drum has traditionally been associated with the folk repertoire known as *ghoemaliedjies* or *pieknieklied*jies, as well as with *moppie*s and the *dhikrs* sung during *ratiep* or *khalifa*.[209] Denis-Constant Martin notes that, although it is similar to other types of hollow wooden drums found elsewhere in the world, the origins of the *ghoema* drum are unknown, as is the etymology of the word "ghoema". Martin describes it as a "creole" instrument created by slaves who came from various cultures where drum playing was an important part of music-making. Here in the Cape, they created their own instrument from the material that was available to them – in this case, material that was used in the wine industry.[210]

The rhythm typically associated with the *ghoema* drum has obscure origins, although it is a basic pattern similar to rhythmic patterns found in India and elsewhere in the Muslim world.[211] Martin notes with reference to the work of

[206] "If you have nothing and you have never had anything then you want the, desperately, the little bit that you have, you want … gives you status, gives you a right to exist. Makes you, uhm, a person with opinions, you know, and it is yours, that, and you don't want someone else to have a part of it, you know?" Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

[207] R Mammon, "Kramer and Petersen's best yet", *Cape Times*, 21 November 2005.

[208] "And just like the language was created on the ships and in the kitchen, new rhythms from the East were mixed with the Dutch street songs, the Portuguese fado, the Malay's kroncong music." *Ghoema*, DVD.

[209] Desai, D, "'Cape Malay' music", in 5th *symposium on ethnomusicology, 30 August – 1 September 1984*, International Library of African Music, Grahamstown, 1985, pp. 40–41.

[210] DC Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, African Minds, Somerset West, 2013, pp. 351–354.

[211] See Chapter 1 for a transcription of the *ghoema* beat.

Simha Arom and Chris Ballantine that this rhythm can also be linked to the Zulu dance, *indlamu*, which is the rhythmic basis for African jazz and *mbaqanga*, as well as to, in the words of Ballantine, "the most basic and widespread drum patterns of traditional Nguni music", a rhythmic formation that plays a role in *marabi* improvisations.[212] Martin concludes:

> It suggests that the *ghoema* beat may have "imposed" itself as the basic pattern of Cape Town popular musics because it represented the smallest common denominator which appeared in overlapping areas where the diverse rhythmic sensibilities and practices of the people who co-existed at the Cape came together. The *ghoema* beat amalgamated and fused those rhythmic sensibilities and practices to provide a unifying creole pulse that pervaded most Cape Town musics.[213]

The *ghoema* drum and its characteristic beat can therefore be interpreted as symbols of creolization, evoking the memory of the diverse cultural influences that contributed to creolization at the Cape, but also demonstrating that something new had been created. The title of Taliep and Kramer's last project therefore seizes on a powerful symbol to make audiences aware of the potent cultural creativity underlying the cultural manifestations it highlights. The lyrics of "Ghoema", the title track, demonstrate a pride in a creole heritage, and an embrace of the "Kaapse mengsel" (Cape mix) flowing in one's veins. Its refrain, "Hoor hoe slaan die ghoema,"[214] is a call to acknowledge cultural intermix, and to celebrate the creole. However, the question needs to be asked whether this song, and indeed the musical as a whole, advocates the claiming of a fixed creole identity (a "creoleness"), as opposed to the acknowledgement of processes of creolization that acknowledge humans, in Glissant's words, as "a never ending change, in a perenniality that never congeals."[215]

The reference to blood flowing in one's veins in "Ghoema" can be read as a celebration of racial mixing, though the use of this metaphor does bring to mind notions of identity based on blood-lines or filial relationships. Two questions are asked in the lyrics of this song. The first, "Wie se kind is ek?",[216] strengthens the blood metaphor, suggesting a fixed identity that is closer to a creoleness than the to fluidity of Relation and creolization. Glissant writes that, unlike creolization,

[212] C Ballantine, *Marabi nights, Early South African jazz and vaudeville,* Ravan, Johannesburg, 1993, pp. 26–27, cited in Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, p. 353.
[213] Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, p. 353.
[214] "Listen to the beat of the ghoema". *Ghoema,* DVD.
[215] É Glissant, *La cohée du lamentin, Poétique V,* Gallimard, Paris, 2005, p. 25, cited in Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, p. 63.
[216] "Whose child am I?" *Ghoema*, DVD.

creoleness "is an attempt to get at Being", and futhermore, "But that would constitute a step backward in comparison with how creolizations can function [...] We are not prompted solely by the defining of our identities but by their relation to everything possible as well [...] ". [217] Indeed, there a strong emphasis in *Ghoema* on asserting an identity for slave descendants, during the course of which creole cultural formations (such as music and cuisine) are positively inscribed. According to Hein Willemse, in its continued emphasis on the uniqueness of Cape creole culture, *Ghoema* runs the danger of becoming a search for authenticity that attempts to claim a fixed identity contradictory to the transformative power of creolization.[218] However, the second question in "Ghoema", "En wie is jy?",[219] asked in response to the first, moves beyond the question of filial relationships. The impact of this question is strengthened by the request: "Mense maak jul harte oop, ons sal mekaar weer kry."[220] This suggests at least an engagement with Relation, if not yet the continuous making and re-making of identities that creolization enables.

Glissant writes about the "chaotic" aspect of Relation, linked as it is to "conscious and contradictory experience of contacts among cultures."[221] This aspect of Relation and, thereby, processes of creolization, is also present in *Ghoema*. The recurrent use of the song "Welcome to Cape Town", which contains the text "Welcome to Cape Town, enjoy the party, come on, let's have some fun, Cape Town's number one!",[222] lends a festive tone to the cultural intermix at the Cape, also suggesting a certain amount of celebratory chaos. This comes across stronger in the second half of the musical. While the characters celebrate the end of slavery after the British announcement that "dinge moet verander, hie onner oppie plaas",[223] the characters launch into a song with the following words: "Hiep hiep hoeraa, ons is deurmekaar, ons draai en swaai en ons maak lawaai in die Kaap vanaand."[224]

Martin notes that, in the context of the carnival, the concept of *deurmekaar* (confused/mixed up) connotes a sense of joy, a "mixture of extreme pleasure and freedom" at entering the world of the carnival.[225] As such, the Kramer/ Petersen use of *deurmekaar* is a reference to the Cape Coon Carnival. Having had its origins in the emancipation of slaves, this is an obvious evocation at the

[217] Glissant, *Poetics of relation,* p. 89.
[218] H Willemse, "Kreolisering en identiteit in die musiekblyspel, *Ghoema*", *Stilet,* vol. 19, no. 1, 2010, p. 38.
[219] "And who are you?" *Ghoema,* DVD.
[220] "People, open your hearts. We will find each other again." *Ghoema*, DVD.
[221] Glissant, *Poetics of relation,* p. 144.
[222] *Ghoema,* DVD.
[223] "Things much change down here on the farm" *Ghoema*, DVD.
[224] "Hiep hiep hoeraa, we are confused, we twirl and swing and we make noise in the Cape tonight." Ghoema, DVD.
[225] DC Martin, *Coon carnival: New year in Cape Town, past and present*, David Philip Publishers, Cape Town, 1999, p. 39.

corresponding point in the musical. However, seen in the context of *Ghoema,* this sentence, perhaps more than any other, illustrates the powerlessness of the Cape slaves during colonial times, and their attempt to come to terms with the external forces that had the power to shape their daily lives. Apart from the physical and emotional violence that slaves had to endure under their masters, it was their powerlessness that forced them to adapt and to incorporate aspects of other cultures into their own. This resonates with the ideas of Kamau Brathwaite who, as discussed in Chapter 3, introduced the idea of creolization "to account for cultural processes in the course of which the confrontation of cultures was not only cruel, but also creative".[226] Chaos is not understood here as having no underlying logic, as Glissant notes: " ... the way Chaos itself goes around is the opposite of what is ordinarily understood by 'chaotic' and that it opens onto a new phenomenon: Relation, or totality in evolution, whose order is continually in flux and whose disorder one can imagine forever."[227]

In 2006, the year following the South African productions of *Ghoema*, Taliep released his first solo CD since Tribute in 1997. *Deur dik en dun* was recorded with a band comprised of Paul Petersen, Errol Dyers, Gammie Lakay, Alvin Hendricks, Warrick Hawkins, Andre Ziervogel, Camillo Lombard, Ivan Bell, Robbie Jansen and Victor Khula.[228] The "choir" that joins Taliep on some tracks consists of Terry Hector, Elspeth Davids, Ruth Hector, Bronwyn Feliz and *Alie Barber* cast members Luqmaan Adams and Emraan Adams.[229] *Deur dik en dun* is essentially a collection of songs taken from the second series of *Alie Barber* sung in the original Afrikaans. The first song on the album, "Two for the price of one", was in fact composed by David Kramer and Taliep two years earlier, initially as a play-out to the first act of the 2004 production of *Poison*, and sung at the *Ons kruis paaie* concert later that year.[230] In an interview conduced with Taliep early in February 2006, he explained his decision to record an Afrikaans album as follows: "As ek myself régtig wil uitdruk, dan is dit in Afrikaans, want dan's ek eerlik met my gevoelens."[231] In another interview published in *Die Huisgenoot*, Taliep stated that *Deur dik en dun* was recorded after Mynie Grové encouraged him to release an album, and represented an important milestone in his life: "Dit het twee jaar gekos en ek het gehuil toe dit klaar was. Ek was so trots."[232] However, with the release of this

[226] Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, p. 61.
[227] Glissant, *Poetics of relation,* p. 133.
[228] T Petersen, *Deur dik en dun,* CD liner notes, FremantleMedia in association with Bowline Records and KykNET, Cape Town, 2005.
[229] Petersen, *Deur dik en dun,* CD liner notes.
[230] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, Tafelberg, p. 268.
[231] "If I really want to express myself, then it is in Afrikaans, because then I am honest with my feelings." Retief, "Afrikaans deur dik en dun", *Rapport.*
[232] "It cost me two years and I cried when it was finished. I was so proud." H Muller, "Tempo: Fokus op Taliep Petersen", *Die Huisgenoot*, 9 February 2006.

album, Grové's concerns about the Afrikaans music community not knowing Taliep as a solo singer, and Binge's assertion – "So was sy reputasie eintlik maar net in die bruin gemeenskap"[233] – proved to be true. In an interview recorded for the Afrikaans program, *Kwêla*, the following exchange took place between him and the interviewer.[234] She states, "Taliep, ons ken jou as musiekmens, maar nie as 'n sanger nie."[235] There is a pause, then Taliep replies, "My lewe lank was ek 'n sanger. Ek is 'n kind van die klopse. Van die tyd van die Sarie awards! Ek was altyd 'n sanger."[236]

In 2006, Grové once again approached Taliep to ask for his participation in a television show. This time, it was KykNET's *Afrikaanse Idols*, based on the UK *Idols*-series, a televised talent competition that gives unknown singers the opportunity to participate series of knockout rounds until only one contestant remains as supposed superstar.[237] In May 2006, Taliep was joined by his fellow judges Grové and Deon Maas with the first episode of KykNET's *Afrikaanse Idols*. Because of its commercial focus, KykNET's *Afrikaanse Idols* was one of the first opportunities for a large audience of Afrikaans-speakers to hear Taliep speaking *Kaaps*, not repeating rehearsed lines, but communicating on a one-to-one basis with his fellow judges and the contestants. Perhaps demonstrating the slow acceptance of different dialects in an environment where notions of cultural purity continued to have currency, Taliep's use of *Kaaps* on television did not escape criticism. In defence of Taliep's language use, singer and television personality (who had recently been appointed as the Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuurvereniging's, or ATKV's, executive director) Coenie de Villiers, stated in an interview:

> Báie mense het gekla jinne, Taliep Petersen praat darem 'n nek-omdraai Afrikaans. My vraag is: ís dit? Praat Taliep Engels? Nee, hy praat Kaapse Afrikaans, en al is dit nie Standaard-afrikaans nie, moet daar tog 'n húís darvoor wees. Weet jy wanneer is 'n taal in die moeilikheid? As jy 'n draad om hom span.[238]

[233] "So his reputation was actually only in the coloured community." Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.
[234] "A tribute to a klopse man: Taliep Petersen", *Youtube*, n.d., accessed on 20 June 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SuNRFvqQtQ.
[235] "Taliep, we know you as a music person, but not as a singer." "A tribute to a klopse man: Taliep Petersen", *Youtube.*
[236] "I have been a singer for my entire life. I am a child of the klopse. From the time of the Sarie awards! I was always a singer." "A tribute to a klopse man: Taliep Petersen", *Youtube.*
[237] Although *Idols* originated in the UK, South Africa was one of the first countries to buy the franchise and screen their own local version in 2002. However, when MNet decided not to present an English version that year, KykNET saw an opportunity to present an Afrikaans version. Interview with Herman Binge, 17 December 2012.
[238] "A lot of people complained, wow, Taliep Petersen speaks a neck-wringing Afrikaans. My question is: is it? Does Taliep speak English? No, he speaks Cape Afrikaans, and even if it isn't standard Afrikaans, there has to be a home for it. Do you know when a language is in trouble? When you erect a fence around it." H Retief, "50 en reg vir die volgende skof", *Rapport*, 12 November 2006.

Figure 70: Taliep giving his opinion as one of the judges on KykNET's *Afrikaanse Idols*, 2006.
SOURCE: KykNET

According to Binge, Taliep took a sympathetic stance towards the *Idols* hopefuls.[239] Grové recalls that Taliep was only harsh when someone was disrespectful of the opportunity to take part in *Idols*, or treated their own talent with diffidence.[240] Later, *Idols* contestants would claim that Taliep had always been very encouraging. One would state: "Hy het 'n passie vir musiek gehad, maar ek dink sy passie vir mense was groter."[241] During the *Idols* auditions held in Windhoek, Namibia, Binge received a call from Taliep's wife, Najwa, who stated that she and their only child, seven-year old Zaynab, were being held up at gunpoint by a man who demanded that Taliep resign as judge.[242] Coming in the wake of telephonic threats the previous week, this incident was widely reported on by the press.[243] However, Binge remembers that Taliep, after speaking to Najwa as well as to his children, declined to return home, ostensibly recognizing this incident as a thinly veiled attempt on the side of his wife to have him return home.[244] According to Grové, Taliep's

[239] Interview with Herman Binge, 17 December 2012.
[240] Questionnaire completed by Mynie Grové, 27 May 2013.
[241] "He had a passion for music, but I think his passion for people was greater." I Fredericks, "Hy was 'n pa vir ons, sê finaliste van Idols", *Die Burger,* 18 December 2006.
[242] Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.
[243] G Prins, "'Idols' se Taliep afgedreig", *Rapport,* 21 May 2006.
[244] Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

marriage was under strain during this time because of Najwa's possessiveness: "She disrupted the entire production from the onset and caused Taliep great embarrassment. Privately he was heartbroken because he loved her so much ... "[245] This was not the first indication of a marriage under strain, or a man struggling to regain some independence in his personal life. Three years earlier, Taliep had written the following in his daily planner:

> Independence – Lost Control – To [*sic*] Many people involved/ Cost – over capitalizing –/ Don't want unnecessary debt./ Scale down to what is necessary/ Never wanted to be answerable to anyone. Don't ever want to eg./ What do I need – e.g. Size of house, where, Cost, environment/ What do I want eg. will investment grow, long term good location?/ Get Freedom from all involvement which bring unhappiness (continuous growing)/ Willing to assist – but wish to retain the right to refuse and be respected for decisions taken./ Re-focus on long term aspirations, career/ Reclaim independance [*sic*] e.g. Assetts [*sic*] etc./
>
> Communication becoming (for some time) difficult./ "Half stories" when dialogue doesn't go in "planned" direction – Either becomes silent, busy on "other important things", moody, Re-attempt in a round about fashion – Vital information held back./ Suttle [*sic*] domineering mannerism, Conveniently deaf, Just doesn't answer questions eg. alarm code?/ Seen to want to make all decisions.[246]

Taliep and Grové's fellow judge, Deon Maas, would later state that he had noticed a scar from an old knife-wound on Taliep's neck, a scar that Maas described as indicative of a wound that was inflicted by someone who had wanted to kill.[247] When Maas asked why he wasn't dead yet, Taliep had answered that he had not been ready to go. Though unknown to the majority of the people in Taliep's life, that wound had been inflicted by Najwa on the night of 13 April 2006. Immediately after this incident, Najwa was admitted to the Crescent Clinic (a private psychiatric clinic) for three weeks, while Taliep moved into a separate bedroom, and his older children who were living with them at the time, moved out of the house.[248] Taliep began spending more time with his children from his first marriage, and with their mother, Madeegha.[249] Grové describes Taliep as follows during this time: "He was a deeply spiritual man, adored his kids and wanted to take charge of his home life that was falling apart. He was remorseful about choices made in his younger days

[245] Questionnaire completed by Mynie Grové, 27 May 2013.
[246] T Petersen, *2003 Diary*, daily planner with handwritten notes, 28–29 July 2003, Taliep Petersen Archive.
[247] "'Hy was 'n jintelman, 'n profeet, 'n leier...'", *Die Burger,* 18 December 2006.
[248] J Desai, *Criminal case no. 02/08*, In the High Court of South Africa (Cape of Good Hope Provincial Division), 2008, p. 10.
[249] Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

and was honest about what he was going through."[250] Jawaahier remarked that her father attempted to draw his family together, reconnecting with his eldest daughter, Natasha Foster and explaining to his children that they had to look after each other the way he had tried to look after his own siblings: "If one goes up, all go up. If you are driving three cars and your sister is taking the bus, you make sure she has a car. And one day when you've got kids, julle kyk uit vi mekaar se kinders."[251]

Figure 71: The four Petersen children from Taliep's first marriage – (from left to right) A'eesha, Mogamat Ashur, Jawaahier and Fatiema, 2009.
SOURCE: Photograph by Ridhaa Damon

With KykNET's *Afrikaans Idols* completed, Taliep travelled to London to attend the opening night of *Ghoema* at the Tricycle Theatre in London on 11 December 2006. He returned to South Africa on 14 December, leaving David and Renaye Kramer to keep an eye on the production.[252] On 16 December 2006, Taliep was found murdered in his Grasmere Street home in Athlone. He had a single gunshot wound to his head, his mouth was stuffed with cloth and his hands and feet were bound with cable ties and electric cabling.[253] A shaken Najwa, together with the rest of the occupants of the house, told police about the armed robbery that took place

250 Questionnaire completed by Mynie Grové, 27 May 2013.
251 " ... you watch out for each other's children". Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2013.
252 De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography*, p. 271.
253 M Peters, "The puzzle pieces that police must fit together", *Weekend Argus*, 23 December 2006.

at the house that night and which led to the shooting.[254] Believing Taliep to be a victim of random crime, South Africans reacted in shock and horror to the state of the country. Western Cape Premiere Ebrahim Rassool hailed Petersen as "one of the great gifts of our community to the nation", stating that provincial government would do more to fight violent crime, though he conceded that "I will be the first to admit that we are dealing with a generation of gangsters and criminals whose souls have been perverted to the extent that they respect no one."[255]

What was particularly shocking and puzzling to Taliep's close friends was the fact that Taliep's standing in the community and his work with convicted prisoners had not safeguarded him against an act of violence that would take his life.[256] Outrage over Taliep's death was voiced by family, fans, friends, community leaders and fellow musicians, such as singer Koos Kombuis who stated: "Hy was 'n brugbouer, die soort mens wat ons vandag in Suid-Afrika nodig het, en dis hoe hy onthou moet word."[257] Kombuis also wrote a song about Taliep's death that reflects on the irony that Taliep was murdered on Reconciliation Day, a public holiday intended as a celebration of reconciliation in the wake of apartheid, essentially a post-1994 replacement of *Geloftedag*, a religious holiday that had commemorated the Afrikaners' victory over of the Zulus in 1838. The first two verses of Kombuis's "Reconciliation Day" read as follows:

> Taliep Taliep/ Is laasnag in die kop geskiet/ Hulle sê dit was 'n hit/ So sê sy pa/ Taliep Taliep/ Hy was die man met die music/ Hy was die guru van die ghoemalied in Suid-Afrika/ Ons voel so mismoedig/ Ons is so hartseer en so droewig/ Ons is so kwaad en so moerig/ Want ons wonder waar is die law/ Van vroeg tot laat/ Is daar net gangs in die straat/ Wat help dit om te praat/ Ons is in 'n state of war. [258]

In their search for Taliep's killer, police eventually began to investigate Taliep's wife. On 1 December 2008, Najwa Dirk[259] was charged with Taliep's premeditated murder along with two hit men, Abdoer Raasiet Emjedi and Walleed Hassen, while a third accomplice, Jefferson Tion Snyders, was charged with robbery with

[254] J Desai, *Criminal Case no. 02/08*.
[255] "'This is a monumental loss to a nation'", Cape Times, 18 December 2006.
[256] Interview with Howard Links, 6 February 2013.
[257] "He was a bridge builder, the sort of person that we need in South Africa today, and that's how he should be remembered." "Bekendes se menings", Die Burger, 3 December 2008.
[258] "Taliep Taliep/ Was shot in the head last night/ They say it was a hit/ So his father says/ Taliep Taliep/ He was the man with the music/ He was the guru of the *ghoemalied* in South Africa/ We feel so despondent/ We are so sad and so depressed/ We are so angry and so pissed-off/ Because we wonder where is the law/ From early till late/ There are only gangs in the street/ What does it help to speak up/ We are in a state of war." K Kombuis, *Bloedrivier*, CD audio recording, Select Music, Cape Town, 2008.
[259] Najwa's maiden name is used here as, during the trial, she allegedly preferred to be addressed as such.

aggravating circumstances.[260] It emerged in court that Najwa had worked through state-witness Fahiem Hendricks to order a hit on Taliep. Although the state failed to determine who had pulled the trigger that night, the final possibilities were narrowed down to Hassen or Najwa herself.[261] As indicated in the criminal case files, the state could not prove a motive beyond reasonable doubt, though evidence offered in court pointed towards financial matters. In 2000, Taliep had given Najwa permission to henceforth control his financial affairs.[262] As such, any money that Taliep earned from his work was either paid to Najwa or to her family business, "Dirk Fruit", which, as it emerged in court, was involved in black market dollar deals[263] and, as some of Taliep's family members pointed out during interviews,[264] of smuggling diamonds hidden in paw-paws out of Namibia.[265]

In 2006, Taliep had no properties registered in his name, and less than R20 000 in his bank account.[266] As discussed earlier, Taliep and Najwa's relationship was under severe strain, and several interviewees indicated that Taliep had wanted to part ways with Najwa, either by divorce or by moving out of the house. As they had been married within community of property, Najwa would have had to give Taliep 50% of her estate.[267] Alternatively, if Taliep was only going to buy his own house and move out, he needed money. This has led some of Taliep's friends and family to surmise that the hit was ordered because Taliep wanted his money back and, in the process, might have been willing to blow the whistle on Dirk Fruit's illegal activities.[268] There was also a life insurance policy valued at R5,3 million at the time, of which the couple's child, Zaynab (who was nine years old at the time of her mother's conviction) was the sole beneficiary.[269] In 2009, Najwa was sentenced by Judge Siraj Desai to twenty eight years in prison.[270]

Numerous interviewees have claimed that Taliep had a premonition about his death. According to Binge, Taliep spoke to him frequently about death, reassuring his friend with the following words: "Horie, as ek iets oorkom dan moet julle

[260] J Desai, *Criminal Case no. 02/08*, pp. 211–212.
[261] J Desai, *Criminal Case no. 02/08*, pp. 208–209.
[262] J Desai, *Criminal Case no. 02/08*, p. 67.
[263] J Desai, *Criminal Case no. 02/08*, p. 72.
[264] Interview with Ma'atoema Groenmeyer, 21 May 2012.
[265] In court, Najwa had claimed that Taliep was also involved in illegal activities, and had lost a lot of money on "bad dollar deals, diamond deals and other money making schemes," though it was later ascertained that she had supplied this information at a stage in the trial during which she had been trying to pin Taliep's murder on a failed diamond deal. Taliep was never officially connected with any of these activities. Desai, *Criminal Case no. 02/08*, p. 76.
[266] Desai, *Criminal Case no. 02/08*, p. 11.
[267] Desai, *Criminal Case no. 02/08*, p. 76.
[268] Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.
[269] Desai, *Criminal Case no. 02/08*, p. 46.
[270] "Najwa gets 28 years for husband's murder", *Mail & Guardian,* 11 February 2009.

nie oor my worry nie want ek is baie reg om te gaan. My saak is reg, ek spandeer baie baie tyd daaraan."[271] Jawaahier remembers that she was very uneasy on the day her father died, stating that he had taken his four children from his first marriage to a mall, and had shown extraordinary patience (which was unusual for him) in accommodating all their diverse wishes. He also had personal conversations with each of them in which he pointedly expressed his pride in and love for them, finally causing Jawaahier to ask him whether everything was alright: "Now that I think about it, and I remember the day that he died, I thought to myself, 'Is this man going to die?'"[272] She also notes that, during his last performance in the Luxurama Theatre on the night before his death (during which he also sang with his son Mogamat Ashur) Taliep had bowed and thanked the audience more than usual, finally taking the microphone to Emraan Adams to sing the last song, "Klop klop" from *District Six: The musical*, as Jawaahier points out, "almost as if he is handing over the reigns to Emo."[273] Indeed, according to Binge, Adams currently occupies a place in the Afrikaans music scene that was to a great extent prepared for him by Taliep. Binge makes it clear that Taliep encouraged Adams to sing in Afrikaans, and had prepared him to take up his role.[274] Significantly, it was also Adams who stepped in to take Taliep's place in the *Kaapse jol* show that was staged as a part of the *Suidoosterfees* in the January after Taliep's death.[275]

With Taliep's passing, a host of potential projects were suspended. According to Binge, his and Taliep's endeavour to promote *Kaaps* and facilitate the reclaiming of Afrikaans by formerly oppressed communities was only in its beginning stages in 2006. He reflects on this as follows: "Ek dink nie dat dit naastenby bereik wat dit sou kon bereik as 'n mens bietjie van 'n groter volume werk daaragter kon sit en dit op 'n bietjie meer van 'n uitgebreide basis kon doen nie."[276] Apart from the projects already mentioned in this chapter, Binge points out that Taliep and Kramer had been in the process of writing another musical that would focus on the *langarm* music tradition of the Western Cape coloured communities, something that also would have led to another documentary on the same subject.[277] Taliep had also been writing a musical about the The Big House, the

[271] "Listen, if something happens to me then you mustn't worry about me because I am very ready to go. My issue is sorted out, I am spending a lot of time on it." Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.
[272] Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2013.
[273] Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2013.
[274] Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.
[275] M Malan, "Emo Adams in Taliep se skoene", *Beeld*, 17 January 2007.
[276] "I don't think that it achieved nearly what it could have if one had been able to put a larger volume of work behind it and could have done it on a bit more of an extended basis." Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.
[277] Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

place that his mother and younger siblings had moved to after her divorce from Mogamat Ladien in the 1950s.[278] Jawaahier relates that, to her best knowledge, Taliep was embarking on this project without a collaborator: "And I think it was such a personal story to him that he wanted that, to do it on his own. To come from him. Somebody else wouldn't get it, making one pot of food and feeding all thirteen kids in the house."[279]

In this dissertation, oral testimonies about Taliep were treated as created texts, stories fashioned by storytellers in an attempt to create coherence from the diverse threads of a life lived. As Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson note: "In telling, they need to make sense of the past. That demands a selecting, ordering, and simplifying, a construction of the coherent narrative whose logic works to draw the life story towards the fable."[280] As first mentioned in Chapter 1, what has emerged from these stories are the ideal conditions for a rags to riches myth. From the early days in District Six, when hard labour, poverty and a sense of community were defining characteristics of Taliep's experience, through to the early years when he struggled as a performer in 1970s and 1980s apartheid South Africa, he emerged in the 1990s and at the start of the twenty-first century as an opinion former and a leader of his community. And despite Taliep's leap in the social and financial strata of South African society, he never (despite a short stint in the so-called "Millionaire's Row" in Rondebosch-East) moved into the upmarket suburbs of Cape Town proper, preferring to remain in Athlone, a suburb central to his community. Binge recalls that this was a conscious decision: "Hy't nou genoeg geld gehad om daar uit te kom, hy kon nou in die wit buurt gaan bly, maar hy wou nie dit doen nie [...] Hy wou liewer 'n groot huis daar bou, maar in die gemeenskap bly."[281] This only adds to the rags to riches myth: the poor boy became a successful man but never forgot where he came from.

The powerful trajectory of the story that has unfolded as embodiment of this myth is illustrated by the following example: In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Taliep, who was a self-made musician, nonetheless had a desperate need for formal qualifications and ended up mythologizing his formal musical education in England. In December 2007 Taliep and David Kramer were awarded honorary

[278] Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2013.
[279] Interview with Jawaahier Petersen, 6 February 2013.
[280] R Samuel & P Thompson, "Introduction", in R Samuel & P Thompson (eds), *The myths we live by*, Routledge, London, 1990, p. 8.
[281] He had enough money to get out of there, he could live in the white suburb, but he didn't want to do it [...] He would rather build a big house there, but stay in the community." Interview with Herman Binge, 8 June 2013.

doctorates from the University of Cape Town. The degree was awarded to Taliep posthumously, his gown and cap occupying his seat in the auditorium where he had first met David Kramer in the 1970s.[282] Taliep's unexpected death does not detract from his myth, but adds to it, opening up tantalizing questions about the future that can never be answered. As noted earlier in this dissertation, myth is understood here not as something that is untrue, but as a powerful force capable of shaping individual lives, as well as the course of history. According to Samuel and Thompson, myth and memory are not merely clues about the past, but also "windows on the making and remaking of individual and collective consciousness, in which both fact and fantasy, past and present, each has its part."[283] The powerful place that Taliep's life occupies in the imaginary of South Africa, and perhaps specifically in the community that he grew up in, is explained through this paradigm. Taliep became the embodiment of a powerful myth. His life demonstrated that a formerly oppressed citizen of South Africa could rise above circumstances and achieve success, moreover, that said success could be achieved through inter-racial collaboration.

Throughout this chapter, Taliep is frequently described as having been a bridge-builder. In a country where communication outside of apartheid racial categories remains a challenge, Taliep demonstrated that he was not only capable of building personal relationships with people from different backgrounds and races; he also succeeded in developing a shared vision with them, of which the outcome would be the numerous collaborative projects that he completed in his life. As illustrated by the projects discussed in this chapter, Taliep's legacy is not only that he created awareness of coloured Afrikaans culture within the white Afrikaans community, but that this created space for other coloured artists, such as Adams, to find a home within a market that was already open to a recognition of the commonalities between these two communities. The question arises whether Taliep's bridges would also have extended into the English communities, or into the communities whose tongues yearn for their native African languages, some of which are more severely marginalized than Afrikaans. For to be an effective bridge-builder in twenty-first century South Africa arguably means to build outside of language communities, to embrace the linguistic diversity that is the legacy of South Africa's complex history.

[282] De Villiers & Slabbert, *David Kramer: A biography,* p. 272.
[283] Samuel & Thompson, "Introduction", p. 21.

One of the most important themes in the work discussed in this chapter was the reclaiming of Afrikaans by a formerly oppressed community, from whom this language had in a sense been expropriated. By discarding normative standards for Afrikaans, Taliep attempted to combat conceptions that *Kaaps* was inferior to standard Afrikaans. The projects of the twenty-first century were also concerned with presenting cultural manifestations from his community to a larger public. This was done not only to create awareness of their existence, but also to demonstrate their history, thereby positing the coloured population as central players in South Africa's past, and not liminal in-betweeners who could claim no history of their own. This is where the claiming of a slave heritage, increasingly dealt with in the final years of his life, became important. Operating within Wicomb's dialectics of shame versus pride,[284] Taliep was endeavouring to help his community to take pride in their history, to assert their culture and thereby become empowered to change their hitherto marginalized position in the socio-political context of South Africa.

In this, the sounding of Cape Town musics, Taliep's *eichikelei*, and all manifestations of the *ghoema* beat, play a role. Because of the *ghoema* beat's association with formerly marginalized communities, its unmistakable sound is an assertion of culture and history, demonstrating the social power of music. As Martin notes with reference to Glissant, the *ghoema* beat is "an illustration that creolisation processes fuelled by such cross-fertilisation can also nurture identity configuration and provide material for reconstructing identities based on the recovering of self-esteem and pride, and yet construed not as 'unique root' (racine unique) identities but as rhizomatous, complementary and nested identities."[285] For, as discussed in the previous chapter, the principle behind Glissant's poetics of relation is Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome, which offers an alternative to notions of the tap root by suggesting an underground network of roots that facilitates multiple connections in different directions.[286]

In exploring Caribbean identity formation, Stuart Hall argues that cultural identities are "the unstable points of identification or suture" made within cultural and historical discourses: "Not an essence, but a positioning."[287] To rethink the positionings of Caribbean identity, Hall employs a metaphor from Aimé Césaire and Léopold Senghor to distinguish between "*Présence Africaine", "Présence*

[284] Wicomb, "Shame and identity: The case of the coloured in South Africa", pp. 91–107.
[285] Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, identity and politics in South Africa*, pp. 353–354.
[286] See G Deleuze & F Guattari, *A thousand plateaus,* trans. B Massumi, Continuum, London, 1987, pp. 3-28.
[287] S Hall, "Cultural identity and diaspora", in J Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, culture, difference,* Lawrence & Wishart, 1990, p. 226.

Européenne" and "*Présence Americaine".*[288] The first of these, *Présence Africaine,* refers to the forever lost place of origin that has been silenced by the experiences of slavery. Hall warns that "Africa" has been transformed through history and cannot simply be recovered in its "original" state. The only return possible is "by another route", to an "Africa" that has been shaped in the New World, "as we re-tell it through politics, memory and desire."[289] The European presence is that of domination, that which does not only exert external power, but which has been inscribed within. Hall describes this colonializing presence as follows within popular cultural life: "It is always-already fused, syncretised, with other cultural elements. It is always already-creolised ... "[290] The third presence, *Présence Americaine* refers to the "New World", the territory in which cultural tributaries meet, the "place of many, continuous displacements", not only of its "original" inhabitants, but also of those displaced to the New World through slavery and colonization. [291] Significantly, this third presence is also "the space where the creolisations and syncretisms were negotiated".[292]

I would like to argue that an adaptation of these presences can be applied to the identity positionings of South Africans who claim a slave ancestry, specifically those designated Cape Malay during apartheid. In this setting, *Présence Africaine* becomes the East, the site of longing and once-belonging that is suppressed but of which fragments remain embedded in the religion, language and cultural forms of a displaced people. For Taliep, as for many Africans who were displaced by the Atlantic slave trade to the Caribbean, that presence demanded the attempt at a symbolic return. In his case, this would find its clearest expression in the projects discussed in the previous chapter, *Tribute* and *Two worlds – One heart. Tribute* was an attempt at identification with the broader Muslim world, and an affirmation of the supposed religion of Taliep's ancestors. *Two worlds – One heart* was a physical return to Taliep's paternal ancestral home, but more significantly, as its name implies, an attempt at a core identification – of the heart – with the country from which his ancestors had been dislocated. However, Taliep's journey, like that of the symbolic Caribbean journey as described by Hall, was necessarily circular.

Présence Européenne is a presence shared equally by Caribbean peoples and by non-European South Africans. It is that which has become internalized through domination, and from which a complete escape is impossible. The history of

[288] Hall, "Cultural identity and diaspora", p. 230.
[289] Hall, "Cultural identity and diaspora", p. 232.
[290] Hall, "Cultural identity and diaspora", p. 233.
[291] Hall, "Cultural identity and diaspora", p. 234.
[292] Hall, "Cultural identity and diaspora", p. 234.

this presence in the imaginary of South African slave descendants goes back to the first memory of slavery. And, as described by Hall, this presence is "always-already creolised"[293] in cultural life, manifest in the South African situation in, for example, the altered Dutch texts and harmonic structure of *nederlandsliedjies* and in the Afrikaans language. As Hall notes with reference to Homi Bhabha, this presence was responsible for inscribing the "'otherness' of the self" onto colonial identity. But it was also an important part of the cultural manifestations that Taliep claimed as his own, always-already forming a part of his cultural identification, making escape impossible, indeed ultimately undesirable. In South Africa, the effects of this presence accrued an added complexity when during apartheid, its domination had the effect of making the coloured population implicit in dominating the black population. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the result was a position of simultaneous advantage and disadvantage, a position from which extraction is particularly difficult.

In a South African setting, the third of the presences discussed by Hall, *Présence Americaine*, or the New World, becomes Africa. It is the territory of displacements, whether of slave descendants or native Africans, the place of cultural encounter where creolization took place and still continues. However, unlike the Caribbean, which Hall describes as a place emptied by colonizers and where the cultural tributaries of peoples from elsewhere met, the South African third presence was decidedly not empty. Nonetheless, from the perspective of slave descendants, Africa was the ground to which they were displaced, and where cultural encounter took place. Taliep's projects in the twenty-first century reflect a preoccupation with the equivalent of this third presence, the South African space of creolization. Although projects such as *Ghoema* and his proposed slave documentary are concerned with slave origins, the preoccupation with a symbolic return to the East has been replaced with a celebration of creolized beginnings on a new continent. This approach is one identified by Glissant in a discussion of the cultural strategies of transplanted communities. As opposed to a longing for supposed origins or failure to recognize forms of domination as they are exerted on such a community, he advocates for a "return to the point from which we started [...] not a return to the longing for origins, to some immutable state of Being, but a return to the point of entanglement, from which we were forcefully turned away, that is where we must ultimately put to work the forces of creolization, or perish"[294]

[293] Hall, "Cultural identity and diaspora", p. 233.
[294] É Glissant, *Caribbean discourse: Selected essays,* trans. JM Dash, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1989, p. 26.

Even though Taliep had invested considerable energy in his last years in advocating the claiming of a slave heritage and unique Cape Town sounds formed through processes of creolization, he was also celebrating District Six and contemporary South African spaces, like the Salt River of *Alie Barber*. This did not constitute a turning away from the "point of entanglement" but, as demonstrated in this chapter, an exploration of difficulties in contemporary South Africa that are the legacy of its past. *Alie Barber* also represented the claiming of a space in the imaginary of its people, located not in a longed-for golden age represented by District Six, but in a contemporary suburb where the coloured community is trying to assert a place for itself in a post-apartheid dispensation while "retaining the particularity of their colouredness".[295] In this and other productions for television, such as *O'se Distrik 6,* Taliep also continued to celebrate the diverse musical influences, often of American origin, that he came into contact with as a child. Here one could conceivably theorize a fourth presence impacting on the positioning of slave descendants' identity formations in South Africa – the American presence that exerted such a powerful cultural force in the form of popular mass culture. The power of this presence was twofold: it signified an engagement with the world outside the borders of South Africa and came to symbolize a place with equal opportunities for all, even for former slave descendants. The continued identification with this presence is demonstrated by the repertoire that Taliep sang throughout his life: During his last performance on 15 December 2006, he sang Kramer/Petersen compositions, such as "Queen of hearts" from *District Six: The musical*, but also Henry Mancini's "Moon river", Mitch Leigh/Joe Darion's "The impossible dream" and Jimmy Fontana's "Il mondo", the song that had made him famous in his youth.[296]

In these pages, Taliep's identity has been theorized as rhizomatic, characterized by multiplicity and opposed to any notion of hierarchy or primary rootedness. As noted in the previous chapter, the rhizome can be conceptualized as a map, embodying possibility and "orientated towards an experimentation."[297] I would like to posit my adaptation of Hall's *Présences* as located on Taliep's map, never as final destinations, but as coordinates in relation to which he could position himself. As Deleuze and Guattari write: "The tree imposes the verb 'to be,' but the fabric of a rhizome is the conjunction, 'and ... and ... and ...' This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb 'to be.'"[298] It is productive to

[295] Ahluwalia & Zegeye, "Between black and white: rethinking coloured identity," p. 277.
[296] Telephonic communication with Jawaahier Petersen, 19 June 2013.
[297] Deleuze & Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 13.
[298] Deleuze & Guattari, *A thousand plateaus,* p. 27.

view Taliep's diverse projects and considerable output through this paradigm, always noting that he never reached a final destination, or one supposedly superior to another. And although he frequently spoke about making "local" music that was typically South African, he demonstrated time and time again the complexities inherent in assigning musical authenticity to a South African setting, choosing instead to engage with Anglo-American music and *ghoema*-influenced Cape Town musics, affirming his identity in the Islamic faith and celebrating an Afrikaans identity through *Kaaps*. For Taliep's multiple identifications throughout the years – be it the District Six, Anglo-American musical sophistication, slavery, Islam, Afrikaans, or creolized cultural formations – all represent different branches of Taliep's rhizome identity, different lines of flight, or possible paths on a map.

… and … and … and …

After driving a short distance behind Mogamat Ladien Petersen, or Boeta Diempie, as I have begun to call him, I park my car at the entrance to the Vygieskraal Cemetery in Johnston Road, Athlone. Boeta Diempie walks over to me, then leans against the car, lights a cigarette and hands it to me. We smoke together in silence. My eye catches a sign up at the entrance of the graveyard indicating that no corpses or limbs may be buried without prior permission.

We wind our way through the rows and rows of tightly packed graves, a landscape of sand, headstones and flowers. We stop at the grave – a patch of grass with a marble headstone – where Taliep and his mother Jawaahier are buried, and Boeta Diempie bows his head. With all the excitement of a dedicated researcher visiting a key site, I take out my camera and begin to take photos of the scene. It is a poignant picture – the figure of Boeta Diempie, standing alone in the graveyard with the sand covering his neatly polished shoes and his long shadow falling across Taliep's tombstone. His eyes are tightly closed. It is then that I notice Boeta Diempie's lips moving and begin to hear his gentle intonation. He is praying.

I am ashamed. Here I am, in the presence of a man with leathery hands who tells me that God comes first and that I must remember where I come from, a man who believes that women should be seen and not heard, a man who has spoken about apartheid with a quietly focused anger tempered by a stoical determination to make the best out of any situation. This is a man who has let me pry into his life, and here, at the burial site of his first son and first wife, I am taking photos with the detachment of a researcher. I put away my camera and stand quietly next to him. With my eyes closed, I try to imagine what we look like – an eighty-three-year-old Cape Malay Muslim wearing his best shirt, dress shoes and fez, and a twenty-six-year-old white girl with dirty sneakers, a poor boy cap and a yellow backpack.

And I am conscious of the shifting sands beneath my feet.

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