

# MANIFESTATIONS OF 'LANGARM': FROM COLONIAL ROOTS TO CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES

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by

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of the late Willie Jales who was and remains the inspiration for this work. It was while interviewing Willie Jales in 2004 for my honours thesis on Christmas Choirs that my attention was first brought to the existence of the early string bands of Cape Town, which according to Willie Jales, functioned as ‘Langarm’ dance bands and whose members, who hailed from the so-called Coloured population of Cape Town, invariably played in both the dance bands as well as the Christmas Choirs, around Christmas time. The same musicians would moonlighted as the bands for the Cape Malay *Nagtroupe* or the *Klopse* (the ‘Coons’ as they are also known locally) on New Year’s Eve after midnight and during New Year’s Day. Willie Jales in his generosity of spirit, counted me as both a friend and a lover of the Cape music that was so close to his heart. I was honoured to be his friend. We maintained our friendship through telephone contact over the years that we were acquainted. Some of my lasting memories are of our telephone conversations just prior to and after his performance as guest artist of Abdullah Ibrahim (known in the 1950s and ‘60s as Dollar Brand) at the Baxter theatre in early 2013, just weeks before his passing. He shared with me his heart-felt and personal feelings about the honour of being invited to play with the world-renowned Abdullah, who Willie Jales and his peers from District Six always affectionately referred to as ‘Dollar’.



Figure 1 The late Willie Jales (Lt) and the author (Rt), circa early 2012.

Willie Jales' driving passion, in the last fifteen years of his life, was to try to ensure that the legacy of the so-called Coloured 'Langarm' dance bands of the Cape would be rescued from its relative obscurity and receive the recognition that it deserved. I am honoured to be able to go some small way towards fulfilling Willie Jales' desire to see this history unpacked and preserved. In this regard a special word of thanks goes to Valmont Layne for his superlative efforts in conjunction with Willie Jales, of interviewing many of the last remaining pioneers of jazz and dance music in the Cape during the late 1990s and early 2000s.

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# DECLARATION

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## ABSTRACT

Use of the term 'Langarm' by various cultural groups in South Africa has tended to problematize the meaning of the term and therefore precipitated research into the term's relation to Ballroom dancing amongst the so-called Coloured community of the Cape, who it appears, have claimed this moniker as their own. This research has revealed a strong tradition of high quality Ballroom dancing to which the Afrikaans speaking sector of this community attached the moniker 'Langarm' at an unknown point in time, but certainly for the greater part of the twentieth century.

Research uncovered music and dance with deep colonial roots heavily influenced by the practice of slavery and an emerging creole culture in a thoroughly slave based society. Central to this history was the musicianship of the slaves and the lasting influence these musicians had on the Contredanse, the Quadrille and other Square Dances which it appears were introduced to the Cape by the French in the late 1700s and re-introduced by the British in the early 1800s and which remained integral to 'Langarm' practice in Cape Town until the late 1960s. Quadrille music was, by its nature, instrumental music which spawned this particular creole history of instrumental dance music at the Cape, not only amongst the creole or so-called Coloured community but also amongst the colonialist Cape-Dutch or latterly Afrikaner community whose dance music become known as *boeremusiek*.

So-called Coloured or Cape Malay Quadrille Band String Orchestras were, it appears, active for dances from the 1850s into the early 1900s. The American 'dance craze' of the early 1900s and its new African American inspired dances as well as the proliferation of African American dance bands and their music which would become known as 'jazz', profoundly influenced the instrumental formation and repertoire of these saxophone driven bands at the Cape, throughout the twentieth century. From 1930s, the introduction of the saxophone as the lead instrument for this style of Quadrille music became almost emblematic with 'Langarm' music in the so-called Coloured community for the remainder of the century until the present.

The creole or so-called Coloured invention of the vastrap or ghoema rhythm, speculatively developed from the up-tempo reels of the Quadrille or Square Dances as played by the Cape Malay Quadrille Bands of the early nineteenth century especially at the Cape Malay sea-side picnics, where *moppies* were also likely to have been sung to these rhythms, was to become central to both the *vastrap* rhythm of 'Langarm' Square Dances and the *ghoema* rhythms of the up-tempo marches of the *Klopse* and *Nagtroepe* of the 'Coon Carnival' of the twentieth century. This vastrap-ghoema rhythm-complex quite possibly fused Iberian and Islamic rhythmic roots injected with Khoikhoi syncopation as well as American minstrel influences from the mid-1800s and Brazilian samba. Although the Square Dances have died out, the *vastrap* rhythm still remains for loose dancing and Line-Dances as the highlight of 'Langarm' dance events today. Contemporary 'Langarm' dancing amongst the so-called Coloured community of the Cape, remains a vibrant social form of weekend recreation, having seen its 'Golden Era' in the 1940s and 1950s.

This thesis attempts to show and explore the links between the colonial roots of Ballroom dancing at the Cape and current manifestations of 'Langarm' dancing. An important aspect of the conclusion, which was inspired by the notes of one of the foremost band leaders of the past half-century, the late Willie Jales, elects to link the titles Ballroom-Langarm in a dual-language moniker that perfectly situates its cultural and linguistic connections to the so-called Coloured community of the Cape while at the same time firmly establishes its roots and formal qualities in Ballroom dancing.

# OPSOMMING

Gebruik van die term 'Langarm' deur verskeie kulturele groepe in Suid-Afrika het die betekenis daarvan geproblematiseer. Navorsing was nodig om die term se verhouding met Baldans in die sogenaamde bruin gemeenskap van die Kaap te ondersoek, aangesien dit voorkom of hierdie gemeenskap die term op 'n spesifieke manier toegeëien het. Die navorsing kon wys op 'n sterk tradisie van hoë kwaliteit Baldans waaraan die Afrikaanssprekende bruin gemeenskap op 'n bepaalde stadium die term 'Langarm' begin koppel het. Die gebruik van hierdie term geld vir die grootste deel van die twintigste eeu.

Die navorsing toon hoe musiek en dans met diepgewortelde koloniale wortels beïnvloed is deur slawerny en 'n ontluikende kreoolkultuur in 'n slaaf-gebaseerde gemeenskap. Kern tot hierdie geskiedenis was die musikaliteit van die slawe en die blywende invloed wat hierdie musici uitgeoefen het op die Contredanse, die Quadrille en ander Square Dances. Hierdie danse is waarskynlik aan die Kaap bekendgestel deur die Franse in die laat-agtiende eeu, en is ook beoefen deur die Britte in die vroeë jare van die negentiende eeu. Dit is hierdie tradisie wat kern is tot 'Langarm' praktyk in Kaapstad tot laat in die 1960's. Die musiek van die Quadrille was in wese instrumentale musiek wat verantwoordelik was vir die bepaalde kreool-geskiedenis van instrumentale dansmusiek aan die Kaap; nie net onder die gekreoliseerde of sogenaamde bruin gemeenskap nie, maar ook onder die koloniale Kaaps-Hollandse en later Afrikaner gemeenskappe wie se dansmusiek bekend geword het 'boeremusiek'.

Sogenaamde Kleurling- of Kaaps-Maleise Quadrille strykkorkeste het skynbaar vir danse gespeel tussen 1850 en die vroeë 1900's. Die Amerikaanse oplewing van dans (die sogenaamde 'dance craze') in die vroeë 1900s en die nuwe Afro-Amerikaans geïnspireerde danse, sowel as die groei van Afro-Amerikaanse dansorkeste en hul musiek wat bekend sou word as 'jazz', het 'n sterk invloed uitgeoefen op die instrumente samestelling en repertorium van hierdie saksofoon-gesentreerde orkeste aan die Kaap gedurende die twintigste eeu. Vanaf die 1930's het die gebruik van die saksofoon as hoofinstrument van

hierdie styl van Quadrille-musiek kenmerkend geword van 'Langarm' musiek in die sogenaamde bruin gemeenskap. Dit is vandag steeds die geval.

Die kreool of sogenaamde Bruin uitvinding van die vastrap-ghoema ritmekompleks, wat moontlik ontwikkel het uit die vinnige riele van die Quadrille of Square Dances soos gespeel deur die Kaaps-Maleise Quadrille-orkeste van die vroeë negentiende eeu (veral tydens die Kaaps-Maleise strandpieknieks waar *moppies* met hierdie ritmes moontlik ook gesing is), sou kern word tot die *vastrap* ritme of 'Langarm' Square Dances en die *ghoema* ritmes van die vinnige marse van die *Klopse* en *Nagtroepe* (die sogenaamde 'Klopsekarnival') van die twintigste eeu. Die vastrap-ghoema ritmekompleks het heel moontlik Iberiese en Islamitiese ritmiese wortels gekombineer met Khoikhoi sinkopasie en American 'minstrel' en Brasiliaanse samba invloede vanaf die middel van die 1800's. Alhoewel die Square Dances uitgesterf het, het die *vastrap* ritme bly voortbestaan en is dit steeds die hoogtepunt van 'Langarm' dansgeleenthede vandag. Kontemporêre 'Langarm' dans in die sogenaamde bruin gemeenskap aan die Kaap is steeds 'n lewendige sosiale tydverdryf tydens naweke, alhoewel die 'goue era' van hierdie danse in die 1940's en 1950's was.

Hierdie tesis poog om die skakels tussen die koloniale oorspronge van Baldans aan die Kaap en kontemporêre manifestasies van 'Langarm' te ondersoek. 'n Belangrike aspek van die gevolgtrekking, ingegee deur die notas van een van die belangrikste orkesleiers van die vorige halwe eeu, Willie Jales, is dat die term 'Baldans-Langarm' in 'n terminologiese koppeling voorgestel word om die kulturele en linguïstiese skakels van die dansvorm met die sogenaamde bruin gemeenskap van die Kaap te bevestig, terwyl dit die oorspronge en formele eienskappe van die dansvorm ondubbelsinnig in die tradisie van Baldans situeer.

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# PREFACE

In 1980, at a time when high apartheid was holding full sway in South Africa and the Afrikaner Nationalist government had succeeded in categorizing and labelling the population along racial lines and had partly succeeded in driving ideological wedges between the diverse groups thus formed, I met and became involved with Lydia October, a so-called Coloured woman from Bishop Lavis, Cape Town.<sup>1</sup> This was to the great dismay of my parents, whose reaction, as members of the so-called White population, was underpinned by the complex social and racial prejudices that had developed at the Cape through the previous 342 year history of colonialization.

We settled in the southern suburbs of Cape Town in an area where four suburbs – Claremont, Kenilworth, Lansdowne and Harfield Village – intersected and in which the Nationalist government’s policy of socially and physically separating members of different racial categories by the creation and implementation of the Population Registration Act and Group Areas Act of 1950,<sup>2</sup> had been cruelly enforced during the 1960s and 1970s.

The little corner that we inhabited in Carlton Road off Rosmead Avenue, was an ostensibly White area comprised of old houses owned by a Jewish landlord from Gardens in central Cape Town. It was inhabited by a mix of so-called Coloured and Cape Malay families, who it seemed had either returned or never left. This mix, according to my experience at the time, was fairly representative of lower middle class and working class areas of Cape Town through the 1970s and ‘80s, and contributed to the perpetuation of its ‘special tradition of multi-racialism’ throughout its various epochs.<sup>3</sup> A lot of mixing slipped through the cracks of the system.

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<sup>1</sup> The name has been changed to protect the person’s identity.

<sup>2</sup> Courtney Jung, *Then I was Black: African Political Identities in Transition*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000, p. 171.

<sup>3</sup> G. M. Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1981, quoted in Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town*, Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 2001, p. 1.

Lydia, whose ancestors were a wonderful rainbow mixture (her father being a shoe maker was clearly South Indian and so-called Coloured; and on her mother's side there was an English grand-parent and a Philippine grandfather brought out to South Africa for Railway work) waged a relentless private war against the racial stereotypes that the prevailing society impinged on her. She never verbalised her rebellion but it was clear that she delighted in open and flagrant disregard for the so-called laws of apartheid.

In Carlton Road, Claremont, we lived with the constant threat that we could be arrested at any moment for contravening the Immorality Act.<sup>4</sup> In my experience, the historic racial mixture of Cape Town was far too complex and widespread for an authority to make any sense of and especially to police, and so they turned a blind eye.

I was immediately accepted as a member of Lydia's family and regularly visited them in Bishop Lavis about ten kilometre from central Cape Town on the Cape Flats, where they lived in humble circumstances in a council house. This was my early introduction into the so-called Coloured community of Cape Town, as a family member. Not having grown up in it, I could never claim to be a member of this community. In fact, like most so-called White South Africans, I grew up rather distant from it, not knowing much about the conditions, circumstances or society of this community. I therefore write this thesis not as a member of the so-called Coloured community, but as someone with deep personal sympathies entrenched in this community.

This work makes no claim to provide a comprehensive exposition of the complex web of cosmologies, ideologies, actions and conditions that have generated the intense racial and class prejudices that have so thoroughly permeated all aspects of the colonisation of the Cape. Many of the resultant human conditions of these forces, such as slavery, servitude, bondage, persecution, brutality, oppression, poverty and discrimination have been highlighted as elements that the people of mixed racial background have had to endure over the course of colonialization at the Cape. As a testament to the human spirit, while negotiating the pressures of these adverse forces and conditions, the so-called Coloured population were always able to keep a sense of humour and to enjoy life with abandon. This is reflected in the special forms of music that they developed at the Cape.

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<sup>4</sup> Jung, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

On 1 January 1838, the last slaves in the Cape colony were officially set free after 180 years of unbroken slavery in a slave based society.<sup>5</sup> If we are to accept accounts of the Cape from the mid-1800s by British visitors such as Lady Duff Gordon or Lady Louisa Ross in letters to their family and friends, written approximately twenty years after the final emancipation of slaves in Cape Town, the effect of freedom on the previously enslaved population was profound.<sup>6</sup> Lady Luisa Ross observed in late-1861:

Considering the fact that these Malays were all once slaves, it is not to be wondered at that they now enjoy their freedom, and have resolved to banish from their faces and thoughts all trace of anxious servility.<sup>7</sup>

It appears from these reports that change happened very quickly, as people in their everyday lives adapted to their newly won freedom. However, from the mid-1800s after slavery, until the mid-1900s, the egalitarian possibility in South Africa that had presented itself after slavery, was slowly eroded by ever evolving class and colour prejudices. This was partly due to British and Nationalist Afrikaner social and racial stratifications and the gradual introduction of discriminatory legislation and push for segregation. A hundred years after slavery was abolished, a new version of totalitarianism was finally implemented in the form of apartheid.<sup>8</sup>

Cape Town was and remains unique in its particular manifestation of cultural, social and racial dynamics within the contexts of the broader South African urban and rural social landscapes. Historians Robert Ross and Vivian Bickford-Smith, who conducted much ground-breaking research from the mid-1970s and the early-1980s respectively, have gone a long

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<sup>5</sup> Robert C. Shell, *Children of Bondage: A social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838*, Hanover (NH), University Press of New England, 1994, p. 415.

<sup>6</sup> Lady Lucie Duff Gordon, *Letters from the Cape*, London, Oxford University Press, 1927; Lady Luisa Ross, *Life at the Cape: A Hundred Years Ago*, Cape Town, C. Struik, 1963.

<sup>7</sup> Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. xix-xx. Shell as an undergraduate 'was struck by the similarities between the system of apartheid and the slave societies of the past.' Shell further posits that: 'There are compelling legal and demographic similarities. Violence and coercion undergirded both systems. Cape slaves and twentieth-century black South African workers were both denied a broad and suspiciously similar range of human rights. They could not move freely. They could not own land. Under both apartheid and slavery, workers were carefully selected by age and sex and were brought in from outside the core area of the economy.'

way to elucidating these racial and class dynamics that developed in urban Cape Town and rural South Africa, particularly through the period of British governance at the Cape.<sup>9</sup>

Particularly noteworthy with regard to this research and the music that is its focus, is a quote from American historian George Fredrickson in Bickford-Smith's introduction to 'Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town', where he notes that Cape Town was unique in 'its tradition of tolerance of white-Colored intermingling in public places' and had a 'special tradition of multi-racialism' and most significantly 'fraternization between racial groups in Cape Town remained free and unimpaired by laws or even strong and consistent patterns of customary exclusion until well into the twentieth century.'<sup>10</sup>

Further emphasising this point, Bickford-Smith quotes Maurice Evans, who was writing in the third person about his experience of Cape Town in 1911:

He hears that it is quite a common thing for the European immigrant introduced for railway and mechanical work to marry, even to prefer to marry women of colour...he sees a toleration of colour and social admixture to which he is quite unaccustomed; it is evident on the streets, on the tramcars, in the railway stations, public offices and in places of entertainment...impossible in an eastern town such as Durban or Pietermaritzburg...[in a cinema]...he will find no distinction made, all and any colour occupying the same seats, cheek by jowl, and sometimes on each other's knees.'<sup>11</sup>

Bickford-Smith. it has to be said, is sceptical of Fredrickson's conclusions regarding the freedom of racial and ethnic mixing in Cape Town, asserting that he 'seriously underestimated the extent of segregation in the city before 1948.' Both Ross and Bickford-Smith have shown that it was a small dominant elite, who through the control of power structures both economic and political, imposed their elitist ethnicity or 'dominant-class consciousness' onto all around them.<sup>12</sup> Bickford-Smith explores in great detail the economic

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<sup>9</sup> Robert Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas: A study in the development of stratification in South Africa*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1976; Bickford-Smith, *op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> G. M. Fredrickson, quoted in Bickford-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Maurice Evans, *Black and White in South East Africa: A Study in Sociology*, London, Longman's, Green & Co., 1916, quoted in Bickford-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas: A study in the development of stratification in South Africa*, *op. cit.*, p. 3. Ross states that 'there has long been a ruling class, which originated among the officials of the Dutch East India Company and the farmers of the south-western Cape [...]' and that '[w]ithout exception those who have ruled have been categorised as white, and they have been prepared to share both semblance and the substance of power only with those of the same putative ancestry'; Bickford-Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9. Bickford-Smith has likewise asserted that '[d]ominant-class consciousness in Cape Town in 1875 was informed by White (or 'European') ethnicity. But there was little attempt to separate Whites from Blacks throughout society. The forms of segregation that existed demonstrated and preserved the power of the dominant class.'

and political forces that were constantly defining and redefining the hegemonies of race and class in ways that would increasingly benefit Cape Town's 'mercantile elite', which Bickford-Smith formalises in his work as the White bourgeois 'dominant class' of Cape Town.<sup>13</sup>

Bickford-Smith has also shown that despite the fact that '[b]elief in White superiority was part of White ethnicity for many' and that 'White ethnicity united a dominant class potentially divided by language, origins, and Christian denominational difference' and furthermore that '[e]xclusionary segregation protected White bourgeois status', the economic and political agendas of this elite in Victorian Cape Town did not affect or impinge upon the way the lower orders or working classes mixed and interacted. This point, then, supports Fredrickson's observations which were speaking of everyday social dynamics among the general population of Cape Town.<sup>14</sup>

The story told by ordinary people remains a largely untold history of Cape Town. Bickford-Smith's book *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town*, for instance focuses heavily on the meta-narratives of economy and politics to explain the social dynamics of Victorian Cape Town. Although he sets out to show 'the tantalising possibility that for once there was a colonial town' which possessed social dynamics not based on race, he extrapolates this argument by an in-depth focus on the meta-narrative of white ethnic domination utilizing primary sources from the time without specifically exposing the social strata of the so-called underclasses.<sup>15</sup> This thesis is an attempt to construct a narrative of social music and dance at the Cape that lies behind the meta-narratives of the power relations of slavery and the hegemonies of a European ruling class domination throughout most of the history of the Cape. Informed by my personal experiences, I set out to imagine the world of ordinary people of Cape Town from which, I maintain, unique forms of music and dance developed.

I have deemed it necessary to use extended quotes from primary sources in order to describe scenes and people and experiences in ways that no précis would be able to match in tone, subtle nuances, as well as the specificity of details. Particularly noteworthy in this regard are the accounts of travellers and visitors to the Cape, such as Lady Anne Barnard,

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<sup>13</sup> Bickford-Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-17, 91-99.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

William Bird, Lady Luisa Ross and Lady Lucie Duff Gordon. These extended quotations add considerably to the length of this thesis, but I hope it does so in demonstrably important ways.

# INTRODUCTION

## Motivation, Orientation and Aim

The late Willie Jales was important in sparking my interest into the local music practices of the so-called Coloured community of Cape Town. While discussing details of the history of saxophone playing in Christmas Choirs, Willie revealed some interesting information to me concerning the introduction of saxophones into so-called Coloured 'Langarm' dance bands in Cape Town during the 1940s and '50s. He related to me that violins were traditionally the lead instruments in dance bands before the Second World War, and that many violin players, after returning from service overseas where they had been exposed to saxophone playing, took up the instrument and transferred the sound of their wide violin vibrato to their approach to embouchure and vibrato on the saxophone. This, in turn, goes some way to explain the origins of the heavy vibrato and so-called 'fish-horn' sound in the Cape style of saxophone playing utilised by some so-called Coloured saxophone players in the Cape Province through the greater part of the twentieth century.<sup>16</sup> Inspired by these bits of information that Willie shared with me, I resolved to research the dance bands and dance music of the Cape.

This thesis sets out to trace and illuminate the colonial roots of 'Langarm' dancing amongst the so-called Coloured population at the Cape by providing social, cultural, religious, political and geographical background to the colonial eras of the Dutch colonisation and the British colonisation of the nineteenth century as well as inner-city Cape Town in the twentieth century. The geographic delineation of the thesis uses the term 'the Cape' and the city of Cape Town in an interchangeable way. Historically, the Cape expands over time, eventually incorporating Cape Town and surrounds to great distances in the west, north and east. For the purposes of this thesis, the area under discussion designated 'the Cape' will include the burgeoning Cape Town and surrounds not farther than the areas of the Boland,

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<sup>16</sup> Willie Jales, interview by the author, 18 November 2004. By way of explanation, 'originally' was placed in parenthesis, as this is now not the case in 2016. Most of the younger saxophone players of today are consciously moving away from this so-called Cape sound found in the saxophone playing of the older dance band musicians who also played in Christmas Choirs where this saxophone sound was most prevalent.

incorporating the towns of Strand, Somerset West, Stellenbosch, Franschhoek, Paarl, Malmesbury, Worcester and Caledon.

This thesis is not theory driven, but focuses rather on the historical relationship between a certain kind of music and the evolution of the so-called Coloured population of the Cape through slavery and their subsequent marginalized position as the poor of inner-city Cape Town. The thesis highlights the rich musical and cultural heritage that developed amongst the slaves, creole and indigenous people of the Cape. Ballroom dancing of the Quadrille 'Squares' in the early-nineteenth century became the pre-eminent form of recreation and entertainment amongst all strata of Cape society. The twentieth century would see the burgeoning of the *Klopse*, *Nagtroepe*, Malay Choirs, Cape Jazz and 'Langarm' dancing amongst the so-called Coloured population of Cape Town's inner-city District Six, traditions which were also echoed in the so-called Coloured populations of the outlying districts of the Boland.

When I asked Willie Jales what the term 'Langarm' meant to him, he replied: 'This term has been a big, shall I say, disappointment to me'. He went on to elaborate how, according to his memory, this term only came into widespread usage during the late 1970's and early 1980's and that as far as he was concerned, this form of dance music had always been referred to as 'Ballroom' from as far back as he could remember.<sup>17</sup> This statement caused me to bring into contention the term 'Langarm'. It also begged the questions: How stable is the term and what constitutes a 'Langarm' dance? Is the term more applicable to the event, to the music or to the dance? Is it a culturally specific term within the so-called Coloured community, and if so, why is it also used in the White *Boeremusiek* circles to refer to the style of dancing done to accompaniment of *Boeremusiek*? What are the different conceptions of the term in so-called White culture? Are there different culturally specific conceptions of the term? What is the historic usage of the term?

Boudina Coetzer and Glen Holtzman, both seem to imply that 'Langarm' is a definitive term for a specific, separate and unique genre of music and dance that developed amongst the

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<sup>17</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by the author, 10 May 2012. This statement appears somewhat ambiguous in retrospect, as Willie Jales clearly uses the term 'Langarm' often in his notes written in 1999 and 2000, as is fully acknowledged in the conclusion to this thesis. In later interviews he explained that it was widely used by Afrikaans-speaking Coloured people to refer to Ballroom dancing.

so-called Coloured community and that can no longer be seen as Ballroom dancing. Coetzer repeatedly refers to 'Langarm' as another genre: '[...] ballroom dance. [...] is so integral to the genre that members of Coysan call *Langarm* a "watered-down version of ballroom" [...]' and 'Langarm is not just a ballroom by-product, it is a distinctive fusion of different local and foreign styles. It is also a genre in flux, [...]',<sup>18</sup> Likewise, Holtzman states: 'Whatever the dance or the music, it is clear that music and social dance were popular at the Cape, and that *langarm* as a genre can trace its roots back to these earlier interactions.'<sup>19</sup> Holtzman further reinforces his understanding of 'Langarm' as a distinct genre when stating: 'This chapter provides a general overview of the various dances and music associated with *langarm* as a genre, [...].' and deepens the ambiguity by stating that 'a *langarm* is a social dance event, and historically, the dance form which dominated was ballroom [...].'<sup>20</sup>

In attempting to separate 'Langarm' dance events, music and dancing from Ballroom dancing and designating these practices as a separate "'neo-traditional" indigenous style', Coetzer adopts a problematic perspective when considering the long prior history of these dance bands and similar events as Ballroom dance bands and Ballroom dances at the Cape.<sup>21</sup> Confirming this continuity of Ballroom dancing, both Coetzer and Holtzman enumerate specifically the Ballroom dances and music at these events as: the Waltz, the swing Waltz, the Quickstep, the Foxtrot and the Tango.<sup>22</sup> This perspective also begs the questions: At what point did these events cease to be Ballroom and become something other than Ballroom? Is 'Langarm' merely a language specific term used as an Afrikaans equivalent of the English term Ballroom dance? Does the term, as used in the so-called Coloured community, always then refer to Ballroom dance, but with the understanding that unique local rhythmic and dance variations augment the original genre of Ballroom dance but do not ever alter it essentially or completely? In this text the term 'Langarm' is used mainly in quotation marks to highlight its ambiguities and to avoid pre-empting assumptions

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<sup>18</sup> Boudina Coetzer, '*Langarm* in Grahamstown: The Dance, the Social History and the Music', in *Papers Presented at the Symposium on Ethnomusicology*, ed. by Andrew Tracey, Grahamstown, International Library of African Music, Rhodes University, 2005, pp. 1–14. Esp. pp. 1-5.

<sup>19</sup> Glen Holtzman, 'A treatise on "Langarm" in Cape Town', H. A. Thesis (Unpub.), Cape Town, University of Cape Town, 2006, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Coetzer, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Coetzer, *op. cit.*, p. 5; Holtzman, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

about these important questions. The historical tracing of this music, to a large extent, is also an exploration of these questions.

## The Utilization of Historic and Cultural Terms

I am profoundly aware that the historical texts that will be consulted in order to construct this speculative history of music and dance at the Cape, have embedded in them racial biases that lack self-reflexive understanding of their own prejudices. It should be understood that these colonial voices, particularly in the cameos of Chapter Two, are not representative of my own voice but serve to illustrate the thinking and perspectives of the literate voices of the times, while at the same time providing invaluable information about the music and dance practices. It is indeed unfortunate that the illiterate voice of those times are forever silent. I adopt a flexible approach to the social terminology utilised in this text, illustrating the terminology used in different eras of the history of the Cape. I am aware that many of these social terms and categories contain political and racial biases and constitute not only terminological problems, but theoretical problems as well. In this regard the focus in recent scholarship on the de-colonization of texts and ethnographic narratives in particular, is important. Without elaborating on these theoretical issues, I endeavour to remain sensitive to them in the construction of this text.

Throughout this thesis, in order to distinguish the social station of the people under discussion, within the social stratifications of the time, the idea of class is utilised extensively. The seventeenth century saw a diminishing aristocracy and the burgeoning of a merchant middle class in the Netherlands in the decades prior to the settling of the Cape and the industrial revolution in Britain.<sup>23</sup> Throughout the history of the colonising of the Cape, these European social constructs have played a major part in determining how people of various racial and cultural origins have coalesced into socially stratified groups under the influence of the 'dominant settler' society. The historian Robert Ross posits that 'people

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<sup>23</sup> J. P. Sommerville, 'The Dutch Republic on the Early Seventeenth Century', in *Faculty History Wisc.Edu.*, <<https://faculty.history.wisc.edu/sommerville/351/351-08.htm>> [accessed 15 June 2015]; 'History of the Netherlands', in *History World*, <<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?ParagraphID=ifb>> [accessed 15 June 2015].

have found themselves assigned to categories according to the preconceptions of those who controlled the political economy of the country.'<sup>24</sup>

Ross, using E. P. Thompson's theories of class, has argued that the dichotomy of 'the interrelationship between ethnic and economic stratification, between "race" and "class"' is compromised by 'insufficient understanding of the dynamics of class.' Quoting E. P. Thompson, Ross posits that 'class should be defined as "an historical phenomenon" ...not...as a "structure" or even as a "category" but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships'. Ross further posits that the 'particular cultural terms by which classes define themselves takes time to develop, and are always changing.'<sup>25</sup> I will use class categories in order to give a general sense of the station into which the people under discussion may have fallen at the time and not as definitive, inflexible and precisely delineated social strata.

Historically, the Cape was riddled with a strange conglomerate of racial and class stratifications whose categories and combinations were often so complex and so blurred, as to be almost unfathomable to all but those directly involved in the dynamics of the society. These categories were often both spoken and unspoken, well recognised and vague, consciously implemented and unconsciously adhered to; they included religious and economic power-based differentials and took in class and race based discriminatory practices.<sup>26</sup>

Cape-born people of mixed European and other races were named 'creole' in the colony during the late-eighteenth century and the early-nineteenth century. Robert Shell, as far back as 1994, suggested that a creole culture emerged through the time of slavery at the Cape.<sup>27</sup> Denis-Constant Martin, following discourses on creolisation developed by Edouard Glissant and other French speaking academics, as well as authors involved in what Martin calls 'The South African debate' and who have expanded the subject in the South African context, suggest a new conceptualisation of creolisation as a continuing process born out of

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<sup>24</sup> Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas: A study in the development of stratification in South Africa*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-6.

<sup>27</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-65.

adversity usually inflicted by a dominant culture that produces new and often unpredictable cultural material out of the mixing of diverse elements of diverse cultures.<sup>28</sup>

In terms of musical developments at the Cape, Martin summarises the dynamics as ‘[i]ntensified cross-pollination between original South African genres and foreign ones’ bringing ‘new energies to processes of creolisation underpinned by internal cross-fertilisation.’<sup>29</sup> Although creolisation is not further utilised as a theory in this text, the conditions of adversity, the actions of the dominant culture, the diverse peoples and cultural material, the processes of admixture and its resultant cultural forms are highlighted at different points throughout the text.

The Dutch East India Company or the General United Chartered East-Indian Company (in Dutch the *Generaale Vereenigde Geocroijeerde Oostindische Compagnie*), will in this text be referred to as the VOC. During the time of the VOC, the ‘power and authority of the VOC and its representatives were publicly and ritualistically emphasised at every possible opportunity.’ In the society of the Cape at this time, the ‘maintenance of symbols of rank was a matter of vital importance.’ Clothing regulations were implemented in 1755 to entrench these symbols of rank even amongst the general population, for example slaves were not allowed to wear shoes and had to be bare footed.<sup>30</sup> Rank was even implemented amongst the slaves in the ‘slave lodge,’ creating a society polarized at every level through dynamics of rank, class, race, bondage and ability.<sup>31</sup>

Some of the more obvious differentials of these polarizations included the likes of: master and slave, free and bonded, landed and renting, phenotype and ethnic origins of culture and race, as well as economic class divisions and divisions along noticeable colour lines.<sup>32</sup>

Worden et al., point out that the colour issues of ‘Black’ and ‘White’ in these times were not nearly as crucial in the society as ‘Christian’ and ‘heathen’, and they state that clearly ‘race was not identical to class in VOC Cape Town. Some free blacks were property owners and

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<sup>28</sup> Denis-Constant Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa*, Somerset West, African Minds, 2013, pp. 54-95.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>30</sup> Nigel Worden, Elizabeth van Heyningen, Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The Making of a City*, Cape Town, David Philip Publishers, 1998, pp. 72-73.

<sup>31</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-184.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 149-159.

some free whites were paupers.<sup>33</sup> These differentials were constantly being modified and adapted over time as social and political environments evolved, some over shorter periods and some over longer periods.

I attempt in this text to deploy these terms as they were utilised in the relevant historical periods in the Cape. During the time of the VOC, those employees of the VOC whose contracts were fulfilled after the appropriate length of service (usually of five years), were given or leased land from the VOC and were referred to as 'free *Burghers*'. The company officials or employees, as well as the free White citizens or free *Burghers*, and all the settlers who came from all countries in Europe, will be referred to simply as 'the Dutch' during the period when the Cape was under the control of the VOC and later the Batavian Republic.

Shell has defined the Governors and some high ranking VOC officials from the time of Simon van der Stel, who emerged as owners of large slave holdings and tracts of land, as the 'patricians', explaining how their families maintained their status and power in a dynastic fashion over generations. These families formed a type of aristocracy or upper class at the Cape, although they were not always linked to royalty by blood lines or historical family ties. These and other high ranking VOC officials, as well as successful free *Burgher* farmers, Worden et al. have called a 'wealthy elite' and Ross has often referred to them as the 'ruling class' or 'dominant settler group' in terms of society at the Cape.<sup>34</sup> After the arrival of the British, the white Dutch speaking people will be referred to as 'the Cape-Dutch'.

After the emancipation of slaves through the mid-1800s, Cape-born people of mixed African or Asian and European origin, who were originally called mulatto or creole, were also called

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<sup>33</sup> Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>34</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, p. xxvii-xxviii. Shell writes in relation to three family forms of the 'ruling class' to be found at the Cape, which include patriarchal, paternalistic and patrician, especially in relation to their relationship to slaves: 'The third family form—the patricians—introduced chattel slavery to South Africa, and the patricians managed the slave trade until 1795. ... The implied parallel with the Roman patricians is deliberate. "Patrician" connotes dynastic family behaviour. The word implies aloofness, coupled with ruthlessness. In Africa, the patrician "golden age" was symbolized by the Van der Stel dynasty, the families that ruled the Cape from 1680 until 1706, in a consecutive father-and-son governorship that ended in ignominy for the family and expulsion from the colony for the son. ...Although weakened by the settler revolt of 1706, the patricians remained in control of the slave trade for the whole colony from 1652 to 1795. After the demise of the Dutch East India Company in 1795, the power of the patricians was reduced to commercial activities at the port. The patricians' main functions were administering the colony, overseeing the Company's large holding of slaves, known as the Lodge, and managing the oceanic slave trade... Initially the patricians were drawn from the upper echelons of local officials. They also came to incorporate, by intermarriage, some of the richest urban Cape Town burghers, the settler families'; Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas: A study in the development of stratification in South Africa*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

*Afrikanders* or *Africanders*.<sup>35</sup> A quote from Lady Duff Gordon in 1861, elucidates the common usage: ‘The waiter is an Africander, half Dutch, half Malay, very handsome and exactly like a French gentleman, and as civil.’<sup>36</sup> In the late nineteenth century some members of the Cape-Dutch elected to call themselves *Afrikanders* or Afrikaners and adopted the, by then, thoroughly creolized Dutch-based language which had evolved at the Cape through the multicultural influences of the Cape Malays, the Khoikhoi and the slaves.<sup>37</sup> I have elected to call white Cape-Dutch speaking people ‘Afrikaners’ after the Boer War in 1902, by which time their ethnic and linguistic unity had been largely consolidated as a cultural group.<sup>38</sup> The British colonialists or English speakers will be referred to as the ‘British’, unless of course they are American, Australian or from other English-speaking colonies, in which case this will be stated.

The ‘middle class’ will be used here to describe those successful merchants and professionals who were usually well educated and affluent enough to own their own home, and live comfortably in town or country, but whose society did not associate so easily with the upper middle or upper class. The ‘lower middle class’ will refer to successful trades’ people, artisans and craftsmen, who had a reasonable education or apprenticeship and might even have owned their own small business, but still, by and large, rented their accommodation. The ‘lower class’ is synonymous with the working class, the lower orders, who were the poorest labourers or even the ordinary soldiers and sailors.

The term ‘Coloured’, according to Bickford-Smith, was utilized as far back as 1830 by some ex-slaves and people of mixed heritage to ‘describe themselves’ in interactions with Whites. Bickford-Smith shows that the term was used by petitioners from ‘mission stations from across the Cape in the early 1850s’ and argues that although ‘continued White racialization and discrimination’ throughout the nineteenth century contributed to the endurance of the term, these were not the sole reasons for its continued usage. Political usage began

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<sup>35</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>36</sup> Duff Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>37</sup> Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 158; Bickford-Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 41-42; Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-65.

<sup>38</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-64. Shell posits: ‘The first book in Afrikaans was written by an *imam*, a slave descendant, and only later in the 1860s did patriotic male European colonists take up the language for themselves. European men were the last to use the Afrikaans language, and some, like Jan Christiaan Smuts, disdained Afrikaans throughout their lives. Breyten Breytenbach, the Afrikaans poet, wittily explained from his own perspective: “We are a bastard people with a bastard language. And like all bastards, we have begun to cling to the concept of purity.”’

increasingly to entrench the designation 'Coloured' throughout the late nineteenth century through to the twentieth century.<sup>39</sup> The apartheid regime 'imposed on South Africans of mixed, Khoisan, or Malay descent' the classification of 'Coloured', defining a 'Coloured' person as "a person who is not a White or a Black person."<sup>40</sup> Despite the fact that this term was used for more than four decades of apartheid as a discriminatory designation, in this thesis the term 'Coloured' will be used with unqualified respect to those people who refer to themselves as Coloured and with the consciousness and understanding that for some who grew up under apartheid and suffered the demeaning nature of this discriminatory classification, the term remains abhorrent.

For the period before the emancipation of slavery, the term 'master' or 'owner' will be used to denote the owner of slaves. The term 'slave' is used for those who were involuntarily sold or captured into bondage to become the property of another person and whose station therefore became that of a commodity and an asset to be bought and sold and whose lot was unquestioningly to do any bidding of their owner no matter how arduous or distasteful.

The term 'free Blacks' was a blanket term used for those people at the Cape, mainly of mixed racial origin, who had been manumitted and freed from slavery, been born free or had entered the colony free and had remained so. After slavery, 'Blacks' is used as a blanket term for those people of African descent or deemed to be of African descent. Their origins would therefore stem mainly from the Southern Nguni and other Southern African tribes northwards of the Cape, not including the 'Khoikhoi' pastoralists or the 'San' hunter gatherers, who will be so named separately. The members of the numerous tribes of the Khoikhoi were originally referred to by the early settlers in historical texts as the 'Hottentot'.

The term 'White' is used as a blanket term for those people of exclusively European descent, or in many cases for those of mixed racial origins in European families who were considered white enough to be accepted as such by the dominant European settler society at the time or whose mixed familial background was conveniently overlooked or forgotten in the recent or distant past. The term 'Cape Malay' will be used for all those people of Muslim persuasion at the Cape, whatever their racial or genetic origin. This usage was already in

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<sup>39</sup> Bickford-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

<sup>40</sup> Jung, *op. cit.*, p. 168. The definition is from the 1950 Population Registration Act, in *The Law of South Africa*, vol. 21, Cape Town, Butterworths, 1984, pp. 404-412.

place in the mid-nineteenth century. After slavery, the term 'Coloured' is used as a blanket term to incorporate all people that were deemed to be of mixed racial origin and who were seen by the dominant settler society as being outside of their sphere. The Coloureds therefore included the Cape Malay as well as those Christians of mixed ex-slave, Black, White, Khoikhoi and San origins. This term has been in use in the South African social and political landscape for well over a century and has become ever more contentious since the new dispensation in 1994. However, the members of the Coloured communities who have participated in the research for this thesis refer to themselves as Coloured and it facilitates the demarcation of their cultural conglomeration as a unique cultural group.

The 'Cape Gentry' refers to those who owned property at the Cape, and usually owned slaves, had some education, and some sensibility towards European culture, despite the possibility that their original families might have come to the Cape from the European underclasses. Until the British arrived with their more sophisticated and stratified sense of class, the people of the Cape had a more blurred (but still complex) sense of class and station. Divisions were drawn more along lines of religion, wealth, profession, ownership of property, education, skills, free or bonded, and amongst the bonded themselves according to an array of categories such as origin, phenotype and colour. As previously stated, these categories of class and station are broad and not intended to be definitive, but rather utilitarian.

In the early twentieth century, class structures in British and European society started to break down and become more blurred through processes 'leading in the Edwardian era to the beginnings of the "classless" mass culture of the twentieth century.'<sup>41</sup> In the Cape, however, different social and political forces were increasingly entrenching social stratifications and divisions along racially determined lines through the twentieth century.

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<sup>41</sup> R. Middleton, 'Popular Music of the Lower Classes' in *The Athlone History of Music in Britain: The Romantic Age 1800-1914*, N Temperley (ed), Vol 5, London, The Athlone Press, 1981, pp. 63–91, esp. p. 65.

# CHAPTER 1

## Music and Dance at the Cape in the Dutch Colonial Era

In the intimate domestic setting, the languages, religions, cultures, and attitudes of slaves and colonists meshed together and changed in a reciprocal cultural exchange that was more important than the romantic frontier expeditions in charting the course of the South African *mentalités* in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>42</sup> Robert Shell, 1994.

### Introduction to the Cape in the Seventeenth Century

In 1602, the *Generaale Vereenigde Geocroijjeerde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC) or the General United Chartered East-Indian Company was established in the *Vereenigde Republiek der Vereenigde Nederlanden* or the United Republic of the United Netherlands. The States General had given the VOC a trade monopoly 'East of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Strait of Magellan'. It also granted them 'a charter vesting sovereign powers to manage soldiers and fleets, to make war and peace, to exercise control over regions, and to establish and govern forts, fortresses and colonies'. It was under these terms that Jan Antonisz van Riebeeck, a former VOC merchant, 'offered his services' as Opperhoof (Chief) or Commander, to found a refreshment station for the VOC fleet at the Cape.<sup>43</sup> He and his crew landed at the Cape on 6 April 1652, and he was to remain in office as Commander of the Cape for ten years until 6 May 1662.

The early years at the Cape were difficult. According to Jan van Riebeeck's daily journal, life consisted of little more than survival for the first few years, with the heavy South East and

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<sup>42</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, p. 414.

<sup>43</sup> 'Introduction to the Resolutions of the Council of Policy of Cape of Good Hope', in *Towards a New Age of Partnership (Tanap)*, <[http://www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents/resolutions\\_Cape\\_of\\_Good\\_Hope/introduction\\_english/21.htm](http://www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents/resolutions_Cape_of_Good_Hope/introduction_english/21.htm)> <[http://www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents/resolutions\\_Cape\\_of\\_Good\\_Hope/introduction\\_english/23.htm](http://www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents/resolutions_Cape_of_Good_Hope/introduction_english/23.htm)> [accessed 29 July 2015].

North West winds regularly destroying newly planted crops and an irregular and unreliable supply of cattle from the local Khoikhoi. Many young men lost their lives to severe stomach illnesses and related infections in the first year at the Cape.<sup>44</sup> Wayne Dooling states that '[I]n 1654 the fledgling colony nearly starved to death. By 1656 the VOC employees consisting of 181 men who had arrived in 1652, were reduced to 133 as a consequence of death and disease.'<sup>45</sup>

From the outset, it was made official VOC policy that the Dutch settlers 'should live in peace' with the indigenous population of Khoikhoi who inhabited the Cape at that time and therefore they were not to be enslaved. The Khoikhoi were divided into a number of separate clans from diverse areas. These groups included the cattle herders, the Kogoukwas from Saldanha on the West Coast, the cattle herders or Grigriquas on the East Coast and the Goragoukwas, the fishermen or *Strandloopers* from the Cape peninsular.<sup>46</sup>

However, it became clear to the Dutch, after five years of hardship, that labour would be needed on a large scale in order to work the land and run the colony as a replenishment station. In 1657, land was granted to nine VOC employees who had completed their five year tenure with the company and so they became known as free *Burghers*; freehold title plots were given to them on the Liesbeeck River.<sup>47</sup> From this time until 1701 'small freehold portions ranging from small plots to 135 acre tracts were allotted to individual settlers.'<sup>48</sup> It is significant to note that the first 51 male free Burghers in 1658 were company employees 'drawn from the lowest rungs of European society'.<sup>49</sup> The VOC drew their labour force from peasants who made their way to Amsterdam to look for work from every country in Europe.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>45</sup> Wayne Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule in South Africa*, Scottsville, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2007. p. 18.

<sup>46</sup> 'Introduction to the Resolutions of the Council of Policy of Cape of Good Hope', in *Towards a New Age of Partnership (Tanap)*, <[http://www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents/resolutions\\_Cape\\_of\\_Good\\_Hope/introduction\\_english/30.htm](http://www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents/resolutions_Cape_of_Good_Hope/introduction_english/30.htm)> [accessed 29 July 2015].

<sup>47</sup> Dooling, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>48</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> Wordon, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>50</sup> Dooling, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

At the Cape this would create a landed 'gentry' drawn from the lower to lower middle class European citizenry and would result in a relatively classless society based more on ability and wealth than on lineage. Musical and literary education, financial success and slave ownership, were factors that would set some above others in the fledgling colonial society.<sup>51</sup> The exception was to be found in some of the high ranking VOC company officials and the Governors as well as army and naval officers who were traditionally drawn from more noble European families.<sup>52</sup>

'Between 1702 and 1735 farmers applied for more than 100 million acres' on the new loan system that was implemented in 1702.<sup>53</sup> This was indicative of the huge and continuous expansion of the colonizers to acquire more and more land into the interior, and in so doing, displacing the indigenous Khoikhoi and San tribes as they went. This led to ongoing wars between them and the colonisers from the seventeenth century and into the nineteenth century. On the northern frontiers of the colony, Dutch raiding parties shot the men and captured the women and children, leading to the near genocide of these indigenous people and eventually to a state of perpetual servitude to the Dutch.<sup>54</sup>

## The Implementation of Slavery at the Cape

The dynamics of the slave society at the Cape were exceptionally complex and to try to elaborate this in any depth is far beyond the scope of this thesis. What follows is the briefest summary of its most salient points, in order to locate the world and culture from which the Coloured musicians of the Cape would emerge.

On 5 March 1657, Jan van Riebeeck wrote a letter to the VOC directors requesting 'the supplementation of the labour of free Burghers and their families with slave labour' and stating that 'free inhabitants could do little in farming without slaves'. These requests and the subsequent supply of slaves to the Colony, soon gave birth to a thoroughly slave-based

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<sup>51</sup> Worden *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-59.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49-51.

<sup>53</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>54</sup> John Edwin Mason, *Social Death and Resurrection: Slavery and Emancipation in South Africa*, Charlottesville and London, University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 27-30; Dooling, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.

society.<sup>55</sup> Shell takes pains to point out that it was not the VOC directors in Holland who promoted slavery; in fact, decades prior to the settling of the Cape the VOC promoted ‘free labour’ as a ‘mercantilist cost-cutting venture’. Shell maintains that from the outset, ‘decisions about the economy and forms of labour at the Cape were directly in the hands of both the individual settler householders and local officials.’ This was due to their demands and the pressure they exerted on the VOC.<sup>56</sup> Shell calls the adoption of this policy of slavery at the Cape ‘the unthinking decision’.<sup>57</sup> The repercussions of this choice of slave labour are still to be felt today in diverse social and cultural manifestations, such as the continuing paternalism of farmers to farm labourers, which is still to be found on the farms in the Boland area of the Cape.<sup>58</sup>

The first slave to be brought to the Cape by the VOC was Abraham of Batavia in 1653.<sup>59</sup> In early 1658, a Portuguese slave ship bound for Brazil with 500 Angolan slaves aboard, was captured by the Dutch, who took 250 boys and girls. Only 174 survived the journey back to the Cape aboard the *Amersvoort*. Shell - commenting on Van Riebeeck’s journal entry of 17 April 1658 in which he notes his preparations for a school and his intention to give each child a cup of brandy and tobacco to enhance their reception of the Christian prayers - declares that ‘Van Riebeeck introduced education, paternalism, and the *dop* system into the infant colony’ in one paragraph of his journal entries.<sup>60</sup>

Later in 1658, a ‘secret voyage into Dahomey return[ed] with 228 slaves’.<sup>61</sup> Due to the Dutch West Indian Company refusing the Dutch East India Company permission to buy slaves from West Africa, they were then forced to import most of their slaves from the Indian Ocean Basin.<sup>62</sup> Roughly 25 percent were from Southern India, Bengal and Ceylon, 25 percent from Madagascar, a further 25 percent from Africa (mainly Mozambique), 22,7 percent from

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<sup>55</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>57</sup> Winthrop D. Jordan, quoted in Shell, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. 79, 206, 395, 407, 414; Andries Du Toit, ‘The Farm as Family: Paternalism, Management and Modernisation on Western Cape Wine and Fruit Farms’, Stellenbosch, A report on Fieldwork conducted for the Centre for Rural Legal Studies, 1992, p. 2; Michael Dunseith, ‘“When the Saints go Marching” The United Gospel String Band: The Religious and Sacred Nature of their Performance Practices’, B.Mus. Hon. Thesis (Unpub.), Cape Town, University of Cape Town, 2005, p. 18.

<sup>59</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, p. xxx; Denis-Constant Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, Past and Present*, Cape Town, David Philip Publishers, 1999, p. 50.

<sup>60</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. 49, 79.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 417.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 404.

Indonesia and the remainder from as far afield as Abyssinia, Arabia, Iran, Borneo, Burma, China, Japan and Brazil.<sup>63</sup>

Slaves belonging to the VOC were kept in the slave Lodge, a large windowless purpose-built structure that housed the largest single holding of slaves at the Cape. It functioned as the lodging for VOC slaves for more than a century and still housed slaves after the second British occupation.<sup>64</sup> Company slaves in the Lodge during the time of the VOC were particularly unfortunate in their living conditions and the hard labour they had to perform, and large numbers died young and from illness, especially in the winter.<sup>65</sup> The lodge was also consistently used by soldiers and sailors as an unofficial brothel through the seventeenth and eighteenth century, as cited in Shell: 'Few Europeans entered the lodge by choice, except during the one hour each night when the Lodge became an active brothel for the local garrison [...]' These practices contributed to the slow and early creolization of slaves at the Cape.<sup>66</sup>

An unusual hierarchy developed in the semi-military style workings of the Lodge. According to Shell, the ranking followed 'gender, racial descent, creole status and then [...] place of origin.' Cape-born, mixed European slaves (otherwise termed mulatto and later creole), were always placed in the superior positions and afforded the most privileges.<sup>67</sup> In Cape Town, price premiums developed according to preferences for slaves of different geographic origins and creole status. Indonesian or Malay males were the most valued of foreign slaves, and Malagasies the lowest. Creole slaves were also the most valued.<sup>68</sup> Mentzel, writing in the early 1700s, claimed that: 'Female slaves from Bengal or the Coast of Coromandel, from Surat and Macassar, are in great demand, because they have a reputation as skilled needlewomen'.<sup>69</sup> Slaves from Mozambique were valued for their good nature, trustworthiness and for their hard manual labour but were lowest on the hierarchy of slaves. The Cape Malays were valued as skilled craftsmen and artisans excelling at building, tailoring, shoemaking and musicianship. These hierarchies of categorization for slaves by

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-48; Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, Past and Present*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>64</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-205.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>69</sup> Mentzel, quoted in Shell, *op. cit.*, p. 51. From, *Description*, Vol. 2, pp. 127-128.

descent, origin and phenotype would continue to have a lasting effect on racial prejudices into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>70</sup>

It is hard to imagine, surrounded by the beauty of the Cape, that in the seemingly innocent and naïve days of eighteenth century life, on the quiet and picturesque farms, in the pleasant valleys of the Boland, that the most atrocious and harsh treatment was endured by these people from foreign lands who had been sold into slavery. It was an especially sad fate to be sold from a life in Cape Town to a life in the country, with incessant hard labour and often brutal punishment for minor short-comings by unsympathetic overseers. Mason quotes John Barrow, an ex-civil servant from the late eighteenth century, who stated that city slaves were 'in general well fed, well clothed, not much exposed to the weather, [and] not put to hard labour [...] others in the country, whose principle food consists of black sandy bread, and the offals of butcher's meat, who labour from morning to night in the field [...] are subject to bilious fevers, of which they seldom recover.' This fact was known to both slave masters and slaves and 'disobedient slaves were "frequently" sold into the rural districts "as punishment."' <sup>71</sup>

It is worth bearing in mind that every household, every owner and every slave had a different fortune, a different life and experienced different forms of oppressive or involuntary circumstances. Some slaves were fortunate enough to be sold to good masters and have relatively good fortune, others lived tortured and miserable lives under oppressive and violent owners.<sup>72</sup> The Cape Malays in particular did not react well to oppressive masters or circumstances and had a reputation for 'running amok', or rather murdering their oppressors and thereby sacrificing themselves.<sup>73</sup>

Arson was one of the most common forms of retaliation, and was ultimately the reason for the architectural change in Cape Town houses, from thatched roofs to the flat roofs that are still to be seen on the historic buildings.<sup>74</sup> The punishment of torture and execution for arson was incredibly brutal, as Mentzel recorded in 1736, quoted in Shell:

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<sup>70</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-54.

<sup>71</sup> Mason, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-112.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 118-123; Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-64.

<sup>73</sup> Kirsten McKenzie, *The Making of an English Slave-owner Samuel Eusebius Hudson at the Cape of Good Hope 1796 – 1807*, Cape Town, Cape Town University Press, 1993, pp. 87-89; Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>74</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-276; Worden *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

Of the remaining incendiaries, five were impaled; four were broken on the wheel; that is to say each arm and each leg was twice broken in two with an iron club, and then they were bound living on the wheel; four were hanged, and two women were slowly strangled while the hangman's assistants waved a burning bundle of reeds about their faces and before their eyes.<sup>75</sup>

Loos, quoting Jemima Kindersley who arrived in Cape Town in November 1765, purports that Kindersley was 'horrified by the harsh punishments that followed' slaves who 'run amok' due to 'violent passions which were 'testimony to the anguish and hopelessness that slavery induced.' Kindersley states: 'The execution [...] was the most cruel that could be invented by the art of man: a lingering death upon the rack, with the application of burning instruments in a manner too shocking to repeat.'<sup>76</sup>

Life in Cape Town offered slaves a lot more freedom than their rural counterparts. They had opportunities to earn their own money and often to sleep out of their master's house. The men who worked as porters (or 'coolies', as they were called) were able to keep 'coolie geld' money for themselves and many slave women operated as hawkers selling their own or their owner's goods.<sup>77</sup> Women slaves were mostly employed at domestic work and in the kitchens, and well into the eighteenth century usually lived in the house with the Cape-Dutch families. During the first half century at the Cape, all slaves generally slept inside the owner's house due to the simple nature of the accommodation. In the eighteenth century men were mostly moved to separate slave quarters.<sup>78</sup>

One of Shell's main interests is based around what he calls, 'the family as central motif'. He states that the 'family was the source of all concepts and patterns of subordination in all metropolitan and colonial areas.' Cape-Dutch families, especially those who farmed on the ever expanding colonial frontiers, followed an extremely paternalistic male dominated hierarchical pattern which dominated women, children and slaves. Violence or the threat of violence was often one of the methods of maintaining order and obedience.<sup>79</sup> It was

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<sup>75</sup> Mentzel, quoted in Shell, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

<sup>76</sup> Jemima Kindersley, quoted in Jackie Loos, *Echoes of Slavery: Voices from South Africa's Past*, Cape Town, David Philip Publishers, 2004, p. 1.

<sup>77</sup> Mason, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-117.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78; Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-254.

<sup>79</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. xxvi-xxix.

convenient to treat the slaves (both male and female) as ‘perpetual children’.<sup>80</sup> Domestic life during the VOC period was centred within the large kitchens of Cape-Dutch households and intimate bonds of kinship were formed between owners’ wives and their slave women and slave children. Shell posits that it was in the setting of the kitchen that some of the most significant creole South African cultural material was incubated and fashioned.<sup>81</sup>

Cape-Dutch children within these households were used to being brought up and served on by slaves. Visiting travellers often remarked on the curious dynamics in the relationship between a slave and his master’s children. Robert Percival quoted by John Edwin Mason, states that early lessons learnt by the children of slave owners include ‘to domineer over, and to insult the slaves, who are subject to all their whims and caprices. Observe the Dutch children, and those of the slaves playing and mixing together, you will see the former at one moment beating and tyrannizing over the latter, and at the next caressing and encouraging them; so that from an early period they acquire an arbitrary and capricious habit of mind.’<sup>82</sup>

The complex web of cosmologies, attitudes, dispositions, concepts and judgements of both master and slave, formed on a personal level and saturated particularly within the nucleus of the extended Cape family in the landscape of over one and a half centuries of slavery in the Cape, have been trapped and perpetuated in thinking, conditioning, language and consciously or subconsciously handed down and imbibed by every new generation of slave owner and slave, master and servant, into the present.<sup>83</sup> Cape-Dutch families, whose children grew up within the hierarchical and paternalistic dynamic of slavery, acculturated to this way of life within one or two generations and knew no other way of life. As a cultural group with a seeming ethnic bond fused by their isolation on the outer extreme of a foreign continent, the Cape-Dutch collective world-view, formed according to their inherited social position of domination, was to be preserved at all cost. From generation to generation, conservatively and tenaciously, this world-view was handed down. The Cape-Dutch became so accustomed and addicted to the dynamic of slavery and servitude that their progeny continued to maintain this legacy through the following three centuries in various, if not

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.239-240.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 414-415.

<sup>82</sup> Robert Percival, quoted in Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>83</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-227, 414-415.

diluted, forms.<sup>84</sup> The Cape remained a slave society until the abolition of slavery in 1834 and the slaves' final release on 1 January 1838 after a four year period of apprenticeship.<sup>85</sup> But Shell goes so far as to say that according to Orlando Patterson's definition of slavery, which 'maintained that the most significant aspect of slavery was the social domination of the slave's personality by the owner', twentieth-century South Africa could still be regarded as a slave society.<sup>86</sup>

The culture of the Cape was heavily influenced by slavery during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; the slaves and their diverse cultures had a profound influence on the music of the Cape as well as the language and culinary culture. Each new shipment of slaves brought with them a fresh world of cultural heritage that influenced those around them, not least by their musicality, their songs, their rhythms, their culinary sensibilities and their language.<sup>87</sup> Music seems able to endure the hardships of the most intense war and destruction, attacks and persecutions on personal dignity and freedom and on entire modes of material culture. Through the many generations of owners and slaves who, in the majority cases, especially in the farmlands of the Cape, became acculturated to a relationship of regular inhumane inequality and sometimes violence, music always had a place, always persisted, was always there to bring hope, solace and joy to the persecuted, both in the psalm singing and in secular and social dance music.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> John Edwin Mason, 'Fortunate Slaves and Artful Masters: Labor Relations in the Rural Cape Colony During the Era of Emancipation, ca. 1825 to 1838' in *Slavery in South Africa: Captive Labor on the Dutch Frontier*, E Eldredge & F Morton (eds), Pietermaritzburg, The University of Natal Press, 1994, pp. 67–91. Mason states that the 'relationship between master and their fortunate slaves and their non-white servants defined the dominant form of labor relations that the Voortrekkers took to the interior of South Africa.', esp. p. 85; Mason further states that the Voortrekkers had a 'formidable' record of holding on to aspects of servitude and racism, stating that in this regard 'their record as historical preservationists is impressive.', esp. p. 87.

<sup>85</sup> Mason, *Social Death and Resurrection: Slavery and Emancipation in South Africa*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>86</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

<sup>87</sup> Martin, *Sounding the Cape Music: Identity and Politics in South Africa*, *op. cit.*, pp 69-79.

<sup>88</sup> Martin, *Sounding the Cape Music: Identity and Politics in South Africa*, *op. cit.*, p. 171; Martin states: 'What makes creolisation processes—especially South African creolisation processes—unique is that they generate creations in conditions of oppression and violence, in spite of the subjugation and humiliation colonised people have been submitted to.'; Loos, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-15.

## Early Music and Dance at the Cape

In 1666, work began on the building of a stone castle, after the 'earthen fort' build by Jan van Riebeeck had collapsed in 1663. The Castle, as it stands today, was largely completed in 1674.<sup>89</sup> The Castle was to become one of the most important venues for music and social dances throughout the different periods of colonial rule, especially until the mid-1800s. The building of the castle was achieved with labour of the imported slaves as well as artisans and soldiers from countries all over Europe, particularly Dutch and Northern German, many of whom were recruited into the VOC in Amsterdam, where 'boarding-house keepers' or 'Seelensverkäufers [soul sellers] [...] doubled as labour touts for the VOC.'<sup>90</sup>

In 1664, according to the Company muster rolls, there were 178 Company employees or officials and amongst these there was only one official Trumpeter and one official Drummer.<sup>91</sup> This fact does not necessarily exclude the possibility that amongst these artisans, soldiers and sailors, there were many who could play diverse musical instruments and functioned as unofficial players for the colony at the time. Jan Bouws proposes that amongst these men were also good musicians who were able to play either the organ, the harpsichord or harp, and the cittern or guitar.<sup>92</sup> Other common instruments from this period that were also played by the proletariat were the bagpipes and the fiddle, both of which were closely associated with dancing and festivities.<sup>93</sup> Bouws speculates that most ships in the mid-seventeenth century had a contingent of buglers, drummers and pipers or fifers and shawm players.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Dooling, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>90</sup> John Murdoch McGregor Imrie, *The Military Band in South Africa*, Cape Town, The South African Navy Printing Press, 1976, p. 7; Dooling, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>91</sup> 'Introduction to the Resolutions of the Council of Policy of Cape of Good Hope', in *Towards a New Age of Partnership (Tanap)*,

<[http://www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents/resolutions\\_Cape\\_of\\_Good\\_Hope/introduction\\_english/31.htm](http://www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents/resolutions_Cape_of_Good_Hope/introduction_english/31.htm)> [accessed 29 July 2015].

<sup>92</sup> Imrie, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8; Jan Bouws, *Solank daar musiek is...: Musiek en musiekmakers in Suid-Afrika (1652-1982)*, Kaapstad, Tafelberg-Uitgewers Beperk, 1982, p. 6.

<sup>93</sup> Curt Sachs, *World History of the Dance*, New York, Bonanza Books, 1937, pp. 285, 326.

<sup>94</sup> Max Wade-Matthews, *The World Encyclopedia of Musical Instruments*, London, Anness Publishing Ltd., 2010, pp. 144-152, 162-177; Bouws, *op. cit.*, p. 6. 'Evolution of the bugle: a very brief history of the trumpet and the bugle through the eighteenth century', in *The Middle Horn Leader*, <<http://www.middlehornleader.com/Evolution of the Bugle -- Section 1.htm>> [accessed 1 June 2015]. In regard to the phrase: 'die trompetter het op sy beuel geblaas (the trumpeter sounded his bugle)'. The natural trumpet was certainly in use at this time for military purposes, whereas the buglehorn or flugelhorn as it was earlier known, was only developed and introduced into military use in the mid 1700's during the Seven Years

Bouws also alludes to the function of municipal musicians, who were common in Europe at the time and known as ‘Stadsfijfers’ in Holland, ‘Stadtspfeifers’ in Germany and ‘Waits’ in England. Typically for the times, these multi-instrumentalists would be employed by the VOC for similar duties in the colonies, which included announcing the new day, sounding military signals and warnings for fire and danger.<sup>95</sup> These musicians were renowned for playing the shawm or schalmey (as it was named in Germany), and also known in England as the Wait-pipes, the instrument having been so closely associated with the profession. It was a loud double-reed, six holed, pipe of ancient Middle Eastern origin that would eventually be modified into the hautboy in 1670 by Martin Hotteterre and in the late-eighteenth century into the modern oboe, the name being an Anglicised version of the French hautboy.<sup>96</sup>

To further support the possibility of the function of musicians employed by a town, a city or the VOC, Bouws quotes from D. F. Scheurleer in *Het Muziekleven* (1901) regarding the wedding of Simon van der Stel to Johanna Jacoba Six on 23 October 1663 in Haarlem, Netherlands, where “four “*blasende en musiceerende*” [loud blowing and musical] city musicians from Amsterdam including the renowned Michiel Servaes Nouts, added a sound to the pleasant atmosphere at the couple’s departure to the church and on their return as well as providing “*tafelmusiek*” [table music] at the midday and at the evening festivities’, a practice that would become part of life at the Cape.<sup>97</sup>

One of the earliest reports of a band or assemblage of musicians at the Cape, was on 14 April 1658 for ‘a semi-military funeral’ for a company official, the band comprising of “‘Twee

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War by all accounts. Many aspects of size, bore, and mouth piece shape differentiate the buglehorn or bugle from the natural trumpet. Trumpets were known for fanfare use in the Middle Ages and subsequently from the sixteenth century were adopted for use in military signalling mainly for the cavalry, while the drums were used for the infantry. A fife is small side blown flute originally with six holes, modernised in America with more holes and stops. Still used today for military type Fife and Drum bands. A pipe would likely refer to bagpipes.

<sup>95</sup> Bouws, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>96</sup> Anthony C. Baines, and Martin Kimbauer, ‘Shawm’, in *Grove Music Online*, S. Sadie (Ed.), 2014, <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ez.sun.ac.za/subscriber/article/grove/music/43658>> [accessed 26 July 2015]. The shawm is English for the German schalmey, an early double reed instrument which was parent of the hautboy or oboe in English; Wade-Matthews, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43, 150-151; Richard Rastall, ‘Wait’, in *Grove Music Online*, 2007, <[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ez.sun.ac.za/subscriber/article/grove/music/29801?q=Wait&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ez.sun.ac.za/subscriber/article/grove/music/29801?q=Wait&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)> [accessed 30 July 2015].

<sup>97</sup> Bouws, *op. cit.*, p. 17. (Translation from the Afrikaans by the present author).

Tamboeren” [Two Drums] and “Drie Trompetten” [Three Trumpets].<sup>98</sup> In the Cape, trumpeters were highly regarded, received the same pay as non-commissioned officers and allowed to wear a sword. In this way they were distinguished above the normal rank and file.<sup>99</sup>

The ‘Fifes and Drums’ had for centuries been and was still in the 1650s, the main combination for most ‘martial music’ in both England and Europe.<sup>100</sup> However, in 1663, the French Army replaced Fife and Drums with ‘Hautbois’, using four for each Company. This practice was later copied by the British Army, who were granted ‘the first official recognition of a Military Band in England’ in 1678.<sup>101</sup>

Simon van der Stel, who became Governor of the Cape from 1679 to 1697, purportedly ‘attached much importance to “Pomp and Ceremony”, and in 1685, had a number of additional musicians drafted to his military establishments, including extra trumpeters, drummers and oboeists’.<sup>102</sup> In 1688 the arrival at the Cape of the French Huguenots, ‘brought with them first-hand information about this instrumentation that had become so popular in Europe’. The trumpeters and drummers still remained central to the military routines in the Cape, with the drummers sounding calls for sailors to return to their ships before departure at high tide, and trumpeters playing the ‘Last Post’ at the Castle.<sup>103</sup>

These musicians, who served at the Castle, made up a military band of sorts. This band functioned not only as a band for official military occasions such as funerals or the welcoming of important officials to the Colony, but also for social occasions, such as entertaining the Commanders and Governors in the evening before playing hymns and the ‘Last Post’.<sup>104</sup> This multi-functionality of the musicians of military bands has played a key role in the history of social music and dance throughout every era of the Cape, and will be

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<sup>98</sup> Imrie, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>100</sup> ‘History: Celebrating British Fife and Drum Music’, in *Corps of Drums Society*, 2016, <<http://corpsofdrums.com/about/history/>> [accessed 29 September 2016]. The Swiss military units are credited with being the first to use fife and drums in battle from the fifteenth century on. The Swiss mercenaries spread this practice across Europe. In the sixteenth century Henry VIII of England first introduced fife and drums into the English Army.

<sup>101</sup> Imrie, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

shown in later sections of this historical chapter to have played an increasingly significant role after the British rule began around the turn of the nineteenth century.

## Instruments of the Period used in Dance Music

More than half a century prior to the settling of the Cape, the French dance master Thoinot Arbeau, in his dance manual *Orchesography* (1588), referred to instrumentation used for dance, listing ‘sackbuts, recorders, pipe and tabor, violins, transverse flutes, spinets, hautboys and “toutes d’ instruments”, adding that dances might also be sung’.<sup>105</sup> In England in 1641, Charles the First’s band ‘consisted of eight hautboys and suckbuts, six flutes, six recorders, eleven violins, six lutes, four viols and a harp’. William Chappell further states that at this time, ‘[v]iolins had long been the favourite instrument for dancing, whether with common fiddlers or at court.’<sup>106</sup> Viols had long been regarded amongst the aristocracy, throughout the sixteenth century, to be more associated with ‘virtuous people’. The violin (which was harder to play than the viol), was more closely related to the common three stringed fiddle and was looked down upon by the aristocracy at that time.<sup>107</sup> The four-stringed violin had been under development in Italy through the early sixteenth century: ‘By about 1550, four strings had become standard and schools of violin making had been established in Venice, Cremona and Brescia.’ Contemporary to the settling of the Cape, the great violin maker Antonio Stradivari (1644 to 1737) was born and worked in Cremona, Italy, where he learned his art from Nicola Amati and further refined the violin to near perfection.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Julia Sutton, ‘Dance: Late Renaissance and Baroque; before 1630’, in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, S. Sadie (Ed.), London, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001, pp. 888–894; Antony C. Baines & Helene La Rue, ‘Pipe and Tabor’, in *Grove Music Online*, , 2007, <[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ez.sun.ac.za/subscriber/article/grove/music/21805?q=pipe+and+tabor&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ez.sun.ac.za/subscriber/article/grove/music/21805?q=pipe+and+tabor&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)> [accessed 26 July 2015]. A combination of pipe and drum played by one musician, consisting of a duct flute with three holes played with the left hand while the right hand plays a snare drum with a drum stick. Mainly associated with music for dancing.

<sup>106</sup> William Chappell, *The Ballad Literature and Popular Music of the Olden Time: A History of the Ancient Songs, Ballads, and of the Dance Tunes of England, with Numerous Anecdotes and Entire Ballads; also, A short Account of the Minstrels. Vol. 1 & 2*, New York, Dover Publications Inc., 1965, p. 468.

<sup>107</sup> Wade-Matthews, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-104, 122-123.

The lute, a plucked and fretted stringed instrument which had been very popular in Europe throughout the sixteenth century to accompany song and dance in a consort setting and as a solo instrument, as courtly chamber music or in other intimate settings, was slowly being replaced through the seventeenth century by the popularity of the Baroque guitar.<sup>109</sup> The guitar had been under constant development from as early as the thirteenth century, when it entered Europe in the form of the gittern through Moorish Spain. The gittern was modified into the vihuela in Spain and Henry VIII is purported to have had four 'Spanish vialles'. The vihuela was associated with 'courtly society, whereas the smaller four-course guitar was used for popular music' and developed as the Renaissance guitar in the fifteenth century, to the point where it became extremely popular by the mid-sixteenth century when 'Juan Carlos Amat brought out the first edition of his tutor, *Guitarra Española*.'<sup>110</sup>

The guitar and mandolin were to play an important role in Cape Malay music through the twentieth century. The guitar is well documented early in the nineteenth century by Bouws, but it is more speculative to ascertain when the mandolin became part of the Malay Choirs, considering that the mandolin was well established in Europe in the seventeenth century already. The guitar was to become ever more popular in all forms of secular music through every epoch of the Cape until the present day. We find the first reference to a guitar associated with the Cape, if a little tenuously, when Bouws reports that Simon van der Stel could possibly have played music himself. According to records found by Dr. S Hart and noted in a book by Dr. A. J. Böeseke, *Simon van der Stel en sy kinders* (1964), thirty year old Van der Stel, around Christmas of 1670, visited the widow of a well-known luthier, Gerrit Menslagen, and bought a Spanish guitar for twenty guilders. Bouws reflects on the possible influence this could have had if Simon van der Stel had the guitar with him at the Cape.<sup>111</sup>

In the seventeenth century, both the lute and the five or six stringed guitar could facilitate the playing of complex polyphonic music, were very light and portable and were very well suited to vocal accompaniment and instrumental dance music. The Baroque guitar was by design a simpler, hardier and more durable instrument for travelling in the harsher climatic

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<sup>109</sup> James Tyler, 'The Four-Course Guitar and The Five-Course Guitar', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, S. Sadie (Ed.), London, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001, pp. 554–563; Wade-Matthews, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-130.

<sup>110</sup> Wade-Matthews, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>111</sup> Bouws, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

conditions of the Cape, than the delicate and more fragile lute.<sup>112</sup> A smaller instrument of the lute type was the mandolino, which was ‘descended from the medieval gittern’ and developed to a greater sophistication in Italy. There is a possibility that some of these instruments might have been brought to the Cape during the eighteenth century, also considering the Portuguese influence in the East, to whom it was known as the bandolim.<sup>113</sup>

The banjo was brought to North America by African slaves as a gut stringed instrument with a wooden neck attached to a skin covered gourd. Named alternatively a banjar, banjil, banza, banjoe, bangie and banshaw, it was first reported in Martinique in a document from 1678. It was used by the slaves in the Southern States of North America to make their own unique music, and it is reported that white men were using it as a prop for black faced comedy in North America before the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>114</sup> The first well known white musicians to perform on the instrument were Joel Walker Sweeney and his Sweeney Minstrels and Billy Whitlock with Daniel Decatur Emmett and the Virginia Minstrels from around the 1830s and 1840s respectively.<sup>115</sup> The banjo became increasingly popular through the 1800’s to the point where there were 10,000 banjos in Boston alone in 1866.<sup>116</sup>

Blackface minstrelsy had become central to American popular entertainment by this time.<sup>117</sup>

Thomas Dartmouth Rice took blackface minstrelsy to Britain in 1836, introducing a genre that would have a strong American influence on Music Hall entertainment through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Britain.<sup>118</sup> The banjo would become popular in Britain

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<sup>112</sup> James Tyler, ‘The Guitar’, in *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz, 2nd Edition*, Chapter 4, <[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ez.sun.ac.za/subscriber/article/grove/music/43006?q=the+guitar&search=quick&pos=6&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ez.sun.ac.za/subscriber/article/grove/music/43006?q=the+guitar&search=quick&pos=6&_start=1#firsthit)> [accessed 13 July 2015].

<sup>113</sup> James Tyler, ‘The Mandolin: Mandolino’, in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, S. Sadie (Ed.), London, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001, pp. 737–743.

<sup>114</sup> Bill Reese, ‘Thumbnail History of The Banjo’, in *Blue Grass Banjo*, 1998, <<http://bluegrassbanjo.org/banhist.html>> [accessed 11 July 2015]; Jay Scott Odell & Robert B. Winans, ‘Banjo’, in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, S. Sadie (ed), London, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001, pp. 660–665.

<sup>115</sup> Veit Erlmann, *African Stars: Studies in Black South African Performance*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 27; Reese, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2; Wade-Matthews, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

<sup>116</sup> Reese, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>117</sup> Gage Averill, *Four Parts, No Waiting: A Social History of American Barbershop Harmony*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp.33-39.

<sup>118</sup> ‘Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain’, in *Source: Folk Music Journal*, vol. 9232129, 2009, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25654177>> [accessed 27 September 2016]; Wade-Matthews, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

from this time on and British instrument makers became active in producing models for the British market such as the six string banjo from the late nineteenth century.<sup>119</sup>

It is highly likely that the banjo first made its appearance in the Cape with some of the early minstrel troupes to tour the Cape, such as the first performance in South Africa in 1848 by the 'Celebrated Ethiopian Serenaders', but fourteen years later the instrumentation reported to be used by 'The Celebrated and Original Christy's Minstrels' who performed at the Theatre Royal in Harrington Street, Cape Town on 20 August 1862, was 'two violins, violincello, bones and tambourines.'<sup>120</sup> We have a record of the banjo being used on Friday 4 January 1878 by E. H. Harvey and The Ethiopian Opera Troupe in the song 'He always came home to tea'.<sup>121</sup> The banjo, introduced to the Cape from North America sometime in the mid-nineteenth century via touring blackface minstrel troupes, would go on to become the leading harmonic and rhythmic instrument for accompaniment to Ballroom dance music in the Cape through most of the twentieth century.

## European Dances and Dance Music of the Period

Dance and dance music has a vast and varied history. Briefly covering the period of European dance history just prior to the settlement of the Cape will establish possible conclusions to a speculative history of European-derived dance and dance music at the Cape from this time, which were certainly modified to some degree over time by local ethnic sensibilities, from every slave's national dances to Khoikhoi circle dances with their particular rhythmic sensibilities and movements.<sup>122</sup> From the time that French troops arrived at the Cape in 1781 more information on dancing from travellers and writers began

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<sup>119</sup> Odell & Winans, *op. cit.*, pp. 660-662.

<sup>120</sup> Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, Past and Present*, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-81.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58-61; Matilda Burden, 'Die Herkoms en Ontwikkeling van die Afrikaanse Volksdans', MA Thesis in Literature and Philosophy, Dept. of Afrikaans Cultural History, Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch University, 1985, pp. 29-35.

to appear.<sup>123</sup> Dancing masters and dancing teachers became part of the social fabric of the Cape from the nineteenth century onwards.<sup>124</sup>

The importance of this section is also to show how aspects of the dances that were maintained in Ballroom dancing at the Cape well into the twentieth century had earlier origins and were quite likely present throughout many eras of Cape history. One example is the Train (or Grand Chain), which had always been a part of peasant choral dancing, as well as appearing in early Ballroom dances. It was still to be found in the Grand Chain of the Square Dance sets of Cape Ballroom dances through the twentieth century, in particular the Quadrille, the Lancers, the Commercials, the Pageant Quadrille and the Second Set.<sup>125</sup>

According to Nicholas Temperley, '[d]ancing was a pastime enjoyed by all classes of society, except those who disapproved of it on religious grounds...'.<sup>126</sup> In 1652 when the Cape was first settled, dance in Europe, as it had been for centuries, was a part of every social setting, from the rough and tumble country dances and the round or choral dances of peasants to the highly refined Ballo of the aristocracy, as well as dance of the theatre.<sup>127</sup> Although it had been an aspect of theatre throughout the Middle-Ages, theatrical dance was developed to immense sophistication in France by Louis XIV, 'the Sun King', during the seventeenth century in the form of early ballet and also opera productions.<sup>128</sup>

The courtly dances are reported to have been a fairly universal language amongst the nobility in the Courts of England and Europe, the music and dance having been performed and taught by the Minstrels in England, Jongleurs in France and Minnesingers in Germany, who were the keepers and curators of the music and dance culture for the aristocracy

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<sup>123</sup> Burden, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>124</sup> Jan Bouws, *Die Musieklewe van Kaapstad 1800-1850: En sy verhouding tot die Musiekkultuur van Wes-Europa*, Kaapstad/Amsterdam, A.A. Balkema, 1966, pp. 136-148.

<sup>125</sup> Sachs, *op. cit.*, p. 422; 'M.C.'s Practical Guide', the Willie Jales Collection. Refer to Figure 4, p. 85.

<sup>126</sup> Nicholas Temperley, 'Ballroom and Drawing-room Music' in *The Athlone History of Music in Britain: The Romantic Age 1800-1914*, Nicholas Temperley (ed), London, The Athlone Press, 1981, pp. 109-134, esp. p. 109.

<sup>127</sup> Sachs, *op. cit.*, pp. 278, 328.

<sup>128</sup> R Harris-Warrick, 'Dance: Late Renaissance and Baroque; 1630-1730', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, S. Sadie (Ed.), London, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001, pp. 893-895.

throughout these regions.<sup>129</sup> The folk dances of the proletariat, on the other hand, were very regional and very varied.<sup>130</sup>

In his *World History of Dance*, Curt Sachs devotes more than 25 pages to elaborate a few theories regarding the interrelatedness of courtly and peasant dances in Europe in what he names ‘The Minnesinger Period’ (up until the fifteenth century). Sachs states that ‘we should not, as is often done, distinguish socially between the courtly “dance” and rustic “choral round,” even if the villager occasionally imitated a *hovetänse* (court dance) and the knights were fond of joining in the choral round.’ The difference lies rather in the ‘manner in which the dances are executed.’ Sachs proposes that the peasants would ‘give themselves up’ to the ‘motor and sensory enjoyment with unrestrained exuberance and passion’, whereas the Knights, in this era of courtly romance or *cortezia*, would ‘polish and restrain’, bringing ‘charm, grace, and tenderness to the love play in the dance.’

Sachs further illustrates by way of two old German words, *Reigen* (choral circle dance) and *Tanz* (couples dance), how these two forms were ‘[t]he alternation of the procession and pantomime within the same dance.’ Sachs shows that the choral dance was most often accompanied only by singing, which ties in very closely with local practices today amongst the Coloured people, for instance in the Pinkster church environment.<sup>131</sup>

The ‘procession’ of the choral would often move into a train with all joining hands. The ‘pantomime’ or *Tanz* aspect was usually accompanied by instrumental music played on the fiddle or pipes and would be associated with dancers braking into couples where movements and play would tend more towards wooing and sexual advances. Amongst peasants this would be boisterous and energetic, whereas with the nobility it would be subdued and refined. Sachs points out that most of the dances of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries could be classified as either ‘processional’ or ‘pantomimic’. The processional was derived from the ancient chorale or round dance and the pantomime was

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<sup>129</sup> Sachs, *op. cit.*, p. 297. ‘Almost every minstrel had his own copy of the Landla tunes familiar to him. He guarded them jealously, as they had been handed down from generation to generation. These notes could be correctly deciphered only by an expert, however.’

<sup>130</sup> Ingrid Brainard, ‘Dance: The Middle Ages and Early Renaissance’, in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, S. Sadie (Ed.), London, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001, pp. 883–888, esp. p. 884.

<sup>131</sup> Sachs, *op. cit.*, p. 286; Dunseith, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-42.

an elaboration of the peasant couples dances. The true pantomimic aspect of the couples' dances slowly faded away through the fifteen and sixteenth centuries.<sup>132</sup>

The Square Dances that were danced at the Cape through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries maintained within them versions of the procession and pantomime in the Grand Chain and the *Passies* respectively.<sup>133</sup> Most of the Square Dance sets that were danced at the Cape in the twentieth century ended with the Grand Chain, and the *Passies* was the second figure of the Quadrille.<sup>134</sup> The *Passies* was pantomimic in that it was the figure of the Quadrille that gave dancers freedom to do their own steps and playful acting or fun movements, although interlacing of the arms was an integral part of the figure.<sup>135</sup>

Folk dances, through the transmission of the Minstrels, were the major source of inspiration for new dances that were introduced into the courtly dance repertoire.<sup>136</sup> In the early-fifteenth century the role of Minstrels as keepers of culture, dancers and balladeers for the Courts, was steadily changing eventually transforming into the role of the dancing Master. Sachs has this to say about this time: 'Dance teacher, dancing master – this is a new picture [...]. The time is past when everybody could dance from natural inclination and learned the unwritten rules from observation and participation. The spontaneity is gone. Courtly dance and folk dance are separated once and for all.'<sup>137</sup> By the time of the Baroque period numerous sophisticated dance manuals had been written by dancing Masters from various courts across Europe. Dancing Masters across Europe would eventually move down through the upper-middle class after the turn of the nineteenth century and the French Revolution, to the middle class into the nineteenth century and eventually moved towards teaching all classes, as Balls became increasingly more accessible to all strata of society in the early twentieth century across the Westernizing world.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Sachs, *op. cit.*, pp. 266-298.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 163, 275-280, 414, 422-424.

<sup>134</sup> 'M.C.'s Practical Guide', the Willie Jales Collection. Refer to Figure 4, p. 85.

<sup>135</sup> Sachs, *op. cit.*, pp. 414, 422; Joe Schaffers, interviewed by the author, 28 September 2016. The *Passies* could derive from an Anglicized use of the French *pas* which means step but is pronounced without the S, as in *pas de gavotte*. It could relate to the (German) *Allemande* where according to Sachs, 'the so-called *passes*' are 'graceful interlacing of the arms'.

<sup>136</sup> Sachs, *op. cit.*, pp. 292-298.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

<sup>138</sup> Richard Powers, 'A Brief History of Social Dance', in *Social Dance Stanford Edu.*, pp. 2–8, <[https://socialdance.stanford.edu/Syllabi/dance\\_histories.htm](https://socialdance.stanford.edu/Syllabi/dance_histories.htm)> [accessed 15 July 2015].

By the sixteenth century, the Branle and the Moresca were danced by the common people with abandon, but unknown to the nobility who were required to dance with dignified reserve in keeping with their station. The Moresque, Moresca or Morris dance was very widespread in Europe through the Renaissance period and had three types: the solo Moresca with exotic movements, the sword or stick dance and the miming Moresca where masks could be worn or faces painted. Sachs purports that '[t]he Moresque is the most frequently mentioned of all the dances of the fifteenth century.'<sup>139</sup> Chappell sites the Morris dance (called in Dutch *Engelsche Klocke-Dans*), in three collections published in the Netherlands and entitled *Bellerophon, of Lust tot Wyshed* (Amsterdam 1622), *Nederlandtsche Gedenck-Clanck* (Haerlem 1626) and *Starter's Friesche Lust-Hof* (Amsterdam 1634).<sup>140</sup> This illustrates in some manner the inter-relatedness of English and Dutch music and dance culture in the mid-seventeenth century through printed music, with London as a major centre for the production of printed music and manuscripts and therefore exercising a strong influence on Dutch publications.<sup>141</sup>

After 1560, the Galliard came into prominence in the courtly repertoire. It was characterised by virtuoso footwork, high kicks, pirouettes and beats or 'capers' where 'young men dazzled their ladies [...]'.<sup>142</sup> Popular dances which were to be found in the dance manuals were the Allemande or Tedesca, the Branle or Brawl, the Canary or Canario, the Courante or Corrente, the Galliard or Gagliarde, the Tourdion or Tordiglione, the Volta or Volte, the Pavan or Pavaniglia, and the Saltarello.<sup>143</sup>

Orchestrated instrumental music which was not specifically composed for dancing but more for listening, became very popular in the Baroque period during which the Cape was settled. This music included many of the prior courtly dances in the form of a suite, namely: Pavane, Gavotte, Canarie, Galliarde, Bourree, Sarabande and Gigue. A few of these dances were maintained as popular dances during this period. These included the Passepied, the Gavotte, the Bouree and the Courante, which 'dominated the social dances' through the

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<sup>139</sup> Sachs, *op. cit.*, p. 33; Brainard, *op. cit.*, p. 887.

<sup>140</sup> Chappell, *op. cit.*, p. 283. The *Klocke* refer to the bells which Morris dancers used around their ankles.

<sup>141</sup> Elise van der Ven-Ten Bensel, 'Dutch Folk-dances', in *The Journal of the English Folk Dance Society*, vol. 2, 1931, pp. 1–8.

<sup>142</sup> Brainard, *op. cit.*, pp. 883-885; Sutton, *op. cit.*, pp. 887-889.

<sup>143</sup> Sutton, *op. cit.*, p. 893.

early 1600s but was replaced by the Minuet by the late 1600s. The Minuet was to become the most popular and longest lasting of these dances.

At masked balls dancers had more freedom and 'more theatrical' dances were permitted, such as the Sarabande (which hailed from Spain), the Gigue, the Loure, the Rigaudon and the Chaconne.<sup>144</sup>

On 10 March 1650, John Playford published his *The English Dancing Master*, which 'continued through 18 editions until 1728': testament to the popularity of these dances and tunes and their becoming accessible to the general proletariat through printed manuscripts.<sup>145</sup> In 1684, the French Court embraced English country dances and soon refined them to their own tastes, after which they became known in French as 'Contredanse' which quickly spread all over Europe.<sup>146</sup> By the late seventeenth century, together with the Contredanse, the Minuet became the most popular dance and continued as such in aristocratic society until the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>147</sup> The Minuet was primarily an elegant dance for a single couple and was danced to a triple beat rhythm in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time to a moderate tempo. Essentially the English country dances or Contredanse were danced in the Longways form with all the members of the ball in two lines, men on one side and women on the other. The Contredanse Francaise eventually came to be called the Cotillon, involving 'two or, more often, four couples' dancing in 'a square formation.'<sup>148</sup> The two dances must have complimented each other, the Minuet being more dignified and refined and the Contredanse being more communal and potentially more lively and boisterous.<sup>149</sup>

The English country dances and the Cotillon would move further into the world of the upper middle classes and would eventually metamorphosize into the Quadrille, persisting through the nineteenth century and late into the twentieth century and becoming central to social

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<sup>144</sup> Harris-Warrick, *op. cit.*, p. 895.

<sup>145</sup> Chappell, *op. cit.*, p. 423.

<sup>146</sup> Harris-Warrick, *op. cit.*, p. 895.

<sup>147</sup> Sachs, *op. cit.*, pp. 391-398; Rebecca Harris-Warrick, 'Dance: 1730-1800', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, S. Sadie (Ed.), London, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001, pp. 899-901.

<sup>148</sup> Harris-Warrick, 'Dance: 1730-1800', *op. cit.*, p. 899.

<sup>149</sup> Harris-Warrick, 'Dance: Late Renaissance and Baroque; 1630-1730', *op. cit.*, p. 895; Harris-Warrick, 'Dance: 1730-1800', *op. cit.*, p. 899.

‘Langarm’ dancing in the Cape as Square Dance Sets.<sup>150</sup> The older members of ‘Langarm’ bands still remember the ‘Squares’ being danced in Cape Town as recently as the end of the 1970s. Willie Jales, founder and leader of ‘Willie and the Starlites’, in a personal communication from 2005, reported the following concerning the final demise of square dancing in the Cape:

Then in the sixties when I started my band, we played two squares per night, one before interval and one square after interval. Then we cut out the one before interval, then we had one square after interval. In the early seventies, the bands played no more squares. It just whoops [...] because there was no more leaders around to play. People in the hall was [sic] getting younger and younger and they don’t know how to dance the square [...] – they think it’s just about *jolling* [moving around/having a good time]. You just can’t [...] – you must listen to your leader.<sup>151</sup>

Currently, at ‘Langarm’ events in the Cape, although the Square Dances have disappeared, the modern equivalent of the English country dances or the Contredans has reappeared in the form of the Line-dance, which has come to the Cape from the United States of America where, in the last thirty years, the Line-dance has had a resurgence of popularity in the Country Music scene.

## Slave Musicians: The Musicians of choice at the Cape

In 1676, only twenty four years after the settling of the Cape and only eighteen years after the first shipment of slaves to the Cape, the then Governor of the Cape, Johan Bax van Herenthals, was reported to have had a ‘slave orchestra’.<sup>152</sup> We also find a report in Bouws relating to 1676, which relates how Abraham van Riebeeck (the son of Jan van Riebeeck), described an occasion where ‘tafelmusiek’ [table music] was presented by a black yardmaster who played on the harp, a young slave who played on the lute and a soldier who enjoyed musical exchanges with them on the violin. Abraham van Riebeeck, who was also a proficient amateur musician, remarked that the black harpist who played the piece and the

<sup>150</sup> Andrew Lamb & Helen Thomas, ‘Dance: 19th Century’, in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, S. Sadie (Ed.), London, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001, pp. 901–902.

<sup>151</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by the author, 18 November 2004.

<sup>152</sup> Gerald L. Stone, *The Coon Carnival*, Cape Town, University of Cape Town, Abe Bailey Institute of Interracial Studies, 1971, p. 2, quoted in Denis-Constant Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, Past and Present*, p. 58.

prelude masterfully, played without a note out of place. After leave the Cape, Abraham van Riebeeck related how the farewell banquet hosted by Johan Bax van Herenthals was concluded as usual with music and dancing. Bouws explains that although there were relatively few high-ranking VOC officials, their society required some musical abilities, and they were role models for the lower ranking members of the colony. It was seen to that their children were schooled in music, often by private teachers.<sup>153</sup>

Bouws relates another example from the eighteenth century concerning Joachim Nikolaus von Dessin (1704-61) who was the secretary of the *Weeshuis* and kept a slave orchestra. Bouws relates how he bought a slave who could play the flute, the oboe and the horn and that in his upper room he kept the instruments for his slave orchestra: two trumpets, two horns, two violins, a bass viol and an oboe.<sup>154</sup> Bouws states categorically that through the time of the VOC, dancing was especially popular at the Cape and that it was mostly slaves or free black servants who played the dance music.<sup>155</sup> From the earliest times it is clear that the slaves were able to entertain their masters with tunes during mealtime, with ‘tafelmusiek’ after the European and particularly German fashion of the times, and also with dance music that was often in demand.<sup>156</sup>

Although detailed descriptions of musical practices throughout the seventeenth century are scarce, we can glean from where the narratives emanated, that the slaves picked up the music of their masters very quickly by ear and with so much natural talent that they were able to master the European instruments and music within a very short time. This mastery of the slaves over European music became a well-established trope of the eighteenth and nineteenth century travel writers.

It should be born in mind that the first generation of slave children growing up in the intimate domestic proximity with their masters and masters’ children would be thoroughly acculturated within their generation into the surrounding or dominant culture. Being exposed to songs or musical instruments from a very young age, they would eventually

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<sup>153</sup> Bouws, *Solank daar musiek is...:Musiek en musiekmakers in Suid-Afrika (1652-1982)*, op. cit., pp. 11-12. (Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author).

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>156</sup> Imrie, op. cit., p. 9.

become even more versed and proficient in the music of their new home culture than their parents' generation.<sup>157</sup> Shell writes:

Slavery brought different people together, not across the sights of a gun, as on the frontier, but in the setting of the home. Each slave was exposed to each owner and each settler to each slave on a very intimate footing. There was in fact, a common reciprocal legacy, which one day might be considered more important than the unfair, but temporary and wholly worldly advantages that the slave owners enjoyed through slavery.<sup>158</sup>

These musical practices of the slaves would continue through every successive generation to become part of the musical culture of the Coloured population of the Cape. Their position as musicians and entertainers of choice was to become a trend which has evolved and flourished through all the different eras of social music and dance at the Cape and was central to the role that the 'Langarm' dance bands of the twentieth century played within the local social milieu. This trend has also evolved into many varied and current musical practices to be found in the Cape today, including Christmas Bands, Malay Choirs, *Nagtroepe*, the *Klopse*, and Cape jazz bands.<sup>159</sup>

The rhythmical development of these genres has resulted in what is today known as the *ghoema* rhythm of the *Klopse* or Coons, the *vastrap* of the 'Langarm' bands and in general the 'Cape beat'.<sup>160</sup> This vastrap-ghoema rhythm-complex has had a profound and lasting influence on popular modern and urbanized indigenous music in South Africa, including the Kadriel, the Vastrap, the Polka and the Settees of *Boeremusiek*, the *vastrap* rhythm of the Square Dance Sets of the 'Langarm' bands, *Tiekiedraai*, *Marabi*, *Mbaqanga*, Township Jive,

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<sup>157</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, p. 415. Shell states that, 'it is towards this amalgam of human relationships, however difficult it may seem, that the historian must force readers to focus their thoughts. Another generation might find the trace elements, no matter how small, of a single domestic creole culture within the otherwise starkly stratified and bifurcated slave society of early South Africa.' Therefore a future micro study of acculturation could be most enlightening, using psychological models, in order to understand how quickly acculturation occurs in the course of one generation and to ascertain in relation to children growing up in a new culture, how much influence the parents' culture might have on mediating that acculturation and what influence the domestic and 'home' environment of the slave/servant might have on their own children as they grow up within it.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 415.

<sup>159</sup> Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, Past and Present*, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-181.

<sup>160</sup> Colin Howard, 'The "No-persons": An Investigation into Aspects of Secular Popular Music in Cape Town', Masters Thesis (Unpub.), University of London, 1994, p. 36.

Township Swing, South African Jazz and modern popular genres like *Kwaito* and African Pop such as the latest Afro House by DJ Ganyani or Thato Ngubs.<sup>161</sup>

## Religion at the Cape: Calvinism's effects on Slave and Master

In order to imagine possible scenarios of social music and dancing at the Cape in the seventeenth century it is necessary to consider the social and religious trends of the day in Europe, and the Netherlands in particular. The state religion of the United Republic of the United Netherlands in 1652 was Calvinism. Roman Catholics were marginalised, as were Jews and other religious groups who resided together in small enclaves in towns. There were so many Protestant groups with differing ideologies that it made religious intolerance impracticable, but there was a definite divide between the Remonstrants and the Contra-Remonstrants who were the more conservative. The rigidity of the Calvinist outlook wherever it was to be found in Europe, led to a pious stance towards Baroque culture and music. Early Calvinists frowned on instrumental music and only condoned vocal music for worship.<sup>162</sup> Contrary to this conservative religious bent and paradoxically for a Calvinist society, the Dutch in the Golden Age (1620 to 1670) were extremely tolerant of advanced thought in Philosophy and the Sciences and many well-known academics found a fertile environment to pursue their work in the Universities of Leiden, Rotterdam and Amsterdam. At this time social status was clearly linked to the accumulation of wealth and the nobility were hard pressed to keep pace with the opulence of the wealthy merchants who were also able to buy their way into the aristocracy with a title and a Coat of Arms.<sup>163</sup>

It is therefore highly probable that both conservative and reformist elements were present in the new Dutch colony at the Cape; however, what is certain from historical accounts and records, is that the Church and reformed Protestantism were central to the new colonial community and the axis around which the new slave-based society revolved. Robert Shell

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<sup>161</sup> Jonathan Eato, 'Serve with Curry and Rice: The Ghoemeization of Jazz at the Cape' in *Coloquium Stellenbosch Conservatorium*, Stellenbosch, 2013, pp. 9-12.

<sup>162</sup> Albert Dunning, 'Calvin', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, S. Sadie (ed), London, s

<sup>163</sup> Sommerville, *op. cit.*,

<<https://faculty.history.wisc.edu/sommerville/351/351-08.htm>> [accessed 15 June 2015]; 'History of the Netherlands' *op. cit.*, <<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?ParagraphID=ifb>> [accessed 15 June 2015].

proffers that from the first decades of the Cape colony, '[r]eformed baptism was perceived as analogous to legal enfranchisement. Baptism was necessary for the right to inherit, the right to marry, the right to be buried in a Christian graveyard, and the right to bear witness.' Slaves who were often denied this right were thus severely marginalized from the mainstream of the society within which they found themselves.<sup>164</sup> So it was within the confines of a climate of strict social legislation and over-arching religious structures that secular and social music and dancing occurred in the first century of colonial life at the Cape.<sup>165</sup>

We know from Jan Bouws's work that psalm singing was central to the practice of Calvinism at the Cape and also to the education of the children of both master and slave. Music teachers were often employed by the more wealthy families to instruct their children primarily in psalm singing as well as general education. Bouws writing on musical education in the early eighteenth century in the Cape, citing the Governor Pasque de Chavonnes in an Ordinance from 21 August 1714 as only discussing '*t singen der psalmen*'. (the singing of psalms) The school teachers that were appointed for the town of Stellenbosch in the eighteenth century were specifically chosen for their ability to teach the singing of psalms to the children and to function as '*voorsinger*' (leader) of psalms in the church services. These included Jacob Rens, Antonie Faure, Abraham Faure and George Knoop (who also played the violin). The attitude of Calvinists towards dancing and instrumental music was generally one of committed conservatism, which went as far as outright opposition and condemnation.<sup>166</sup> This stance could have influenced social life in the Cape as far as social

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<sup>164</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 352. Shell puts forward much information to show a lack of piousness amongst the settler community often only using Christianity to suite their own ends, such as refusing to Baptise their willing slave so that it would be easier to sell them should the need arise. Shell posits: 'The early Cape settlers had a reputation for being "religious," but this is extremely difficult to confirm. Much hard evidence points the other way. Recusancy rates were astronomical, and an analysis of the inventories reveals not only widespread illiteracy but also few household Bibles.' André du Toit, cited in Shell, has also written on the subject of Calvinism with a telling title: André du Toit, 'No Chosen People: The Myth of the Calvinist Origins of Afrikaner Nationalism and Racial Ideology,' *The American Historical Review* 88 no 4 (October 1983): 920-952.

<sup>166</sup> Chappell, *op. cit.*, p. 407. As an example of English Puritan discourse, Prynne in his *Histriomastix* of 1633, writes the following: 'Dancing is for the most part attended with many amorous smiles, wanton compliments, unchaste kisses, scurrilous songs and sonnets, effeminate music, lust-provoking attire, ridiculous love-pranks; all which savour only of sensuality, of raging fleshly lusts. Therefore it is wholly to be abandoned of all good Christians. Dancing serves no necessary use, no profitable, laudable, or pious end at all: it issues only from the inbred pravity, vanity, wantonness, incontinency, pride, profaneness, or madness of man's depraved natures. Therefore it must needs be unlawful unto Christians. The way to heaven is too steep, too narrow, for men to dance in and keep revel-rout: No way is large or smooth enough for capering roisters, for jumping, skipping,

occasions for dancing were concerned, especially amongst the smaller country communities where the local society gathered together for weekly church services. This social religious tension might also have kept informal social dancing and music confined more to the domain of the slaves and lower classes, but by all accounts it didn't seem to hamper the frivolities of these classes at picnics, in the taverns and at the so-called Rainbow Balls.

## Conclusion

In the seventeenth century, and persisting in many forms ranging from moderate to extreme in the following centuries, there were marked social divides between the Balls organised for and by the nobility and ruling classes and the dances of the middle and lower classes. These divides would become less severe as the nineteenth century progressed, becoming ever more classless until the end of the twentieth century, by which time there was only the vaguest sense of respectability still associated with some Ballroom dance occasions. In mid-seventeenth century Europe, Balls were still associated with the Court and social occasions for the nobility. However, as can be seen by the vast amount of printed collections of songs and dances published at this time, the culture of Balls was already moving from the exclusively court-centred dance culture of earlier times into the upper-middle and middle classes, the merchant classes and all people with aspirations to gentile society.<sup>167</sup>

Due to a paucity of textual evidence we can only surmise from the examples that we have that the Governors of the Cape and the officials and visitors of the same social standing, through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, held the occasional Grand Ball or festivity for a life-cycle event at the Castle or on their Estates, in the style of their European

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dancing dames, but that broad, beaten, pleasant road that leads to hell. The gate of heaven is too narrow for whole rounds, whole troops, of dancers to march in together: Men never went as yet by multitudes, much less by morrice-dancing troops, to heaven: Alas, they scarce go two together; and these few, what are they? Not dancers, but mourners, whose tune is Lachrymae; whose music is sighs for sin; who know no other Cinque-pace but this to heaven; to go mourning all the day long for their iniquities; to mourn in secret like doves; to chatter like cranes for their own and others sins.'

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 322-377. Examples of Printed Dance Collections quoted in Chappell showing the dates and the leanings towards pretensions to Aristocracy: Musick's Delight on the Cithren (1666), p. 365; The Golden Garland of Princely Delights 3<sup>rd</sup> Edit (1620), p. 377; Merry Drollery Complete (1670), p. 327; Musick's Recreation on the Lyra Viol (1652), p. 322; Melismata: Musical Phansies fitting the Court, Citie, and Country Humours, ed., Ravenscroft (1611), p. 373; Harris-Warrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 893-899.

counterparts. Regarding the frivolities and dancing of the slaves and lower classes through this period, Bouws makes mention of many Seaman's Pubs in the late 1700s with colourful names such as 'Het Witte Paard', 'De Witte Swaan', 'De Roode Vos', 'Het Goude Anker', 'De Keizers Kroon', 'Het Eerste Stuivertjie' and 'Het Laaste Stuivertjie', and purports that sailors and visitors could dance there to the strains of one or more slave musician and sometime just the men would dance together.<sup>168</sup> Martin, citing from Victor de Kock, conjectures that '[i]n the taverns where sailors, lower class colonists and slaves met, drank and gambled, music was essential. And often the musicians were slaves. They played on violins, flutes, trumpets, oboes, harps or *ramkies*, and some tavern owners bought only slaves who had a talent for music.'<sup>169</sup> Martin remarks that there were 'continual dances among the other orders called rainbow balls, at which females were chiefly the better class slave girl and the free coloured, while the men included even officers and merchants.'<sup>170</sup> Picnics at the beach on Sundays for slaves was a favourite form of entertainment for the lower orders and it appears as though they used the English Country Dances or Contradance and the Quadrille dances and music to dance the whole day through.

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<sup>168</sup> Bouws, *Die Musieklewe van Kaapstad 1800-1850: En sy verhouding tot die Musiekkultuur van Wes-Europa*, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

<sup>169</sup> Victor de Kock, quoted in Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, Past and Present*, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>170</sup> Laidler, quoted in Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, Past and Present*, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

## CHAPTER 2

### Music and Dance at the Cape in the British Colonial Era

The Slaves of Cape Town have so many opportunities of getting Money that they frequently purchase for themselves with their savings every Article of decent Apparel to sport on a Sunday. I have seen them with their Wives and Children very well attired taking their walks or dancing to their rude Music of a Sunday Afternoon or Joining their Rix Dollars for the hire of a Waggon and spend the afternoon at some of the dancing Houses in the Country.<sup>171</sup> S.E. Hudson at the Cape 1796-1807

### Introduction to the Cape in the Nineteenth Century

The British took the Cape from the Dutch in 1795, at a time of great turmoil, both in Europe and at the Cape.<sup>172</sup> After centuries of wars and conflicts between most of the Western European nations over territorial, religious and trade issues, in which millions of lives of ordinary people were lived and lost in appallingly violent and brutal circumstances, so too, at the Cape, were the lives of thousands of slaves, indigenous Khoikhoi pastoralists and San hunter-gatherers lived and lost in diverse, but equally violent and brutal circumstances. Over a million people had lost their lives in Europe during the mid 1700s in the Seven Years War (1755-1763) alone, estimated at six hundred thousand soldiers and seven hundred thousand civilians.<sup>173</sup> The French Revolution had just sent reverberations through the ranks of the nobility of Europe. The hegemony and power of the aristocracy had been undermined and in this era of so-called Enlightenment power was moving into the hands of the middle class.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Samuel Hudson, quoted in McKenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>172</sup> Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>173</sup> 'History of the Netherlands', *History World*, <<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?groupid=3109&HistoryID=ac90&gtrack=pthc>> [accessed 15 July 2015]; Dooling, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-28, 58-70; 'Statistics of Wars, Oppressions and Atrocities of the Eighteenth Century', in *Necrometrics*, <<http://necrometrics.com/wars18c.htm>> [accessed 2 August 2015].

<sup>174</sup> 'The French revolution', in *etsu. edu.*, pp. 43-53, <<http://www.etsu.edu/coe/uschool/faculty/braggj/documents/frenchrevolution.pdf>> [accessed 2 August 2015].

The Dutch, who had a small nobility, were the first nation in Europe to build a large and prosperous middle class in the seventeenth century.<sup>175</sup> Britain and the Netherlands had been fierce trading competitors, leading to more than a century of conflict, mostly at sea. When France took the United Provinces of Holland in 1795, the British felt it imperative to take the Cape from the Dutch lest the French might gain such a strategic point on the trade routes to the East.<sup>176</sup>

It was the French garrisons that had been sent to the Cape to protect the Dutch colony in 1781, who were to 'liven up the serious Calvinistic community' at the Cape. During their short three year tenure, 'Cape Town came to be known as the "little Paris"'.<sup>177</sup> The French soldiers, who numbered over a thousand (including mercenaries), brought with them the great and short-lived prosperity as well as the latest fashions in music and dance from France and Europe. Provision was made for theatrical evenings to be held in the old barracks hospital near the Parade in Cape Town. A quote from a German visitor to Cape Town in 1784 is very revealing:

I am having an excellent time as there is no end of amusement and congenial society...It is not surprising to find French styles in great vogue, for is not the Cape almost a French dependency? Whatever styles may have been favoured formerly, I can vouch from personal observation that the coiffure of today is Parisian in every detail; not in vain were so many hairdressers included in the Pondicherry garrison.<sup>178</sup>

The first British occupation of the Cape lasted from 1795 until 1803. During this period the British were unconvinced of the benefits of taking on an impoverished and turbulent colony, with a largely Dutch-speaking society primed with animosity towards them. Other problems included a pioneering settler population on the north eastern frontier who 'were in revolt against the VOC and saw no reason to suspend their proceedings in favour of their new

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<sup>175</sup> 'History of the Netherlands', *op. cit.*,  
<<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?ParagraphID=ifb>> [accessed 15 June 2015];  
'History of the Dutch Empire', in *History World*, p. 2,  
<<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=aa61>> [accessed 19 July 2015].

<sup>176</sup> 'Introduction to the Resolutions of the Council of Policy of Cape of Good Hope', in *Towards a New Age of Partnership (Tanap)*,  
<[http://www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents/resolutions\\_Cape\\_of\\_Good\\_Hope/introduction\\_english/45.htm](http://www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents/resolutions_Cape_of_Good_Hope/introduction_english/45.htm)> [accessed 29 July 2015]; Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>177</sup> Marina Grut, *The History of Ballet in South Africa*, Cape Town, Human and Rousseau, 1981, pp 1-3.

<sup>178</sup> Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

rulers' and the fact that the indigenous Khoikhoi and San, 'whom the colonists had reduced nearly to the status of slaves, were soon to rebel.'<sup>179</sup>

General Craig was the first British Governor at the Cape. He was replaced from 1797 to 1798 by George Macartney, during which time he secured the 'foundations of British power at the Cape'.<sup>180</sup> He was forced to return to England due to ill health and was replaced by General Dundas as Acting-Governor from November 1798 to December 1799, at which time Sir George Yonge took over Governorship till April 1801.<sup>181</sup> In 1803, the British ceded the Cape back to the Dutch who were now governed under the Batavian Republic, after Napoleon's reorganisation of the United States of the Netherlands. The British recaptured the Cape in 1806 when it became more pressingly of strategic importance.<sup>182</sup>

From this time on, British social and material culture would have an ever increasing influence on the development of the country, especially in the development of the cities, industry and commerce.<sup>183</sup> These changes were built on the previous advancements that had been put in place during the first British occupation. From this time on there was a marked increase in the pursuit and organisation of entertainment, both in social music and dance as well as theatrical productions which included plays, musicals, farces, opera, ballet and classical music recitals.<sup>184</sup>

Jan Bouws points out that prior to the British occupation there was little or no organised public entertainment and no mention of stage productions or theatre. Bouws relates that in 1770 the Swedish traveller Jacob Wallenberg complained that besides the Company Gardens and the Zoo there were no public places of recreation and that 'Assembly-Rooms, Opera, Masquerade are here not even known by name'.<sup>185</sup> There was little that visiting

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<sup>179</sup> Mason, *Social Death and Resurrection: Slavery and Emancipation in South Africa*, *op. cit.*, p. 39; McKenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>180</sup> McKenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34, 46.

<sup>182</sup> 'History of the Netherlands', *op. cit.*,

<<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?ParagraphID=ifb>> [accessed 15 June 2015].

'History of the Dutch Empire', *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=aa61>> [accessed 19 July 2015]

<sup>183</sup> Mason, *Social Death and Resurrection: Slavery and Emancipation in South Africa*, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-40.

<sup>184</sup> Grut, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3; Loos, *op. cit.*, pp.44-47; McKenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-36. Bouws, Solank daar musiek is...:Musiek en musiekmakers in Suid-Afrika (1652-1982), *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>185</sup> Jacob Wallenberg, 'Min son pa Galejan', (translation, M. Roberts), taken from M. K. Jeffreys, 'The Travels of a Busybody at the Cape', in *Kwartaalblad van die Suid-Afrikaanse Biblioteek II*, Kaapstad, 1947, p. 47, quoted in

European passengers en route to the East or homeward bound could find to do and the population of Cape Town were content to be at home. Bouws states that travellers seldom mentioned card games or dice, but that much mention was made of the dancing parties for which the Cape ladies were well known. These travellers, Bouws further states, were responsible for bringing the latest European fashions in culture, including music and dance fashions, and introducing them to their hosts and families in Cape Town. In this way the Cape stayed abreast of the latest trends in Europe.<sup>186</sup>

Besides the use of the Castle by the Governors and their wives to entertain guests with concerts and Grand Balls, by 1800 the *Burgerwaghuis* was also being used for concerts. In the same year there was a request by citizens of Cape Town to the Governor, Sir George Yonge, led by Henry Murphy, 'to sanction the building of a theatre.' Sir George Yonge went ahead with the building of the theatre which was named the African Theatre or in Dutch *Di Afrikaansche Schouwburg* on what was the *Boereplein* (the renamed Hottentot Square).<sup>187</sup> It was planned that it would be funded in the customary manner of the time in London: purely 'by subscription among the leading colonial figures' and it was to be fitted out 'at first, entirely of private boxes.'<sup>188</sup> As this project was part of the British attempt to reconcile two cultures (the Dutch and English) it was arranged that shares would be divided equally between the two cultural groups with plays alternating between Dutch and English.<sup>189</sup>

The new British administration was able slowly to influence Cape society with 'new forms of material culture'. Amongst these changes was the move away from the trade monopoly that the VOC had wielded for the previous 143 years to a free trade system, and a new era of wholesale and retail shops at the Cape.<sup>190</sup> The Dutch were also maintained in positions of

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Bouws, *Die Musieklewe Van Kaapstad 1800-1850: En sy verhouding tot die Musiekkultuur van Wes-Europa*, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>186</sup> Bouws, *Die Musieklewe Van Kaapstad 1800-1850: En sy verhouding tot die Musiekkultuur van Wes-Europa*, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-139.

<sup>187</sup> Grut, *op. cit.*, p. 2; 'Afrikaansche Schouwburg', in *ESAT*, <[http://esat.sun.ac.za/index.php/Afrikaansche\\_Schouwburg](http://esat.sun.ac.za/index.php/Afrikaansche_Schouwburg)> [accessed 31 July 2015].

<sup>188</sup> Loos, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>189</sup> 'Afrikaansche Schouwburg', in *ESAT*, <[http://esat.sun.ac.za/index.php/Afrikaansche\\_Schouwburg](http://esat.sun.ac.za/index.php/Afrikaansche_Schouwburg)> [accessed 31 July 2015].

<sup>190</sup> McKenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 43-45; Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-91.

importance within the Civil Service as the Burgher Senate until it was abolished 1827 due to findings of mismanagement and corruption.<sup>191</sup>

## Slavery at the Cape: Abolition and Emancipation

Jackie Loos states that:

During the VOC period, punishment was always harsh, but that reserved for slaves was particularly brutal. Although the incoming British administration did away with some of the more barbaric tortures in 1797, capital punishment was still imposed for a wide range of offences.<sup>192</sup>

While there was a lot of suffering and sadness in the lives of many slaves with husbands and wives and families being separated, so too were there many happier situations filled with love and tenderness. Many foreign visitors married the slave women they met. Many slaves were manumitted by their owners and over time quite a substantial community of free blacks formed in the town.

By 1822, manumission of slaves had dropped dramatically due to the official termination of the oceanic Slave Trade and a new 'class' of creole slave had developed who were named Afrianders or Afrikanders, as described by W. W. Bird in the racist terms of the time:

The Afriander women are the favourite slaves of the mistress, arranging and keeping everything in order, and are entrusted with all that is valuable—more like companions than slaves; but the mistress rarely and the slave never, forget their relative situations, and however familiar in private, in the presence of another, due form prevails. The Afriander slave girl would consider herself disgraced by a connection with a negro, or the production of a black infant.<sup>193</sup>

White Cape-Dutch slave-owning fathers whose offspring were born of slave women, often left this child in slavery, more than likely benefiting thereby from its labour, whilst his children from his lawful wife were free. Shell quotes a Dutch visitor in 1806, H. G. Nahuys van Burgst illustrating the point:

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<sup>191</sup> Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>192</sup> Loos, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>193</sup> Bird, quoted in Shell, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

I have not yet spoken of those slaves who are blond and white and in this respect not inferior to the European complexion. [...] I must alas! Now declare to the shame of the Capenaars, that I have gained the impression that the white slaves are dealt with too cruelly. In the Indies the most miserly, most inhuman resident would not dare to keep in slavery, however much he might desire it, any slave-child having but the semblance of blondness and by this causing surmise that it has a European or white father, but in the Cape the owner is so devoid of feeling that only seldom does he grant his white domestic slave their freedom. The child of a white slave-woman, born to a white European father is not only regarded as a slave, but there is not even a law in his favour compelling the colonist to let the European father have his child at a fair price.<sup>194</sup>

Slavery worldwide was becoming a very contentious issue and the abolitionist trends in England focused on ending the slave trade. This was in complete opposition to the Cape-Dutch culture of slavery which was still looking towards fresh imports of slaves to bolster their workforce.<sup>195</sup> In 1806, approximately 16,500 people were residing in Cape Town. Of these 6,428 were free citizens (white and black, but not including the 626 Khoikhoi descendants) and the remaining 9,367 people were slaves. Not included in these figures are the civil servants, and soldiers of the British garrison which could have numbered in region of 4,000 men.<sup>196</sup> On 25 March 1807 the British parliament passed the Abolition of Slavery Act, which was finally implement on the 1 March 1808.<sup>197</sup> Slavery at the Cape, as previously mentioned, would not be officially over until the ‘full emancipation’ on 1 January 1838, which was after the slaves had served a four year apprenticeship from the date of emancipation in 1834.<sup>198</sup>

Any slave who had been manumitted was called a free black even if they had a European parent.<sup>199</sup> In Cape Town free blacks or *vrijzwarten* occupied a contentious space between the slaves and the dominant social class of slave owners. Free blacks manumitted more slaves per capita than any other social group, often to liberate family members and thereby putting themselves into a state of dire poverty in the process. By contrast, until 1795 the free burgher population who owned approximately 93 percent of slaves at the Cape, manumitted only about 34 percent of slaves.<sup>200</sup> Mason states that ‘[b]etween 1808 and

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<sup>194</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

<sup>195</sup> McKenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>196</sup> Loos, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>197</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, p. 418; Loos, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>198</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. xxv, 415.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 389.

1820, 108 marriages took place between whites and free blacks; during the same period, only 102 marriages were contracted in which both parties were free blacks.' These figures, Mason feels, reflect a 'community of feeling among working-class Capetonians.' He further posits that colour never divided the members of the lower or working classes as much as their lowly status united them as a community, which corroborates what Bickford-Smith has posited about the working class in Cape Town during the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>201</sup>

The Cape Malays managed to remain a strongly homogenous group throughout the years of slavery and have maintained this quality to the present through their strict adherence to the Islamic faith, which united and isolated them as a group.<sup>202</sup> As will be shown throughout this history, the Malays played a significant role in the music-making within the Coloured community throughout the history of the Cape. Eric Rosenthal relates that Charles Duval, an Irish showman visiting in Cape Town in the late nineteenth century was most 'impressed by the Malays, especially by the musical gifts of the men.'<sup>203</sup>

## Development of Popular Music

African American influences in the forms of minstrelsy and latter jazz hugely affected popular taste in music in the Coloured communities of the Cape during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Most significantly, the development of jazz in Barbershop singing, ragtime, New Orleans street bands and eventually the songs of Tin Pan Alley became central to the Ballroom dance music repertoire throughout the twentieth century. The new developments in dance and music were readily absorbed by the Coloured communities of the Cape, particularly in District Six, through the conduits of records, sheet music, radio, film, foreign visitors and sailors.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Mason, *Social Death and Resurrection: Slavery and Emancipation in South Africa*, *op. cit.*, p. 32; Bickford-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 37. Refer to paragraph relating to Footnote 14.

<sup>202</sup> Shell, *op. cit.*, pp. 361-362; Worden *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp.124-128.

<sup>203</sup> Hinrich Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806*, Cape Town, The Van Riebeeck Society, 1928, p. 36; Eric Rosenthal, *Fish Horns and Hansom Cabs: Life in Victorian Cape Town*, Johannesburg, AD. Donker, 1977, p. 106.

<sup>204</sup> Valmont Layne, 'A History of Dance and Jazz Band Performance in the Western Cape in the Post-1945 Era', M.A. Thesis, Cape Town, University of Cape Town, 1995, pp. 46-70; Richard Gassert, *Bop Till You Drop: An Oral*

The development of popular music in Britain, from the early 1800s to the end of the nineteenth century, was affected by a number of forces of change. The steady growth of industrialisation was giving rise to a working-class that was becoming 'an identifiable and self-aware group' whose thirst for entertainment in the cities gave rise to the vast commercialisation of popular music which coalesced into the Music Halls of London and other major cities throughout England by the mid nineteenth century.<sup>205</sup> Andrew Lamb states that 'the ancestry of music hall may be found in the catch clubs which flourished widely in England from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century and particularly during the late 18<sup>th</sup>.'

The American influence reached the Cape in 1848 with the arrival of the first minstrel troupe: Joe Brown's Band of Brothers. Joe was 'a renowned jig dancer and Joe's party were the first band of vocalists who gave South Africa a taste for nigger part singing.'<sup>206</sup> These were the same performers who, according to Bouws and Denis-Constant Martin, called themselves the Celebrated Ethiopian Serenaders and alternately the American Serenaders and the Darkie Serenaders.<sup>207</sup> The American influence of minstrel troupes continued to impress local musicians and music lovers throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. Veit Erlmann states that after the visit in 1862 of the world-famous Christy Minstrels, 'black face minstrel shows became the dominant form of popular white musical and theatrical entertainment in South Africa' until the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>208</sup>

Initially, in the turbulent racial dynamics of nineteenth century South Africa, the novelty of humour, music and song brought by the American minstrel troupes was enjoyed by South Africans of all social and racial backgrounds. According to Martin, the shows eventually became commercialised and 'they ossified racial stereotypes and became vehicles of scorn, contempt and derision against blacks.'<sup>209</sup> Significantly, Erlmann points out that 'American minstrelsy was not confined to Anglo-Saxon forms of racist ideology. It also reached deep

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*Study of Popular Music in Cape Town, from the late 1940's to the early 1960's*, History III Core Course Long Paper, Cape Town, 1988, pp. 14-15.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 80.

<sup>206</sup> Murray, 1894, p. 207; quoted in Denis-Constant Martin, 'Chronicles of the Kaapse Klopse: with Some Documents on the Sources of Their Music'. French Institute for Research in Africa, French Institute for Southern Africa, University of the Western Cape, 2007, p. 12.

<sup>207</sup> Bouws, *Solank daar musiek is...: Musiek en musiekmakers in Suid-Afrika (1652-1982)*, *op. cit.*, p. 81; Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, Past and Present*, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>208</sup> Erlmann, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>209</sup> Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, Past and Present*, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

into Dutch Boer and Cape “coloured” culture and song.’ A certain Cape Coloured gentleman, Joe Lyal, and his troupe, put on weekly performances of minstrel shows in Cape Town from 1869.<sup>210</sup>

In the mid to late 1800s many musicians from the Music Hall tradition in England toured South Africa and entertained large audiences in Cape Town. By 1858, there was a New Music Hall in Buitenkant Street with seating for 280 reserved and 150 in the gallery.<sup>211</sup> It was close to the burgeoning area called ‘Irish Town’, soon to become District Six.<sup>212</sup> Some of the professional performers visited Port Elizabeth and Mossel Bay by ship and others made the arduous journey by coach or wagon to the towns of Caledon, Swellendam, Riversdal and the South Western Districts.<sup>213</sup> However, by the early twentieth century the tide of popular taste would eventually turn towards American Vaudeville, especially amongst the Black and Coloured population throughout South Africa.<sup>214</sup>

New developments in the musical structure of African American music from the late 1800s started to influence all forms of secular music developing in and emanating from America. These forms would profoundly influence local musical tastes, especially amongst the Black and Coloured populations through the ‘Concert and Dance’ format that became so popular in the early twentieth century.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Erlmann, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>211</sup> Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 111.

<sup>213</sup> Johanna Rousseau Groenewald, ‘An Historical Investigation into the Music-Cultural Activities of the Cape South-Western Districts from 1879-1902’, M.Mus. Thesis, Port Elizabeth, University of Port Elizabeth, 1989, pp. 275-296. A few examples of the variety performers listed: Mr and Mrs Geo. Case (aka Miss Grace Egerton) toured Mossel Bay, George and Oudshoorn from July to Aug 1878; In Mossel Bay and Oudshoorn from 1879-1880, Prof. Lover and the Cassandras performed variety entertainment with comic Irish songs. Master Alexander, danced and played eight different instruments; Mr Bertie Philips in 1883 in Oudshoorn but travelled throughout South Africa with song and comedy. In George and Knysna from 1886-1887, Bob Bolder’s Party a four piece variety act; In George and Knysna in August 1888, The Wittingtons from England performed; Elizabeth Margaretha Marais, ‘Die Musieklewe van Swellendam 1743-1975’, M.Mus. Thesis, Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch University, 1989, pp. 90-99.

<sup>214</sup> Christopher Ballantine, “‘Africans in America’”. “Harlem in Johannesburg”: The ideology of Afro-American in the formation of black jazz and vaudeville in South Africa before the mid-1940s’ in *7th Symposium on Ethnomusicology*, A Tracey (ed), Grahamstown, International Library of African Music, Rhodes University, 1989, pp. 5-10.

<sup>215</sup> Ballantine, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-10.

## Ballroom Dance at the Cape: Nineteenth Century Literary Cameos

The military bands of the British forces that came to the Cape at the beginning of the nineteenth century brought with them many of the latest innovations in music and instrumentation from both German and French sources, which had filtered through to the British regimental Bands.<sup>216</sup> These Bands would become central to the musical entertainment of the Cape in the theatre, concerts and playing for the Grand Balls arranged by the Governor.<sup>217</sup>

In the first half of the nineteenth century dancing teachers became a recognised part of the social fabric of Cape Town. Jacques Bertrand was working with Charles Boniface and organised a dance school at No. 2 Dorp Street, Cape Town and in 1821 he was advertising to teach Quadrilles, Waltzes and Contredanse. Louis B. Meurant was advertising his dance school in 1815 for private lessons to prepare dancers for the Cotillons, Country Dances and Waltzes and notifying the public of the possibility of organising subscription balls.<sup>218</sup> The presence of numerous dance teachers, is clearly indicative of the popularity of Ballroom dancing amongst the population of the Cape through this period.

In 1797, the new Colonial Secretary, Mr Andrew Barnard, and his wife Lady Anne Barnard, arrived from England into the unfamiliar cultural setting of the Cape and soon began to have a major influence in local cultural activities. As representatives of the British upper class, Mr Andrew Barnard and Lady Anne were closely connected to Governor Macartney, and they both played an important role in anglicizing Cape Town society, primarily through the dances and balls that Lady Anne regularly organised at her house as well as at the Castle. Commander John Imrie states that '[i]t was she who started using the Military Bands to supply the music for these occasions – a practice to be carried on in later years by successive Governor's Ladies'. Lady Anne Barnard also used 'half a dozen black fiddlers' to play for the dancers at her bi-weekly 'hop'.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Imrie, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-19.

<sup>218</sup> Bouws, *Die Musieklewe van Kaapstad 1800-1850: En sy verhouding tot die Musiekkultuur van Wes-Europa*, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-144.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

## Cameo I: 1797

Lady Anne Barnard is quoted in Bouws and Kirsten McKenzie as saying:

I have fitted all up in the style of a comfortable plain English house Scotch carpets English linen and rush bottom chairs with plenty of Lolling sofas...in a week or two, I shall invite all who wish to be merry without cards or dice, but who can talk or *hop* to half a dozen black fiddlers, to come and see me on my public day, which shall be once a fortnight, when the Dutch Ladys (all of whom love dancing, and *flirting* still more) shall be kindly welcomed, and the poor ensigns and cornets shall have an opportunity of stretching their legs as well as the generals.<sup>220</sup>

This quote from Lady Anne clearly places the slave, ex-slave, free black or Khoikhoi string player in the role of dance musician of choice at the informal or semi-formal balls or dances held at her residence. It also highlights the passion for dancing among the local Dutch ladies and their love of flirting, which further points towards an often unspoken aspect of social dancing as constituting a unique opportunity and a rich arena for the initiation of contact and intimacy between men and women, and a chance to find a suitable partner.

Julia Sutton, reporting on the sentiments of the dancing master Arbeau from 1588, relays his idea that 'the chief purpose of social dancing was to find a suitable, attractive and accomplished mate.'<sup>221</sup> Also to be noted in Lady Anne Barnard's quote, is the presence of men of some social standing: ensigns, cornets, as well as those of high social standing such as the generals, all of whom would have been very advantages partners for most young Cape-born ladies.

## Cameo II: 1798

Further socialising aspects of Ballroom dance at the Cape are highlighted in this quoted from Jackie Loos's book *Echoes of Slavery*. A travelling Indian noble of Persian decent, Abu Talib (whom Lady Anne called Khan Saijb), wrote of the many balls that he attended at Lady Anne

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<sup>220</sup> Lady Anne Barnard, *The Letters of Lady Anne Barnard to Henry Dundas: From the Cape and elsewhere 1793-1803*, Cape Town, A.A. Balkema, 1973, p. 43; H. J. Anderson, *South Africa A Century Ago (1797-1801)*, Cape Town, p. 11, quoted in Bouws, *Die Musieklewe van Kaapstad 1800-1850: En sy verhouding tot die Musiekkultuur van Wes-Europa*, *op. cit.*, p. 139; Imrie, *op. cit.*, p. 14; McKenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>221</sup> Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, Langres, 1588, Eng. trans., 1967, quoted in Sutton, 'Dance: Late Renaissance and Baroque; before 1630', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, *op. cit.*, p. 889.

Barnard's invitation. He shows that the flirtatious innuendoes of the ladies at these dance occasions were quite flagrant; the point being that dances and balls were primary social sites for the opposite sexes to meet, which would consistently add to their attraction and appeal as popular occasions for all strata of society:

Although I was ignorant of the Dutch language, and could not converse with the young women, yet in dancing they made use of so many wanton airs, and threw such significant looks towards me, that I was often put to the blush, and obliged to retire to the other side of the room.<sup>222</sup>

Jackie Loos further posits that Abu Talib was a regular guest at Lady Anne Barnard's dinners and balls, where he had time keenly to 'observe Cape society'. Most of the British military and government personnel were working at the Cape without their wives accompanying them. Abu Talib reported that some of these officers and officials formed liaisons with married Dutch ladies whose husband apparently knew and conceded to this arrangement and 'generally walked out when the admirer entered the house', the officers and officials apparently bestowed expensive gifts on these ladies, which increased the wealth of the households.<sup>223</sup>

### **Cameo III: 1798**

In another paragraph quoted from Lady Anne Barnard in Loos, Lady Anne expressively describes her informal balls, hinting at a few of the meanings of these dance events for the different people involved, especially the slave girls:

In particular I see I am reckoned very wrong for not turning out of the room the slaves of my guests who like to stand at the door and see the dancing. Now, though I don't much like the smell of the slaves and would rather they were not there, if the mistress chooses to bring a slave to wait on her, I do not choose to turn her out. I wish to make all happy after their own way, and I do not wish to make a very few happy in the exclusion or mortification of others.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Loos, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

The reference in this quote to ‘exclusion’ and ‘mortification’ of the female slaves speaks to a kind of paternalistic indulgence, but also awareness that the slaves stood to learn about the modes of social conduct of their owners in this cultural setting, as well as becoming familiar with the music and the technical aspects of the steps of the dances. The late Willie Jales, in personal conversations, often told me that ‘our people stole with their eyes’ from their European employers. This phrase referred to the way Coloured people would have learned the steps of the Square Dances that would become so popular at ‘Langarm’ dances through the twentieth century.<sup>225</sup>

### **Cameo IV: 1803**

Heinrich Lichtenstein, traveling in the Cape in October 1803, visited a certain Mr Van Reenen, who was a prominent member of the community of Swellendam. Lichtenstein describes the evening:

In the evening Mr. Van Reenen entertained the company with a concert performed by his slaves. They played first a chorus, and afterwards several marches and dances upon clarinets, french horns and bassoons. The instruments were good, and there was great reason altogether to be pleased with the performance, though much was wanting to render the harmony complete. They afterwards played on violins, violincellos, and flutes, on which they performed equally well. It is not uncommon to find the same thing among many families at the Cape, and there are many freed-men in the town who gain there living by instructing the slaves in music: but neither master nor scholars know a single note: they all play entirely by ear. The practice receives great encouragement from the inclination that the slaves, particularly the Malays, have to music, from the passion for dancing that prevails among the young people of the colony, and from the advantage that the gentlemen find in having them at hand on all occasions of festivity. I know many great houses in which there is not one of the slaves who cannot play upon some instrument, and where an orchestra is immediately collected together, if the young people of the house, when they are visited in the afternoon by their acquaintances, like to amuse themselves with dancing for an hour or two. At a nod the cook exchanges his saucepan for a flute, the groom quits his curry-comb and takes his violin, and the gardener throwing aside his spade sits down to the violincello.<sup>226</sup>

Lichtenstein notes a number of extremely pertinent points that show to what extent these slave musicians had mastered the European music and instruments that they played. Of

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<sup>225</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by the author, 10 May 2012.

<sup>226</sup> Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

specific interest is their repertoire, which includes a chorus (that possibly points to a popular song of the time) and then, most notably, marches and dances. Equally noteworthy is the fact that they could all play two instruments equally well, first creating a woodwind and brass ensemble and then a string and flute ensemble. What should be noted as well are the clear and definite assertions that the slaves in general, but Malays in particular, had a strong proclivity towards and talent for music making. What is also significant is that the ‘young people of the colony’ had a particular passion for dancing and that there were numerous ‘occasions of festivities’ where it was advantageous to have slave musicians on hand to provide the music for entertainment and dancing and that they were ready to play at the shortest notice.

## Cameo V: 1811

Writing on 18 January 1811, William John Burchell, Esq., the English explorer and naturalist, made some keen observations of dancing in Cape Town at the time:

Yesterday, in honour of the Queen’s birth-day, the Governor gave, as usual, a grand dinner to about two hundred persons, Dutch and English. On this day his levee was well attended; and in the evening a public ball was given at the Government-house. At these parties I had a very favourable opportunity of seeing the *beau monde* of Cape Town. The ball-room was crowded. The ladies, who were for the greater part were Dutch, were dressed neatly, and to great advantage; and both they and the gentlemen appeared to have adopted the fashions and manners of English society. Country-dances afforded the chief amusement; neither Waltzes nor Quadrilles being at that time generally in vogue. After supper, the dancing was renewed with spirit, and continued until a late hour, the party being apparently much gratified.<sup>227</sup>

As noted by Burchell, these Grand Balls were the chosen manner in which the British Governors elected to host days of national celebration for the people of Cape Town. In a city of about twenty thousand people, of whom possibly seven thousand could be White and that would be including the garrison of soldiers, two hundred people make up a small elite group.<sup>228</sup> However, two hundred people is a grand party, with an enormous amount of catering involved for the huge dinner. Most significant is that neither the Quadrille nor the

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<sup>227</sup> William Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, Cape Town, C. Striuk, 1967, p. 38.

<sup>228</sup> Worden *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

Waltz had yet reached English high-society in 1811, which would imply that Burchell, who must have been writing in retrospect, was possibly not as familiar at that time with the Quadrille as the Cape-Dutch ladies were, a point clarified by Bird in the following cameo.

As it was just over twenty years since the French garrisons had been stationed in Cape Town having arrived in 1781 and sojourned for three years, it is most likely that the new French versions of the Contredanse, the Quadrille and the Cotillon (or Cotillion), which had all developed originally out of the English Country Dances, had been acquired from these temporary French residents at the Cape.<sup>229</sup> The English Country Dances having been danced throughout the eighteenth century, were obviously still popular at the Cape amongst all strata of society in the early nineteenth century. Matilda Burden citing De Kock reports that the English Country dances were already high fashion at the Cape in the 1730s.<sup>230</sup>

There was usually an intermission for dinner and the dances continued to well after midnight. This custom or propensity to dance until the early hours of the morning was customary in Cape Town as well as further afield and was maintained in Cape Town well into the twentieth century.<sup>231</sup> According to Les Steiger, it is apparent that during the 1940s and '50s, dances were commonly set to run until 4 o'clock in the morning.<sup>232</sup>

## Cameo VI: 1822

Twelve years after Burchell, the customs controller William Bird, who was equally British in his outlook, was far more detailed in his documentation of local habits than Burchell, particularly in so far as dancing was concerned:

The ladies of the colony, whether English or Cape-Dutch, appear to be little, if at all, inferior in grace and activity to the usual standard of London dancing, and superior to most of the provincial assemblies; but they cannot be expected to keep pace with the exquisite movements of the elegantes of the court. The waltz or quadrille are now the high Cape tone; and country now termed kitchen dances are neglected. Quadrilles and cotillons were danced

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<sup>229</sup> Grut, *op. cit.*, p. 1; Burden, *op. cit.*, pp.27-28.

<sup>230</sup> V. De Kock, *Those in Bondage, An Account of the Life of the Slave at the Cape in the Days of the Dutch India Company*, Pretoria, 1963, cited in Burden, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>231</sup> Duff Gordon, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81. Lady Duff Gordon describes an informal ball in Caledon ending at 4 o'clock in the morning.

<sup>232</sup> Les Steiger, interviewed by Valmont Layne and Willie Jales, 9 November 1999, District Six Museum Archive, transcript, pp. 1-41, esp. p. 16.

generally by the Cape-Dutch, before the conquest of the English; and to oblige them the Dutch ladies give up the quadrille, which the English could not then dance, and adopted what is called the country dance.<sup>233</sup>

Bird's observations in 1822 confirm that the standard of Ballroom dancing at the Cape was at this time very high (in fact, comparable with the assemblies of London). Most significant in this cameo is Bird's knowledge that the Waltz and the Quadrille, which had both been introduced in London high-society assemblies in 1815, had now become high fashion at the Cape in 1822.<sup>234</sup> Also that the Cape-Dutch were familiar with the Quadrille and Cotillons (or Cotillions) prior to the arrival of the British at the Cape. The English Country Dances, which were possibly not as demanding technically as the new French dances, were assigned to the kitchen, possibly primarily associated with the dances of the lower classes.

## Cameo VII: 1822

The following paragraph by William Bird is important in several respects:

The private entertainments, whether given by the Dutch or the English, are in good style, and abound in all the delicacies of the season. The glass circulates freely to a late hour, except when the entertainment closes with music or dancing. Musical parties occasionally take place at the Cape; and there are not wanting private performers of taste and execution; but the professors are few and not eminent. Dancing is a favourite amusement of the Cape ladies; for all prefer to do that in which they most excel. In addition to the dances at private houses, there are subscription assemblies at the Society-house during the winter, well attended by the English and Cape-Dutch.<sup>235</sup>

Bird gives the impression that private entertainments hosted at the houses of English or Dutch inhabitants of Cape Town, were stylish and convivial and could in all likelihood end with music and dancing. These private entertainments, according to further descriptions, referred to functions amongst the mercantile and upper class of Cape Town. Amateur musicians of high quality gave concerts, but the favourite recreation, especially for the ladies, was dancing. Most noteworthy is the mention of subscription dance assemblies at

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<sup>233</sup> William Bird, *State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822*, Cape Town, C. Struik, 1966, pp. 165-166.

<sup>234</sup> Temperley, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-134, esp. p. 111.

<sup>235</sup> Bird, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166.

the 'Society-house', which was following the current dancing trends in England at the time.

Bird further states in relation to the subscription assemblies:

To these dancing assemblies a lady may go with a brother, or a friend, or alone, without the fear of impertinent remark or intrusion. And she may return on foot at night, unattended, except by her slave with a lantern, without the slightest apprehension of alarm or insult.<sup>236</sup>

Ladies who wished to dance appeared to have a lot of freedom to attend these social balls with a family member, another female friend or even alone and return alone without a male partner or escort. This would have given the Cape ladies freedom to remain unattached if they so wished. This trend of ladies attending dances unaccompanied by male partners has been part of the 'Langarm' dance scene in Cape Town at least from the 1950s until the present. The MCs job was to see that single ladies were not left out of the dancing.<sup>237</sup>

Bird's observations of the dances of the lower orders of Cape Town are highly evocative of the mixed racial and cultural milieu that constituted these events and the frequency with which they were held:

Whilst the public and private balls of the upper class are going on, there are continual dances amongst the other orders, denominated rainbow balls, composed of each different hue in this many coloured town. The females are chiefly slave girls of the first class, and girls who have acquired their freedom; and amongst the men are seen officers, merchants, and young Dutchmen. It cannot be pretended that these meetings add to the morals of the town. However that may be, everything during the ball is conducted with due decorum. The ladies imitate the manner, conversation, and dancing of their mistresses, and nearly equal them in dress; and, when the dance is over, it is not necessary to follow the parties into retirement.<sup>238</sup>

The appellation 'Rainbow Balls' is interesting in terms of the racial and cultural mixing that took place and reveals a consciousness of the local population as to their situation. The phrase 'continual dances' boldly states the popularity of these events among the lower orders as the pre-eminent form of recreation. Most significant in this paragraph is the fact that the balls were 'conducted with due decorum' and that the slave or Coloured ladies could dance the dances correctly or well. This points to a tradition that might have persisted throughout the nineteenth century into the twentieth century by Coloured Ballroom

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<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>237</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 14 September 1999, District Six Museum Archive.

<sup>238</sup> Bird, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166.

dancers, who have throughout the twentieth century maintained a high standard of 'Langarm' dancing. Especially as far as the Square Dance set is concerned, a large body of dancers and musicians maintained the intricate knowledge of how to dance and play the sets.

Bird's descriptions of the picnics that took place on Sundays is of great importance to the history of a tradition that was maintained particularly by the Cape Malays of the District Six and the Bo-Kaap throughout the twentieth century:

Besides these rainbow dances, there are others, in which the negroes are engaged; and although a few of these dances take place every night, yet the grand display is on the outskirts of the town, to which the black population rush on a Sunday, (as the English do to Greenwich on Easter Monday), and go through their various awkward movements in quick or slow time, according to the taste of the dancers. The Sunday dance is accompanied by native music of every description. The slave boys from Madagascar and Mosambique bring the stringed instruments of their respective tribes and nation, from which they force sounds, which they regard as melodious. The love of dancing is a ruling passion throughout the Cape population in every rank; but music, though a pursuit favoured by a small part of the society, is here a passion with the negro alone.<sup>239</sup>

In 1822, it appears from Bird's writings as though many of the picnics on the outskirts of town were multi-cultural, pointing to the kind of melting pot of musical influences that might have gone towards encapsulating the essence of the *vastrap* or *ghoema* rhythm as the most popular rhythm for local urban dances. From the 1860s, twenty two years after slavery, we glean from the writings of Lady Luisa Ross that the Cape Malays were having picnics on the beach and green at Camps Bay. Judging from a photograph (see Figure 2 below) in Eric Rosenthal's *Fish Horns and Hansom Cabs*, taken on the green at Camps Bay, the dancing appears to be versions of the Quadrille or English Country Dancing where couples swing arm-in-arm in the round.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Bird, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166. These two paragraphs are quoted in their entirety due to the large quantity of extremely pertinent material they contain.

<sup>240</sup> Photograph, *Dancing on the green at Camps Bay*, Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 106.



Figure 2 Dancing at a picnic on Camps Bay Green.<sup>241</sup>

## Cameo VIII: 1850

Alan Hattersley, writing on the life of Lucy Gray, had this to say about Cape Town in 1850:

Public entertainments were lacking. Cape Town was certainly neither a busy nor a gay town in 1850. The old theatre in Riebeeck Square had been converted into a place of worship for ex-slaves. The nearest approach to the assembly rooms of the English spas was the large hall of the Commercial Exchange building on the Grand Parade, with its portico of Corinthian pillars. The room was available for subscription balls and dinners, though it had been intended for public auction sales. A Malay stringed orchestra provided the music for dancing.<sup>242</sup>

The subscription balls or assemblies were being held at larger venues in 1850, but the practice which was part of London society in the early 1800s and well established at coastal spas around England as well as Cape Town in the 1820s was still central to the social fabric

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<sup>241</sup> Bird, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166.

<sup>242</sup> Alan Hattersley, *A Victorian Lady at the Cape 1849-51*, Cape Town, Maskew Miller Ltd., 1950, p. 28.

in the 1850s and '60s.<sup>243</sup> Significant is the reference to a 'Malay stringed orchestra', which appeared to have been the band of choice for the subscription balls.

## Cameo IX: 1861

The writings of Lady Luisa Ross from 1861 (despite the fact that speculation abounds as to their authorship), are exceedingly informative of life at the Cape and especially of Ballroom dancing and music and dance amongst the middle class and so-called lower orders. The following two paragraphs focus on the picnics. These descriptions further confirm the tradition of dancing at picnics, which was well established by 1861, and the first paragraph might even refer to different social strata dancing at picnics (she first mentions the ladies not having crochet, but dancing as an agreeable substitute). Lady Luisa Ross mentions the beach at 'Camp's Bay' and places further from the beach as favourite spots for picnics and dancers, facts which relate directly to the dancing in Figure 1:

As yet crochet has not taken deep root among the Cape ladies. The want of lawns is probably the cause of it; but picnics, with music and dancing, are no unpleasant substitute, and the sands of Camp's Bay and the woods of Mr. Breda are never long deserted by the mirthful throng.<sup>244</sup>

The next paragraph richly describes a Malay picnic on Camps Bay beach on Thursday morning 26 September 1861:

We were roused up earlier than usual this morning by the merry sounds of music and loud voices before our bedroom windows. While we were sleeping early bands of Malays had arrived to spend the day in our neighbourhood and enjoy themselves in their own simple *al fresco* fashion under our very walls. There were at least fifty of them gathered together on the beach, hunting up dry bushes, collecting driftwood, and starting fires for coffee-making. The older men dispersed themselves about the rocks to catch soles and 'klipfish', while the younger and more enthusiastic fry incontinently laid themselves out for dancing, and a

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<sup>243</sup> P Mitchinson, 'Regional evidence for social dance with particular reference to a Yorkshire spa town, Harrogate, UK' in *Dance History: An Introduction*, J Adshead-Lansdale & J Layson (eds), London, Routledge, 1995, pp. 81–97. English Spa towns such as Bath and Cheltenham had dedicated Assembly Rooms for dancing in the Regency Period of the early nineteenth century. By the 1820s

<sup>244</sup> Ross, *Life at the Cape a Hundred Years Ago: By a Lady*, *op. cit.*, p. 7; A.R.E. Burton, *Cape Colony To-Day*, Cape Town, The Cape Government Railway Department, 1907, p. 30. Burton reports that Camps Bay had many hotels and a concert hall for entertainment. Burton, almost a half century after Lady Luisa Ross, further describes the same practices amongst the Coloured people still intact: 'Dancing on the beach and the green is also a favourite enjoyment. The coloured people form their own merry groups, and their powers of endurance on the light fantastic toe seem inexhaustible.'

thorough day's enjoyment. How the fiddles did squeak, and the drums and big violincellos keep thumping away and droning out the most inspiriting strains! In and out, round and round, backwards and forwards surged the crowd; footing it and capering, backing and filling, stamping time, and slapping hands and thighs as the music and the measure kept steadily increasing in pace and fury! Never were there seen more indefatigable dancers! The American Nigger 'breakdowns' were fools to them; and I'm sure they richly deserved the appetite and meals which the sea-breeze and the bay were likely to procure them. Through the whole livelong day these people were dancing on the sands, and if ever musicians deserved their beer, these native fiddlers did!<sup>245</sup>

This description of dancing at a picnic on the beach at Camps bay refers to the music of violins and cellos (which by all accounts were both plucked and bowed) and the drums (which were most likely to have been the *Ghoema* single headed drums). Lady Luisa Ross seems to be describing facets of the Quadrille and English Country Dances with phrases such as 'backwards and forwards surged the crowd' a movement that could occur with line formations as in the Longways form of English Country Dances.<sup>246</sup> 'In and out, round and round' could also refer to common movements such as arm in arm swings and the Grand Chain from the Quadrille and English Country Dances. Most noteworthy are the phrases 'footing it and capering' and 'stamping time, and slapping hands and thighs', which conjure images of movements that speak of more local or indigenous influences. Also noteworthy is the untiring dancing throughout the day and the fast pace and 'fury' of the music and dancing, as well as Lady Luisa Ross's allusions to the 'American nigger "breakdowns"', which could point to the possibility of the *vastrap* style. These descriptions bring to mind the current trend in 'Langarm' dance, when a whole roomful of a hundred and fifty people are doing the modern version of the Longways as in the American Line-Dancing to the *vastrap* rhythm, as took place at the 'Ballroom Bands Festival' at the Grand West Arena on 1 June 2013.<sup>247</sup>

## Cameo X: 1861

This quote as it appears in *Coon Carnival* by Denis-Constant Martin, is given the curious title of 'Free dancing'. Nothing captures quite so eloquently the sense of unequivocal enthusiasm

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<sup>245</sup> Ross, *Life at the Cape a Hundred Years Ago: By a Lady*, *op. cit.*, p 21.

<sup>246</sup> Harris-Warrick, 'Dance: 1730-1800', *op. cit.*, p. 899.

<sup>247</sup> Ballroom Bands Festival, Grand West Arena, video documentation by the author, 1 June 2013.

for dance in the Cape at the time, than the words of Lady Louisa Ross in this quote from 13 September 1861:<sup>248</sup>

There was a general cry for the musicians to strike up and ‘spuil a bietjie’. Speedily a clever stringed band came to the front, and fiddled away at whatever was called for, entirely by ear. Jigs, melodies, and polkas followed in rapid succession. Then a supply of beer was served out to them, during the consumption of which the younger folk sent off urgent dispatches to their dancing neighbours to come and join them, and then dashed with the utmost zeal into the circling Waltz and fatiguing gallopade. Then the servants – male and female – pressed forward to see the fun, and being descried, were ordered by the old squire to stand forth and dance away for their master’s amusement, while the old people placidly looked on and enjoyed their pipes and coffee à la turque. The new arrivals brought with them fresh musicians and vigorous limbs, and so master and valet, maiden and maid, footman and groom, and pages of high and low degree, in inextricable confusion, went footing it and capering it over the smoothly mown lawn, until even the coarse grass broke out into a violent perspiration, and the falling dew drove the company within doors. Nor would they stop here! Their dancing blood being thoroughly up, a ballroom was soon improvised by moving all the heavy furniture out of the great hall, and submitting its highly polished oak floor to the indignity of being trampled and jumped upon by stalwart cavaliers and heavy boots, and having its lustre smirched by the Balmorals of more than one buxom wench!

In dancing at the Cape, there is no mincing the matter, no solemn pretence of being pleased, no spasm of the lip and inward groaning of the spirit, but real, downright, honest, unrestrained play of limb and of countenance, producing a wholesome perspiration and developing a heavy appetite for supper. And as with the masters, so with the servants in the capacious kitchen, where the sable attendants plunged and curvetted, pranced and leaped, shrieked, laughed, slapped their hands and soles and knees and indulged in such eccentric gymnastic feats among their demented selves, that it seemed as if Bedlam had broken loose and no keepers were to be found for love or money.<sup>249</sup>

This is a description of a seemingly unplanned open-air ‘ball’, held on the lawns of a farm in Newlands on the slopes of the south side of Table Mountain. Many characteristics of dance and frivolity, as I have experienced it in the contemporary ‘Langarm’ dance environment in the Cape, are already present in this description from some hundred and fifty years ago. In this instance Lady Ross does not describe the musicians, but one can surmise from other parts of her writing that the musicians who are asked to ‘spuil a bietjie’ and ‘entirely by ear’ are servants, Malays or other musicians from the so-called lower orders, who throughout the history of the Cape were known to have learned their musical craft by ear and subsequently had a huge repertoire of songs, tunes and dances to draw on.<sup>250</sup> Lady Louisa

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<sup>248</sup> Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, Past and Present*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>249</sup> Ross, *Life at the Cape a Hundred Years Ago: By a Lady*, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>250</sup> Martin, *Coon Carnival: New Year in Cape Town, Past and Present*, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

Ross is purported to have stated that she ‘greatly preferred’ the ‘native string band’ to the ‘military brass’.<sup>251</sup>

The younger members of the ‘squire’s’ family or household have ‘dancing neighbours’, conjuring up notions of the predisposition of young white couples from adjoining farms to dance at any chance they may get. Echoes of the paternalism by the white farmers and land owners over their workers that has pervaded the farms of the Cape since the earliest times, are evident in the description of ‘male and female’ ‘servants’ being ‘ordered by the old squire to stand forth and dance away for their master’s amusement’.<sup>252</sup> Eventually everyone is dancing together, ‘master and valet’, ‘maiden and maid’, ‘footman and groom’, in the gayest abandon and with the most obvious pleasure and enjoyment that they have to improvise a ‘ballroom’ when the dew threatens to stop them. This evocation implies an unbroken tradition of music and dance in the Cape, where for centuries these cultural forms have broken down class and colour lines.<sup>253</sup>

## Cameo XI: 1861

Another vivid comment on life at the Cape in August 1861 by Lady Luisa Ross, make a number of important assertions:

The Coloured people, especially, are surprisingly polite. Insolence and surliness seem banished from their homes; and in their intercourse with strangers, Malays would set a bright example to many English provincials. In the so-called society of the place there is no sharply-defined line between class and class; and, as a rule, you will meet with quieter, well-bred manners among the necessarily mixed lot that attend the subscription balls than you would expect to find among people who are engaged in trade, and have but few opportunities of studying the habits of really first-class circles.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66; Ross, *Life at the Cape a Hundred Years Ago: By a Lady*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>252</sup> Dunseith, *op. cit.*, p. 18. A similar scenario was witnessed by the author in 2005 on a farm off the R44 on the way from Somerset West to Stellenbosch where the Coloured farm workers/musicians as a Christmas Choir, played for quests attending the owner’s garden party at the main house.

<sup>253</sup> Michael Nixon, ‘The world of jazz in inner Cape Town 1940-1960’ in *Papers Presented at the Symposium on Ethnomusicology Number 13*, Andrew Tracey (ed), Grahamstown, International Library of African Music, Rhodes University, 1998, pp. 19–23, esp. p. 23.

<sup>254</sup> Ross, *Life at the Cape a Hundred Years Ago: By a Lady*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

Twenty three years after the emancipation of slaves, the Coloured people and Cape Malays are courteous and well-mannered by English standards. Particularly notable are the 'mixed lot', who are traders or small business people who frequent the subscription balls that were already a feature of society in Cape Town as described by Bird in 1822.

## **Cameo XII: 1861**

This paragraph from Lady Luisa Ross is significant for a number of specific references to dancing and the musicianship of the Coloured population of Cape Town:

'Any fresh arrival with a little singing talent is soon regarded as a great acquisition; for although the colonial-born ladies are capital horsewomen, and especially strong in the dance line, they are not given to the drudgery which good music demands. For one who can sing with judgement, science, and expression, you will find dozens that can dance uninterruptedly from the opening of a ball to its close, viz., nine to four, and this even without deranging their 'coiffure'. Musical parties are thus an especial treat, and generally furnish the quidnuncs with gossip for a week. All simple ballad music is deservedly honoured, and the clever natives soon pick up the most complicated operatic overtures, and after one hearing at a concert, will whistle the score, in capital time, of nearly every piece that has taken their fancy. They are admirable mimics, and especially clever with the violin and the accordion, playing entirely by the ear. It is quite a treat to hear them whistling in roving quartette bands on fine moonlight evenings, each man in subjection to his mates. Their accuracy is surprising!'<sup>255</sup>

Lady Ross mentions the fact that the Cape ladies are exceptionally strong in the 'dance line' and although they don't have the patience to study music, most can dance well. Most significantly they dance without flagging from 9pm until 4am in the early morning, which are the normal times for the opening and closing of balls in nineteenth century Cape Town. Also deserving of interest is the mention of the 'roving quartette bands' which have been described by other travellers as being Cape Malay groups who sang in the streets of Cape Town. Lady Ross describes the proficiency of these Coloured musicians on violin and accordion and their special facility to catch tunes immediately by ear. The reference to 'quartette' and 'each man in subjection to his mates' no doubt describes harmony whistling or singing, most likely in four-part (relating to English glee singing or the new Minstrel part-

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<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

song which was part of the touring Christy Minstrel repertoire from America around this time).<sup>256</sup>

### Cameo XIII: 1861

This large paragraph from the writing of Lady Luisa Ross is primarily concerned with Ballroom dancing at the Cape in the mid-nineteenth century:

We have only been to two balls as yet, one given by the Artillery and one at Government House. The latter was very crowded; and although the rooms are large and the Governor's aides-de-camp most attentive to strangers, still to find partners for 300 people, all wanting to dance at the same time, must have severely tried their courtesy, and made it very difficult to see much of the dresses or criticize the company fairly. One thing struck me at once, and that was, the absence of giggle and gaucherie amongst the daughters of the middle-class gentry there assembled. The naval 'bucks' as usual, were here, there, and everywhere, and slightly boisterous in their appreciation of fun and supper; but otherwise the behaviour of every one was everything to be desired. Certainly, the Cape girls are indefatigable Waltzers; and they had the good sense to dress in nice, becoming, fresh tarlatans, and gauzy gowns, instead of vieing with each other in expensive silks and satins. Many of the chaperons and married women, of course, were disposed on the benches running round the ball-room, but except in the fact of being more richly and carefully dressed, they seem to me to be not a whit less fresh and lively than the frisky youngsters in the lancers or galop. The climate is so dry that ladies soon lose that peachiness and bloom of skin peculiar to colder countries, but they do not age so rapidly, and I think, on the whole they have a very good time of it. The music was alternatively played by a military brass and by a native string band, and I greatly preferred the latter.<sup>257</sup>

It is curious that Lady Ross states that they had 'only been to two balls as yet' when they had barely been at the Cape three weeks. This would imply that balls were quite a regular occurrence and a common form of evening entertainment in the mid-nineteenth century. Three hundred people at the Government-house ball is a large affair, considering the cost and the catering in particular. Lady Ross alludes to the enthusiasm of everyone wanting to dance, again mentioning the Cape ladies' untiring ability to dance and noting that the 'chaperons and married women' were no less able to keep up with the younger ladies in the fast dances. Notable are the benches 'running round the ball-room' and the Galop (which was a relatively new dance) as well as the Lancers (which was one of the Square Dance sets

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<sup>256</sup> Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>257</sup> Ross, *Life at the Cape a Hundred Years Ago: By a Lady*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

that would come through the nineteenth century and survive into the late twentieth century in the 'Langarm' dances of the Coloured population of Cape Town).

## Cameo XIV: 1862

Lady Duff Gordon described how two Malay bricklayers arrived at the Inn in Caledon at New Year of 1862 and spontaneously provided the dance music for a ball:

The handsome yellow man took the concertina which seemed so discordant, and the touch of his dainty fingers transformed it to harmony. He played dances with a precision and feeling quite unequalled, except by Strauss's band, and a variety which seemed endless. I asked him if he could read music, at which he laughed heartily, and said music came into the ears, not the eyes. He had picked it up from the bands in Capetown, or elsewhere. [...] The dancing was uninteresting enough. The Dutchmen danced badly, and said not a word, but plodded on so as to get all the dancing they could for their money. I went to bed at half-past eleven, but the ball went on till four.

The next night there was genteeler company, and I did not go in, but lay in bed listening to the Malay's playing. He had quite a fresh set of tunes, of which several were from the 'Traviata'<sup>258</sup>

Noteworthy is the musical talent of the Malay bricklayer for playing dance music, which interestingly he had learned by ear from the bands in Cape Town. His repertoire was impressive for a lady obviously familiar with the dance trends in England. The Malay musician had adapted tunes from 'La Traviata' for dancing, which was common practice for quadrille bands of the time.

## Cameo XV: 1874

David Coplan has developed the most informed narrative around the music of the urban development of Kimberley, the first major industrialised town in the Cape Province in the late nineteenth century. One of Coplan's quotes comes from evangelist Gwayi Tyamzashe, who recalls his experience there in 1874 and paints an evocative picture of life in those days:

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<sup>258</sup> Duff Gordon, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.

On my first arrival at the New Rush I observed that nearly every evening was devoted to private and public amusements [...] The evenings resounded with the noise of the concert, the circus, and all sorts of dances from one end of the camp to the other. The life then of both Coloured [non-Europeans] and Whites was so rough that I thought the place only good for those who were resolved to sell their souls for silver, gold and precious stones, or for those who were determined to barter their lives for the pleasures of a time.<sup>259</sup>

Coplan brings together possible musical influences and cites Whites playing ‘guitar, concertina, banjo, cornet, violin and even piano.’ In the mix were Khoi ‘servants who improvised new dance tunes on home-made violins.’<sup>260</sup> There can be no doubt, as has been documented by so many historians, that Black-faced Minstrel performance was the most popular form of entertainment in the latter half of the nineteenth century in South Africa and would have constituted a large part of the concert repertoire in Kimberley at this time. Coplan goes on to make one of his most sweeping but profound statement about this time:

But among these varied strains it was the Coloureds, arriving from the Cape with traditions of professional musicianship extending back more than two hundred years, who most strongly influenced early African urban music and dance.<sup>261</sup>

Coplan further describes this music as a ‘blend of Khoi-khoi, Malay, European, and American popular music on the violin or guitar for anyone who promised them a coin.’<sup>262</sup> Coplan quotes Xhosa choral composer Ben Tyamzashe in connection with Malays playing violin in Kimberley, as remembering ‘exuberant music and vibrant rhythms emanating from gambling dens, saloons and dance halls’.<sup>263</sup>

## Conclusion

As has been touched on in the previous chapters, the slave and coloured musicians had a particular gift and penchant for picking up the latest trends in music that they heard around

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<sup>259</sup> David B. Coplan, *In Township Tonight!: South African Black Music and Theatre*, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1985, p. 13.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*; Percival R. Kirby, *Musical Instruments of the Indigenous People of Southern Africa*, 3rd ed., Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 2013, pp. 334-337. These home violins were called *velviool* and the body was constructed of a skin stretched over a gourd.

<sup>261</sup> Coplan, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

them. The dance bands at the Cape through the nineteenth century—except for military bands functioning for dances—had primarily been string bands emanating from the ex-slave based coloured community, utilising violins as lead instruments, cellos and basses for the bass and banjos and guitars for the rhythm. In the Cape context, this dance music had already been greatly affected by the influence of the visiting and hugely popular Minstrel troupes in the mid 1800s and late in the 1800s the Jubilee groups from America, particularly in their repertoire with its African American harmonic and rhythmic content. It should not be underestimated what an influence the up-tempo Scottish and Irish reels of the Square Dances could have had on the local *ghoema* rhythms of the Cape Malays. It could be speculated from the descriptions of music and dance at the picnics and Rainbow Balls, that the particular syncopations of the *vastrap* and *ghoema* rhythm could possibly have been well established by the latter half of the nineteenth century. This would have paralleled the development of syncopated African American dance music in the USA.

The evolving jazz inflected music or Ragtime emanating from the USA, especially through the medium of the disc and the gramophone in the early part of the twentieth century, was to have a profound effect on the direction that dance music would take through the twentieth century not only in America, but worldwide. In the following chapter it becomes evident that the Cape was no exception especially in the realm of ‘Langarm’ dance amongst the Coloured population.

## CHAPTER 3

### Music and Dance at the Cape in the Twentieth Century: Retrospectives and New Perspectives

#### District Six: Heart of the Mother City

Today the inner-city suburb of Cape Town known as District Six lies largely as barren land next to the city centre, a testament to the harsh legacy of the Group Areas Act, one of the most socially devastating policies of the apartheid regime to be implemented in the city during the 1960s and '70s. Over the past half century, District Six has been the focus of a large body of academic work in political science, history, sociology, anthropology and musicology, covering issues as diverse as identity, human rights, politics, poverty, criminality, language, music and culture. Chris Schoeman has succinctly captured the essence of community in District Six:

District Six was a place of many faces. That it had been a slum throughout its existence, no one can deny. Various forms of crime and immorality, gangsters and prostitutes were to be found there. But there was another side to District Six. Amongst all the poverty and misery there was happiness, the joy of life and love for one's neighbours, the spirit of *kanala*, of helping each other.<sup>264</sup>

District Six has become almost synonymous in popular memory with that 'singular mix' or that 'special tradition of multi-racialism' to be found in Cape Town throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>265</sup> It was an area which, from the earliest days of the colony, had seen every class of person from every nation come and go in the rich cultural melting pot that was the port city of Cape Town. As the late Revel Fox, renowned Cape Town architect and town planner, described it:

What distinguishes the District from countless other established communities that were uprooted by the Group Areas Act was that it had become a spiritual heartland, the symbolic

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<sup>264</sup> Chris Schoeman, *District Six: The Spirit of Kanala*, Cape Town, Human and Rousseau, 1994, p. 11.

<sup>265</sup> Robert Semple, quoted in, Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89; Fredrickson, cited in Bickford-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

home of that rich and varied mixture of races and nationalities that constituted the biggest segment of the population of the Mother City.<sup>266</sup>

Most importantly, District Six was the area that became the heart of the Coloured ‘Langarm’ culture throughout the twentieth century, the bedrock of musicians from the early Quadrille string bands and marching Christmas Choir string bands as well as the Cape Malay Choirs and marching troupes. Later in the twentieth century, many musicians from brass bands and saxophone led dance bands also hailed from this area, with District Six being home to many of the top dance bands and dance band musicians in Cape Town through the twentieth century.<sup>267</sup>

In the early 1800s, Buitenkant Street marked Cape Town’s eastern extremity on the slopes just above the Castle and the new developments east of this street quickly became one of ‘the poorer districts’ of town.<sup>268</sup> After the Napoleonic Wars, many working class people from Europe and the British Isles were leaving poverty for the prospect of a new life in the colonies. Hundreds of Irish landed at Cape Town in 1823 and 1840 and formed a ‘distinctive community’ on this side of town around Constitution Hill, which became ‘informally known as “Irish Town” and became a source of much concern to the authorities.’<sup>269</sup> Here ‘the lower Irish, intermingled with English and Scotch’ reportedly lived in poverty and were associated with organised crime, drunkenness and moral degradation.<sup>270</sup> These communities were comprised of a majority of young unmarried men around this time.<sup>271</sup> George Thompson’s ‘properly surveyed street plan of Cape Town’ drawn in 1826 shows the site of the Roman Catholic Church or Chapel one block to the east of Buitenkant Street in Harrington Street near Constitution Hill and open land further east of the church.<sup>272</sup> In 1838 Bishop Patrick Raymond Griffith from Ireland was responsible for founding St Mary’s Cathedral and the Catholic Academy in this area.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Schoeman, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>267</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 29 July 1999 and 14 September 2016. District Six Museum Archive.

<sup>268</sup> Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 119; Schoeman, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>269</sup> Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-96.

<sup>270</sup> K. Elks, quoted in, Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

<sup>271</sup> Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

In the 1820s, three quarters of the inhabitants of Cape Town were tenants and the landlords who bought and erected large areas of properties in District Six eventually became 'slum landlords like Messrs Wicht, Glynn, Smuts and Higgs', generally interested in gaining the largest amount of rent possible.<sup>274</sup> After the final abolition of slavery in 1838, the strongly Irish character of the district started to change as more ex-slaves and Coloured people moved into the area. James Blackhouse noted at the time that Sydney Street in 'Irish Town' was a district 'where many low Irish and coloured people reside'.<sup>275</sup> The strong Irish and Scottish association with District Six is not remarked on in musical contexts, but would no doubt have had an enduring musical cross-pollination in relation to the Square Dances, Reels from the Square Dance figures, a strong tradition of violin or fiddle playing and even banjo playing. It might or might not be coincidental that Tem Hawkers first dance band from District Six was called the Ballyhooligans.<sup>276</sup>

By the 1840s there was an outcry about the shocking state of dwellings in this district, which was without an infrastructure of water and sanitation.<sup>277</sup> In 1867, Cape Town was divided into six districts. This district, which was originally designated as District Twelve and had become known locally as Kanaladorp, was demarcated and renamed District Six and was envisaged as the inner-city of Cape Town's new eastern extremity.<sup>278</sup>

In the 1860s the Wicht family owned 460 houses of which J. A. H. Wicht owned 106 houses in District Six. By 1880, C. and A. Wicht, who had inherited their father's property, owned 375 houses, 'mainly in District Six.'<sup>279</sup> Until 1861, this type of speculator and builder had been unrestricted by municipal regulations and without any town-planning they developed streets and buildings at liberty as they progressed. The journalist R. W. Murray is reported to have said of District Six: 'Houses of all shapes and sizes were built, without any drainage

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<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120, 180.

<sup>275</sup> James Blackhouse, quoted in, Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>276</sup> *Jazz People of Cape Town*, Lars Rasmussen (ed), Copenhagen, The Booktrader, 2003, p. 80. Further in depth research would need to be conducted to ascertain if this Irish presence did in fact have any impact on local popular music in Cape Town, particularly the Irish reels in relation to the *vastrap* rhythm and also dances such as the *Rieldans* from the Western Cape and North-Western Cape. The *Rieldans*, in particular, appears to be an indigenized version of traditional Irish step dancing, the name appearing to be linguistically connected as well.

<sup>277</sup> Worden, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 172, 250.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

being thought of, much less provided. [...] People built where they liked and how they liked, with no object but that of rent.'<sup>280</sup>

The wool boom in the Eastern Cape from 1846 bolstered development in Cape Town until the export wool prices collapsed in 1859. The late 1860s saw a 'severe economic depression' which was relieved by the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1870 and led to an economic boom in Cape Town from 1875 to 1882.<sup>281</sup> A further depression from 1882 to 1891 severely exacerbated the plight of the poor in District Six.<sup>282</sup>

Already in 1862, Mary Maclear, who lived in the Southern Suburbs, a socially and culturally a world apart from the inner-city poor, described a journey through District Six from a distinctly middle-class view as:

a tedious journey through one of the district outskirts of the Town, open gutters beside the streets & between the houses, & sometimes from under the doors filled with offensive black sluggish stuff, idle people at most of the doors & windows, or lounging about dirty & vacant, surely they are not in want, or they could not be so idle; perhaps it is because they don't care to be clean that they seem to have nothing to do!

As Bickford-Smith posits, in the late 1800s there were marked parallels between the inner-city poor of London and Cape Town. The social elite as well as the middle class of London and the dominant mercantile class of Cape Town viewed the problems of the poor in similar ways and in the climate of Victorian values blamed the incidence of violence, crime, drunkenness and prostitution or sexual promiscuity on general moral decay rather than on poverty. In Cape Town the dominant class added the extra dimension of race and racial discrimination to the judgement of the poor, mixing their attitudes with common Darwinist views of racial hierarchies.

An advert at the bottom of the front page of the *Cape Times* of Tuesday 10 October 1876 reveals 'The Alfred Quadrille Band', whose contact was P. J. Elario from 11 Sydney Street in District Six, announcing their availability for 'Balls, Parties, Picnics, Dramatic Entertainments etc.'<sup>283</sup> Top Coloured Ballroom or 'Langarm' bands from the early twentieth century were

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<sup>280</sup> R. W. Murray, quoted in, Worden *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

<sup>281</sup> Bickford-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>283</sup> P. J. Elario, 'Advertisement', in *The Cape Times*, Cape Town, 10 October 1876, p. 1.

based in District Six. They included bands like the Paulse Big Six, the Collins Dance Band and the Ballyhooligans led by Tem Hawker. Numerous smaller Ballroom or 'Langarm' string bands hailed from the district, such as the Arnie Adams Dance Band.

Throughout the twentieth century until its decimation in the 1970s, District Six would be associated with a distinctive multi-racial working class culture that would eventually give rise to many aspects of Cape Town's Coloured culture in the twentieth century, especially in the area of music and social Ballroom dancing.<sup>284</sup> The district was always and remained a hub of dance band activity. District Six was the centre from which the Christmas Choirs paraded at Christmas time and it was also a hub for the New Year street marches of the *Nagtroepe* and the *Klopse*. Top Ballroom or 'Langarm' dance band musicians, who were mosoften members of Christmas Choirs, were recruited for a fee by the *Nagtroepe* at New Year to form a marching band leading the troupes through the streets.<sup>285</sup>

The issue of forced removals of almost the entire population of District Six under the Group Areas Act of the apartheid regime remains a very sensitive and emotional issue that my informants would invariably mention in passing and would usually gloss over in a brave and philosophical way. The terminology they would use would include the phrase 'moved by the Group', and every musician from the District of those days expresses some form of the irreparable loss; of cultural cohesion, of community, of a sense of home, of dignity and freedom, of connection to and location in the city, of family and friends, of entire Christmas Choirs and other Bands, of artistic cohesion and artistic culture. Those who were removed were offered, in place of their homes, badly constructed counsel flats spread out across the Cape Flats. The District Six Museum stands as a constant reminder of the loss of this inner-city community and the rich diversity of Cape cultural heritage that its community embodied.

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<sup>284</sup> Schoeman, *op. cit.*, p. 62; Manuel, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-112.

<sup>285</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 29 July 1999, District Six Museum Archive.

## Ballroom dancing in the twentieth century: American ‘Dance Craze’

Ballroom dancing from the nineteenth century to around the turn of the twentieth century took its lead from innovations in three major cultural centres world-wide: France, England and America. The British dance teachers and associations had a huge impact on what was happening in dance fashion in all the British colonies and this was very relevant to South African dance trends.<sup>286</sup> Victor Silvester notes that British dance fashions were inspired by French fashion before the Rag came to London from America in 1912, and from that time onwards, American dance fashions dominated the development of Ballroom Dance in Britain and the world.<sup>287</sup>

The Imperial Society of Dance Teachers was founded in Covent Garden, London on 25 July 1904.<sup>288</sup> In 1924 the organisation formed the new Ballroom Branch and shortly thereafter changed their name to the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing.<sup>289</sup> The Committee of the Ballroom Branch of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing was instrumental in analysing the drastic changes that were happening in Ballroom dancing at that time and formalising the main dances into a series of codified moves. Their magazine, *The Dance Journal*, published these findings and the governing laws of the steps, carriage and style in relation to the four main dances, which in 1924 were the Foxtrot, Waltz, One-step and Tango. They set up a syllabus and examination standards which candidates would need to pass in order to become certified teachers. Together with the staging of yearly World Championships in Britain and local British Championships, these teaching standards and the style of dancing that thus developed, eventually became known or recognised as the ‘English Style’ of Ballroom dancing.<sup>290</sup> Writing closer to the time in 1936, dancing teacher Alex Moore of Kingston-upon-Thames in Surrey had this to say about his experience of the changes that took place:

It is now, however, some years since the English dancing public made the great change from the sequence and set dances, and engaged themselves in the turmoil of what was then

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<sup>286</sup> Alida Maria Green, ‘Dancing in borrowed shoes: a history of ballroom dancing in South Africa (1600’s – 1940’s)’, *Masters in Cultural History*, Pretoria, University of Pretoria, 2008, pp. 103-104.

<sup>287</sup> Victor Silvester, *Modern Ballroom Dancing*, London, Stanley Paul, 1993, p. 21.

<sup>288</sup> ‘Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing’, in *Wikipedia*, <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial\\_Society\\_of\\_Teachers\\_of\\_Dancing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_Society_of_Teachers_of_Dancing)> [accessed 15 May 2016].

<sup>289</sup> Silvester, *op. cit.*, p. 32;

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

known as 'Jazz'. Naturally enough, chaos existed for a number of years, but the standardization of a few basic steps and the gradual clarification of the technique that governs them, have resulted in tremendous progress being made, until, to-day, the English style of Ballroom Dancing stands pre-eminent throughout the world.<sup>291</sup>

In the first decade of the twentieth century there were few dedicated Modern Dance Halls in Britain, largely at the most popular seaside resorts such as Blackpool, Morecambe and Margate. There were, however, still Ballrooms or 'Assemblies' (as they were also called), that had existed from an earlier era in the mid-nineteenth century, often attached to Hotels. In London people with average means would dance at the Academy of an 'old-time "sequence" teacher' who would 'organise an "Assembly" in some Town Hall' where they would dance 'the "sequence" and the "set" dance'. These old-time Assemblies would have music provided by a 'Quadrille Band', which was usually a string band.<sup>292</sup> The English Quadrille Band relates directly to the Quadrille string bands of the Cape from the nineteenth century and which were still referred to as string bands when discussing Ballroom dance bands from the early twentieth century before the first brass and reeds were introduced to the dance bands.<sup>293</sup>

In London, in the first decade of the twentieth century, the Waltz was still supreme in the Ballroom. A program containing twenty four dances might have as many as eighteen Waltzes, the remainder being Two-steps and Lancers. The Barn Dance was often included, as well as a final Galop, especially on the programmes of all Hunt and Country Balls and also many Private Subscription Dances until 1914. A slow Waltz was played at the popular Assemblies and Academies, whereas the general dancing public still danced the faster Rotary Waltz or Viennese Waltz at 'the smart private dances, at the leading subscription dances, at the Hunt and Country Balls and at dance clubs'. Very important Society Balls such as State Balls, still maintained the Quadrille and the Polka.<sup>294</sup>

The Boston had been introduced from America in 1902 and was a flat footed triple time dance with a hip to hip hold, danced at a fast pace like the Rotary Waltz. The Tango was introduced to Europe in 1907 by Camille de Rhyndal who had seen it in Argentina. It

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<sup>291</sup> Alex Moore, *Ballroom Dancing*, London, A. C. Black, 1989, p. 1.

<sup>292</sup> Silvester, *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 26.

<sup>293</sup> Jimmy Adams, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>294</sup> Silvester, *op. cit.*, pp. 17, 21.

flourished at first in Paris and was introduced into England between 1911 and 1912 and became the rage, inspiring the ‘Tango Teas’ in London society at that time. These ‘Tango parties’ would be held in ‘drawing-rooms with an Argentine boy playing the piano, in place of the usual “at homes”’.<sup>295</sup>

By 1910 the Two-Step had given way to the One-Step and a string of animal inspired Ragtime dances followed such as the Turkey Trot, the Grizzly Bear and the Bunny Hug. According to Silvester, possibly from a British perspective, it was the Two-Step that by 1912 had ‘become the “Rag” and one of the most popular dances on the programme, particularly at the smart dance clubs.’<sup>296</sup> Silvester notes that at this time dancing was first introduced into London restaurants by clearing a little space for dancing couples. The Savoy Hotel was the first establishment in London to offer a dedicated dance floor in their restaurant.<sup>297</sup>

Sigmund Spaeth states that ‘[t]he decade between 1910 and 1920 can be identified primarily, as the period in which America went dance mad.’ He continues to assert that ‘[a]fter 1910 the publishers of popular music became more and more insistent that a song must be danceable in order to achieve real success’, with even ballads in ‘free vocal style’ that commonly had ad lib flexible rhythm, were ‘immediately supplied with a dance orchestration in strict time’.<sup>298</sup> After 1910 Irving Berlin came to prominence as a composer from Tin Pan Alley, writing for Broadway and producing many future jazz standards.<sup>299</sup>

Irene Foote and Vernon Blythe returned from Paris to America in 1912, at the Louis Martin restaurant and later became known as Irene and Vernon Castle.<sup>300</sup> The Tango had recently arrived from London and Paris where it had been formalised from its original Argentinian form and the Foxtrot was soon to be unleashed on the world just before the First World War. The Castles were purported to have popularised the Foxtrot in Irving Berlin’s score for *Watch Your Step* on Broadway in 1914.<sup>301</sup> The Castles fuelled the now widespread dance craze in America in 1912 with their style and charm and ingenuity of remodelling existing

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<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-38.

<sup>298</sup> Sigmund Spaeth, *A History of Popular Music in America*, New York, Random House, 1948, p. 369.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 376-381.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 387-389.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 387; ‘Vernon and Irene Castle’, in *Wikipedia*, <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vernon\\_and\\_Irene\\_Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vernon_and_Irene_Castle)> [accessed 16 May 2016].

dances and creating new ones. Agnes de Mille writes: 'The Castles were marvellous performers, inventive and tasteful, and they changed the style of social dancing over the western world.'<sup>302</sup> They were at the forefront of innovating dances to African American ragtime rhythms and were instrumental in introducing these dancing styles to a whole generation of 'well-heeled whites'.<sup>303</sup> The Castles organised their own dancing school, Castle House and put together their own dance orchestra of African American musicians lead by Jim Europe and Ford Dabney which echoes the place of Coloured dance bands in Cape Town society in the early twentieth century.<sup>304</sup>

By 1923 the Charleston had been developed and became the quintessential rage for rest of the decade before it faded from popularity. The 1925 dancing World Championships featured a special competition in the quick Foxtrot but by 1929 it had officially become known as the Quickstep. From this time the Waltz, the Foxtrot, the Quickstep and the Tango made up the core of official Ballroom dancing. Later the Latin American dances would be added to the repertoire after the Samba was introduced in the late 1930s. The Beguine, the Mambo, the Bossa Nova, the Rumba, the Cha-Cha-Cha and the Jive would follow.<sup>305</sup>

In South Africa by the mid-1920s the South African Dance Teachers Association had been established along the line of its British counterpart the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing. By 1933 the Amateur Dancers Association was founded which 'promoted a high standard of dancing amongst amateur social dancers.'<sup>306</sup> These associations would have a lasting and ongoing influence on the maintenance of high standards of Ballroom dancing in South Africa.<sup>307</sup>

The considerable output of music compositions emanating from the pens of dozens of now famous composers of Tin Pan Alley hit tunes was being aggressively marketed by the Gramophone companies and sheet music publishers, both in the USA and Britain, and then disseminated to all corners of the world via this aggressive marketing campaign. The music stores of Cape Town were no exception and all these materials were made available for the

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<sup>302</sup> Agnes De Mille, *Dance in America*, United States Information Service, p. 8.

<sup>303</sup> Spaeth, *op. cit.*, pp. 387-389;

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>305</sup> Silvester, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-39.

<sup>306</sup> Green, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-105.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 103-131.

population of the Cape through the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>308</sup> This was the popular music that would eventually reach the Cape in the early years of the twentieth century, in the form of sheet music and records and, by the 1930s, also the movies. From the turn of the century, through the new technology of the record, jazz would slowly integrate into the dance music repertoire of the Cape and alter it forever.<sup>309</sup>

## **Jazz at the Cape through the twentieth century: Concert or Dance?**

The ambiguity around the term jazz and what particular style of music it refers to is very pertinent to the narrative of dance bands and jazz bands at the Cape.

Early jazz bands in the USA functioned as dance bands. The elitist argument of what constitutes a jazz band and what constitutes a dance band, which is embedded in many texts on Cape jazz, becomes problematic when viewed in relation to jazz elements in certain Ballroom or ‘Langarm’ dance bands from the pre-Second World War decade in Cape Town (such as the Senators of Swing) and the development of jazz as dance music in the United States of America. By the 1930s the majority of Ballroom dance bands in the United States were playing jazz. Well-known African American band leaders such as Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Count Basie were all playing at large dancing halls or clubs in Harlem, New York. Fletcher Henderson had come up to New York in the early 1920s, formed his band and played at the Club Alabam and later at the famous Roseland in midtown Manhattan in a style he developed which would become known as ‘swing’. King Oliver and Chick Webb played at the Savoy Ballroom where they would alternate sets of twenty minutes each. The ‘Savoy’ was huge catering for hundreds of dancers, ninety percent of whom were ‘colored’ dancers.<sup>310</sup> The practice of alternating bands became popular in Cape Town from the 1940s amongst the Ballroom or ‘Langarm’ bands and these events were called ‘non-stops’.<sup>311</sup> Mary Lou Williams’s account of the times gives a clear picture of the functions of these top jazz

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<sup>308</sup> Layne, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-52.

<sup>309</sup> Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa*, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>310</sup> Cab Calloway, ‘Cab Calloway’ in *Reading Jazz: A Gathering of Autobiography, Reportage, and Criticism from 1919 to Now*, R Gottlieb (ed), New York, Pantheon Books, 1996, pp. 117–121; Spaeth, *op. cit.*, p. 479.

<sup>311</sup> Les Steiger, interviewed by Valmont Layne and Willie Jales, 9 November 1999, transcript p. 5, the District Six Museum Archive.

bands and the dance engagements that they were playing, citing numerous examples of the Ballroom dance venues, where they played for hundreds of dancers.<sup>312</sup>

Spaeth, writing in 1948, reveals some of the sentiments about the jazz scene amongst American critics and writers of the time, describing the essence of jazz as an ‘inspiration of a sort in some of the improvised variations and spontaneous polyphony created by the masters of the jazz technique.’ Spaeth relates that ‘[i]t is generally agreed that the purest and best jazz has been produced by small groups of instrumentalists, who actually arrived at a spontaneous and instinctive polyphony and achieved some of their most astonishing results when honestly improvising.’ These citations reveal some of the early narrative elements that contributed towards constructing an elitist stance regarding the critical esteem of these small jazz combos in relation to the larger popular big bands. Spaeth notes in this regard: ‘there is general agreement amongst connoisseurs that the big commercial “name” bands do not play jazz at all [...]’.<sup>313</sup>

This rift widened further in the 1950s with the developments in Bebop and Hard-bop jazz, which eventually became far removed from dance music. This is generally where the local Cape narrative on jazz begins. Although the handful of District Six and Kensington-based Coloured musicians who formed part of the first so-called ‘jazz clique’ of Cape Town had all grown up with some schooling in or musical connection to the Cape Ballroom or ‘Langarm’ dance bands, when they got together to play Bebop it was understood that they were aspiring to a more sophisticated and less commercial form of music. This was the new style of jazz, the latest style of jazz; in fact, to the local enthusiasts it was possibly the only style they knew that could be called jazz. This music was not seen as dance music, but something more profound and ultimately meant for serious listening.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> Mary Lou Williams, ‘Mary Lou Williams’ in *Reading Jazz: A Gathering of Autobiography, Reportage, and Criticism from 1919 to Now*, R Gottlieb (ed), New York, Pantheon Books, 1996, pp. 87–116. It is evident in Williams’ account that Lois Deppe’s band played at the Arcadia Ballroom in Pittsburgh in the 1920’s. In the late 1920’s Williams’ band was playing at the Pink Rose Ballroom in Memphis. Later, possibly the early 1930’s, Williams’ Band played in New York at the Roseland Ballroom where Fletcher Henderson’s Orchestra had played in the 1920’s and then her band moved to the Savoy Ballroom where Chick Webb’s Orchestra was playing. Later they opened the Winnwood Beach Park Ballroom in Kansas City. It is also evident from her account that a large amount of top jazz musicians were playing in smaller combos in Speakeasies and Nightclubs, but the bigger bands and Orchestras played the Ballrooms.

<sup>313</sup> Spaeth, *op. cit.*, pp. 416-417.

<sup>314</sup> Vincent Kolbe, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen, *Jazz People of Cape Town*, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-110; Gassert, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

Jimmy Adams was one of the Cape Town jazz musicians who was an exception to the Beboppers, having learned his big band skills from Tem Hawker and the Harmony Kings (essentially a dance band). His unwavering interest in big band swing inspired him to teach a group of young Coloured musicians to play big band swing arrangements, which he hoped would be viable in the Ballroom or 'Langarm' dance scene. With his great love of African marabi and jive and his grounding in American swing band styles, Jimmy Adams's sophisticated swing jazz arrangements were unfortunately unappreciated by the more conservative Coloured Ballroom dancing fraternity.<sup>315</sup>

Michael Nixon, writing on the 'world of inner-city jazz in Cape Town 1940-1960', illustrates the ambiguities that can enter the dance band/jazz band narrative, stating that '[t]he story of Jimmy Adams illustrates the move from dance band to jazz band. Jimmy Adams claims to have started the first (coloured) jazz band in Cape Town.'<sup>316</sup> In the case of Jimmy Adams, according to Willie Jales, a former member of the Jimmy Adams Swing Band, Jimmy Adams geared his music towards Ballroom dancing with well-arranged orchestrations. The Jimmy Adams Swing Band took part in a number of Ballroom band competitions, for instance the event in Somerset West Town Hall in 1957, won by Alf Wyllie's Dance Band.<sup>317</sup> Lars Rasmussen confirms this ambiguity when discussing Tem Hawker, stating that: 'Sometime, in the thirties, he was able to found one of the earliest non-white jazz bands in Cape Town, an eighteen piece unit, called The Ballyhooligans. They were probably based in District Six, where Tem was living.'<sup>318</sup> This quote from Rasmussen is problematic with regard to his usage of the terminology 'one of the earliest non-white jazz bands' in regard to The Ballyhooligans. There can be little doubt that the *raison d'être* for The Ballyhooligans was to function as a Ballroom dance band as all the Coloured 'Langarm' dance bands in District Six were functioning at that time. There were no concert venues for an eighteen piece 'jazz band' in Cape Town during the 1930s, except in the fledging townships of Ndabeni and then Langa where versions of concert and dance were likely to have been held. Even in the 1940s

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<sup>315</sup> Jimmy Adams, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 18 June 1992.

<sup>316</sup> Nixon, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>317</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 29 July 1999, District Six museum Archive; Willie Jales, 'Story source for The Collector', the Willie Jales Collection, p. 3; *Jazz People of Cape Town*, Lars Rasmussen, *op. cit.*, pp. 167.

<sup>318</sup> Lars Rasmussen, in *Jazz People of Cape Town*, *op. cit.*, 2003, p. 80. However it is important to bear in mind that this form of dance music was only few decades old in America in the 1930s, and had only recently been given the moniker of jazz. Refer to the quote by Moses Molelekoa in the following paragraph.

Tem Hawker and the Harmony Kings were functioning as a dance band. Les Steiger, who was one of the most sophisticated 'Langarm' saxophonists of the 1940s, confirmed that the style of music that Tem Hawker and the Harmony Kings played was very close to their American Big Band counterparts. He categorized them as swing jazz musicians.<sup>319</sup> It stands to reason that Ballroom dances would have been the primary source of income to sustain a band of the size of The Ballyhooligans, especially at a time when 'the dance craze' was captivating society in the western world. The Ballyhooligans were no doubt one of the most sophisticated Ballroom dance bands in Cape Town of the 1930s.

As the 1950s drew to a close and bebop was still high-fashion, the so-called jazz scene in Cape Town became centred around the night-clubs: 'The Naaz, The Catacombs and the Vortex', the Mermaid, the Zambezi as well as the Navigators Den and Darryls, some of which catered for social dancing and some for more of a listening audience. There was also the occasional jazz concert organised at UCT, the Weisman Hall or at a hall in District Six. The Ballroom dancing club, the Ambassador, was used on Sundays as a jazz venue and became



Figure 3 Joe Murray and his Philharmonic Orchestra, circa late 1930s, early 1940s.<sup>320</sup>

<sup>319</sup> Moses Molelekoa, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen, *op. cit.*, p. 167. Moses Molelekoa stated regarding the early Harmony Kings: 'We played basically ballroom, orchestrated ballroom. I had taken a diploma in syncopation, Teddy Garrett. Actually we were impressed and followed these bands, Glen Miller, Duke Ellington, Tommy Dorsey.'

<sup>320</sup> Joe Murray and his Philharmonic Orchestra, photo courtesy of Jerome Jales and the Willie Jales Collection.

the place to appreciate the handful of local jazz musicians as they made history in the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>321</sup>

The elitist stance surrounding the jazz narrative in Cape Town, which if confined to the Bebop, Hardbop and Cool era could be considered a valid trope, becomes inappropriate when the Coloured Ballroom dance bands of the pre-Second World War era, who incorporated the new jazz and swing elements, are not considered part of the popular jazz narrative. This narrative often fails to take into account the development in Cape Town of early influences of jazz in the Ballroom or ‘Langarm’ dance bands of the late 1930s and 1940s; influences that parallel that of the early developments of jazz bands in the United States. Photographs of local dance bands, such as Joe Murray and his Philharmonic Orchestra in Figure 2, correspond almost identically with similar photographs of American jazz dance bands of the 1920s. The dance bands of the Black community in Cape Town have been designated as jazz bands, while the narrative surrounding Ballroom or ‘Langarm’ dance bands seems to relegate them to a position that fails to credit the influence of jazz on the dance band musicians with regard to style, instrumentation and repertoire. The ‘Langarm’ bands were seen, at least by the musicians who in the mid-1950s aspired to Bebop, as being less advanced, less modern, less swinging and less sophisticated (or possibly just more mainstream and popular), as opposed to the elite subculture surrounding the so-called jazz scene.<sup>322</sup>

Les Steiger had this to say about these attitudes after describing an argument which revealed the musical talent of two of the top Cape Town jazz guitarists Kenny Japthah and Norman De La Harpe:

Then of course they also broke away. Then Arthur Gillies came into the picture—then Attie Treu came into the picture and they started—and that’s where things were starting to go *deurmekaar* because those guys sort of had an air about themselves—the want to play jazz—then they heard about jazz. There was no education in jazz. You couldn’t sell jazz. You could sell dance music, yes.<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> Leonard Weinreich, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen, *op. cit.*, p. 263; Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa*, *op. cit.*, p. 222; George Cupido, in *Jazz People of Cape Town*, *op. cit.*, p. 56; Tony Wyllie, interviewed by the author, 29 May 2016.

<sup>322</sup> Vincent Kolbe, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

<sup>323</sup> Les Steiger, interviewed by Valmont Layne and Willie Jales, 9 November 1999, District Six Museum Archive, transcript, pp. 1-41, esp. p. 7.

The interview by Valmont Layne and Willie Jales with Les Steiger reveals how a musician of his calibre was influenced by the swing band era and how he and his band introduced this style of swing to the Ballroom or 'Langarm' dances in Cape Town in the early 1940s. Les Steiger also related how the dancers and audiences were wildly enthusiastic about hearing and dancing to the new swing band styles at the Cape Town City Hall.<sup>324</sup> Steiger was also at the forefront in Cape Town of the early bop era of the mid-1940s. By definition and in relation to swing bands in the USA at this time, it would be appropriate to place Ballroom or 'Langarm' dance bands like Les Steiger and the Senators of Swing firmly in the realm of 'jazz band'.

Willie Jales spent at least the last fifteen years of his life developing a counter narrative to the disproportionate importance lent to the musicians of the so-called Cape Town 'jazz clique' from the 1950s onwards.<sup>325</sup> Before Jales passed away in 2013, he had been working on a number of drafts of what was essentially the same document, variously named, 'Original Cape Coloured Bands', 'History of Dance Bands' and 'Story source for the Collector'. In his opening paragraph he states:

Much has been said in the media (on TV/Media/Etc.) about the origin of Cape Jazz. However, the media seldom (nobody ever) mentions where these jazz musicians came from? They certainly did not fall out of the sky!

Credit must be given to these dance bands which started after the first and second world wars. Musicians who came from the army or navy bands played, or formed their own respective bands, playing weekend after weekend. That was before what we now call Cape jazz bands came into existence. Many, if not all jazz musicians in their young days played for dance or *Langarm* bands. Some were even taught how to play dance music.

However, you find some jazz musicians not giving credit or enough credit to these bands of yesteryear. I would like to mention some dance bands from the late 1920s to the 70s. When jazz took off when it did a lot of these jazz musicians, although they played and got experience and exposure, did not want to be associated with so called "Gam Bands" a name given because they were not jazzy or modern enough. Today they talk of their District Six music. I would like to give credit to some of the popular bands that started from the late 1920s to the 1970s.<sup>326</sup>

It is not possible to apply the same conception or the same usage of the term jazz as applied to bebop of the 1950s, to the term jazz as was appropriate for the pre-1950s Coloured

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<sup>324</sup> Ibid., pp

<sup>325</sup> Gassert, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>326</sup> Willie Jales, 'Story source for The Collector', the Willie Jales Collection, p. 1.

Ballroom or ‘Langarm’ dance bands such as Sonny’s Jazz Revellers, Tommy Lee and his Merry Revellers or the Senators of Swing. It is also a misconception, as Valmont Layne realised in an interview with Willie Jales, that District Six was a thriving centre for Bebop jazz and the emerging Cape jazz that emanated from there in the 1950s and early 1960s. Amongst the Coloured population, there was only a handful of musicians who set their sights on Bebop, Hardbop and Cool, the majority of whom were schooled in and began their musical journeys in the Ballroom or ‘Langarm’ dance bands of Cape Town.<sup>327</sup> As bebop emerged in Cape Town in the early 1950s, the divide between the players who were drawn to the new form of jazz on the one hand and those dedicated to Ballroom or ‘Langarm’, deepened.

## The Vastrap-Ghoema Rhythm-Complex

The term and practices surrounding *ghoema* have been extensively debated. It is a contentious term that has, through time, acquired many varied usages and spellings. Examples include: ‘*Goomah*’, referring to the ‘*Goomah*’ dance; ‘*ghommas*’, referring to the drums; ‘*gommaliedjies*’; ‘*ghommaliédjies*’; ‘*ghoemaliédjies*’; *goema* music.<sup>328</sup> The so-called *ghoema* beat or *klopse* rhythm that accompanies the *moppies* of the *Klopse* troupes is traditionally a far more complex rhythm than the slower *vastrap*, played for dances either by Coloured or *Boeremusiek* musicians. Apart from the banjo and guitar rhythm, different accents are created by the *ghoema* drum, the tambourine hand-drums and walking sticks, as well as the patterns created by the claves or *klappers*.<sup>329</sup>

The *vastrap* beat appears to be a crystallisation of the essence of the *klopse* beat which occurs in Coloured Ballroom or ‘Langarm’ dance history, as well as in *Boeremusiek* dances. It is likely that the Contredanse and its off-shoots, the Quadrille and Cotillon (which formed

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<sup>327</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 29 July 1999, District Six Museum Archive.

<sup>328</sup> *Argus* 1908, quoted in Martin, *Chronicles of The Kaapse Klopse: With Some Documents on the Sources of their Music*, *op. cit.*, p. 41; George Ascham, *The Outspan* 25 November 1949, quoted in Martin, *Chronicles of The Kaapse Klopse: With Some Documents on the Sources of their Music*, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73; George Manuel, *District Six*, Cape Town, Longmans Southern Africa, 1967, p 110; Desmond Desai, ‘“Cape Malay” Music’ in *5th Symposium on Ethnomusicology*, T Andrew (ed), Grahamstown, International Library of African Music, Rhodes University, 1985, pp. 39–44; Bickford-Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-189; Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

<sup>329</sup> Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 36; *Hier Kom Die Klopse & Karnival Jol 1955*, The Harlem Darkies, Captain-William Lewis, Melody Music, Trutone, RA 197 (4350. X; 4351).

the basis for the Square Dances that proliferated in the nineteenth century), constitute the origins for the development and continued use of the *vastrap* rhythm in the Cape and throughout South Africa, both amongst the Coloured population as well as Whites.

As Willemien Froneman has shown, there is compelling evidence to support the creole and hybrid origins of *boeremusiek*, and the history of ‘Langarm’ dancing confirms this.<sup>330</sup> The dances that constitute the repertoire of *boeremusiek* have their origin in early to mid-nineteenth century Ballroom dancing: the Quadrille or *Kadriel*, the Cotillon or *Kotiljons*, the Lancers or *Lansiers*, the Schottische or *Settees* or *Setties*, the Scottish Reel or *Skotse Riel*, the Contredanse or *Kontradans*, the Waltz or *Wals*, the Polka, the Mazurka, the Galop, and of course the *Vastrap*.<sup>331</sup>

The Coloured population of Cape Town who danced Ballroom through every fashion change of the early 1900s, appear to have dropped the Polka, Mazurka and the Galop for the modern dances by the 1940s and had embraced the Foxtrot, the Quickstep, the Tango as well as the new Bop and Jive dances as they emerged, but always retained or maintained the Square Dance tradition of the Quadrille, the Commercial, the Lancers, the Pageant Quadrille, the Caledonians, Irish Quadrille, the d’Alberts Quadrille, the Royal Alberts Quadrille and the Second Set.<sup>332</sup> The *Boeredanse*, on the other hand, maintained all the older forms of couples-dances. The *Kadriel* and the *Lansiers* appear to have died out through the twentieth century, only being maintained through the 1940s and 1950s by isolated groups of old-time dance enthusiasts like the Jan Pierewiet Society of Stellenbosch.<sup>333</sup> One reason for the demise of the Square Dance Set in the twentieth century amongst the White population could have had something to do with the growing trends of a

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<sup>330</sup> Willemien Froneman, ‘Pleasure Beyond the Call of Duty: Perspectives, Retrospectives and Speculations on Boeremusiek’, PhD dissertation, Dept. of Music, Faculty of Humanities, Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch University, 2012, pp. 49-64.

<sup>331</sup> Burden, *op. cit.*, p. 79; Froneman, *op. cit.*, p.45; Dr. Edith Katzenellenbogen, interviewed by the author, 2012. Dr. Edith Katzenellenbogen assured me that the *Vastrap* was the Quickstep as Kenny Wentzel related that north-east of Mossel Bay even the Coloured population danced a Quickstep to a slow *vastrap* rhythm. Since the Quickstep was established in the early 1920s it is a relatively recent adaptation to the beat which is obviously much older.

<sup>332</sup> Les Steiger, interviewed by Valmont Layne and Willie Jales, 9 November 1999, with a transcription pp. 1-41, the District Six Museum Archive.

<sup>333</sup> Dr. Edith Katzenellenbogen, interviewed by the author, 19 October 2016. The Jan Pierewiet Society of Stellenbosch maintained ‘die Lansiers Dans’ through the 1940s until 1955.

record buying public and the length of a set, which at approximately twenty minutes couldn't be recorded in its entirety on one side of an LP Record until the mid-1950s.

Denis Constance Martin has very eloquently suggested a possible scenario for the existence of the so-called *ghoema* beat. After mentioning possible origins he posits:

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 coexisted at the Cape came together.

It appears that Cape musicians must have distilled the essential syncopation of a simple duple rhythm structure that was to be found in many types of musical genres, styles and situations throughout the history of the Cape. This simple syncopation which could be found in military drumming for marching and in the reel tunes of the Quadrilles and Country Dances, was central to the development of this vastrap-ghoema rhythm-complex by the slaves and other creole people at the Cape.<sup>334</sup> This essential syncopation could be played at any tempo but once speeded up to frenetic dance and quick march tempos with the added influences of Khoikhoi and other ethnic rhythmic sensibilities of the Cape, became an altogether unique entity embodying subtle variations of anacrusis that created a perpetual lilt and bounce which inspired dance.

## **Dixieland to Fairyland: the 'Squares' and the 'Vastrap' at the Cape**

During the twentieth century, at least until the early 1960s, Square Dancing (which included the Quadrille, the Commercial, the Pageant Quadrille, the Lancers, the Caledonians, the d'Alberts Quadrille and the Second Set), constituted an integral part of 'Langarm' dance in the Coloured community of Cape Town.<sup>335</sup> These dances came emerged in the twentieth century from their continued usage during the nineteenth century in the Cape by all classes, racial groups and cultural groups, the Quadrille having been developed into the square

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<sup>334</sup> 'Quadrille and Commercial', recording of The Harmony Kings, courtesy of Jerome Jales from the Willie Jales Collection. Banjo rhythms often appear to follow the snare drum patterns of certain of the Quadrille figures, this would also then apply to the snare drum patterns for quick-marching to marching bands.

<sup>335</sup> Les Steiger, interviewed by Valmont Layne and Willie Jales, 9 November 1999, District Six Museum Archives.

formation in France from the older English Country Dances or Contredanse in the late eighteenth century and introduced into England in 1815. The other Square Dance sets developed out of the Quadrille style during the nineteenth century and these six or seven versions of the Square Dance became the most popular sets that continued to be used through the twentieth century in Cape Town. We can also deduce that many of the tunes and dances of the Square Dances were Scottish, Irish and English tunes in reel and jig rhythms, some of which could be called 'march time', while some, played faster, could be called reels in duple time or straight 4/4 time. Some figures of the Quadrille were originally in 6/8 time, but they weren't favoured, being less vibrant than the fast single duple time rhythms.

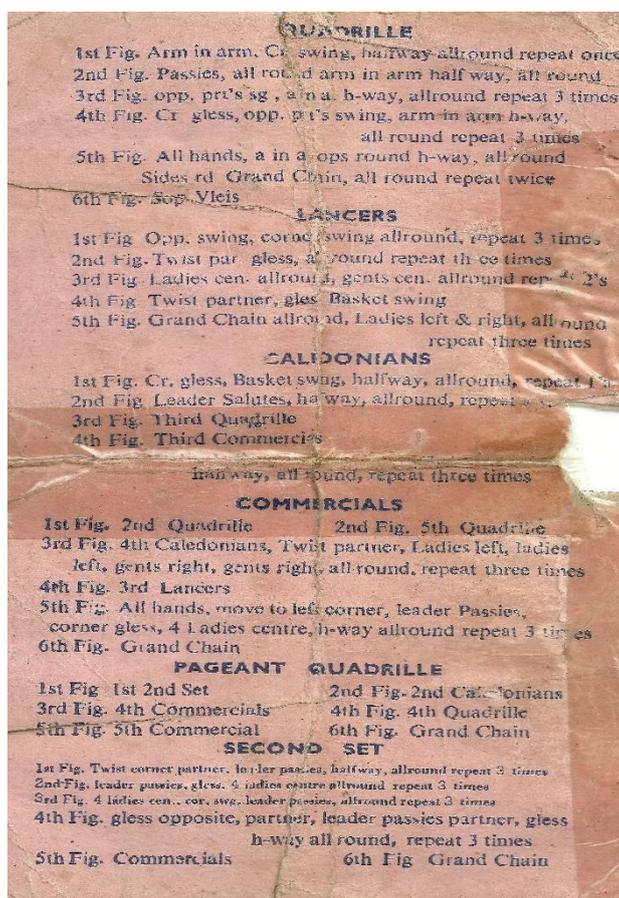


Figure 4 MC's Practical Guide for the Square Dance Sets.<sup>336</sup>

<sup>336</sup> MC's Practical Guide, Willie Jales Collection.

The well-known bassist Sammy Maritz, who began his music career playing for Ikey Gamba's junior band, had this to say to Lars Rasmussen about the 'Squares':

There's this music that only coloured people really enjoy, you won't see black or white people enjoy it, it's called square dance. Quadrille, commercial, it's arm in arm, there's a variety of different music. All of a sudden, it's a foxtrot, or a waltz, a vastrap! But when it comes to the square dance, sambas, you can see how the people are changing partners, ooh, lekker, man! But as I said it was only famous among the coloured people, the square dance.

You can ask Abdullah [Ibrahim], he used to play the same thing. Even today, he put it into his music, the ghoema. It's the same thing, coloured music.<sup>337</sup>

Rasmussen posed the question to Sammy Maritz, 'So what is the vastrap?' Sammy Maritz replied:

It all falls in there, in the square dance. Then you get the vastrap. When you request a square dance, then the vastrap will be in there, the samba, it's all jol, just jol. It's lekker to see them do it. But you don't see it any more, it's gone. The youngsters won't know it, not a chance. In those days, when you book a dance band, you can bet there will be a square dance, because that is what the dance bands are noted for. And the musicians must be able to play that. All coloured bands will know how to play it.<sup>338</sup>

It appears then that the *vastrap* rhythm existed in Ballroom or 'Langarm' dances throughout the greater part of the twentieth century as an integral part of the Square Dance Sets, not as a separate dance or a rhythm that existed apart from or isolated from the Square Dance Sets. Joe Schaffers at the District Six Museum, points out that when the Squares Dance Sets had finally died out in the early 1980s, when there were no more leaders and the complex steps of the sets were forgotten, the popularity of the *vastrap* rhythm continued. The bands continued to play one or two tunes taken from the Square Dance Sets on their recordings and in their repertoire.<sup>339</sup>

At some historical juncture, Coloured musicians introduced the particular syncopation of the *vastrap* to the Square Dance sets or sequences. The relationship to the majority of the Quadrille figures (in duple time and often quite up-tempo or lively) as well as some Irish, Scottish or British reel tunes that sounded like marching music, is compelling in suggesting a

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<sup>337</sup> Sammy Maritz, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town*, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>339</sup> Joe Schaffers, interviewed by the author, 28 September 2016.

genealogy for the vastrap-ghoema rhythm-complex.<sup>340</sup> Most of the interviewees speaking on the subject, talk about the ‘Squares’ being the *jol* part of the evening when people could really let go and have a wild an exuberant time to the *vastrap* rhythm.<sup>341</sup>

With the introduction of saxophones and trumpet or cornet from the 1930s, the dynamics of jazz style improvisation might have begun to alter the musical character of the Square Dances considerably, the latter having originally been played by strings. Cape Town Ballroom or ‘Langarm’ bands of the 1940s and ‘50s also transformed the ‘Squares’ from what might have been a more straight military style Quadrille music (when played by the Quadrille string bands of the late nineteenth century), to something that approaches Dixieland jazz in its syncopation, instrumentation, improvisation and energy.<sup>342</sup> As Willie Jales explained, Jimmy Adams played the ‘Squares’ solo because they weren’t the kind of melodies that lent themselves well to complex harmonic arrangement.<sup>343</sup> These melodies gave the various instrumentalists an opportunity to find their own counter melody in an improvisational way. As in Dixieland jazz, so too in the Cape Ballroom or ‘Langarm’ version of the Quadrille, the musicians are all interweaving their own individual parts around the lead player’s melody lines in a free and energetic style.<sup>344</sup>

Vincent Kolbe drew a similar conclusion when he stated: ‘The dance bands I grew up listening to, played very much dixieland, you know. They played Quicksteps and Foxtrots, but always with a swing [sings], very syncopated. It was dance music, but very dixie style.’<sup>345</sup> With the new inclusion in the late 1920s and early 1930s of brass instruments, cornets, trumpets and saxophones, these syncopations and improvisations must have constituted an

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<sup>340</sup> Pauline Norton, ‘Country Dance’, in *Grove Music Online*, 2007, <[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ez.sun.ac.za/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2256240?q=Country+Dance&search=quick&pos=2&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ez.sun.ac.za/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2256240?q=Country+Dance&search=quick&pos=2&_start=1#firsthit)> [accessed 12 July 2015]; Freda Burford & Anne Daye, ‘Contredanse’, in *Grove Music Online*, 2007, <[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ez.sun.ac.za/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2092959?q=contredanse&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ez.sun.ac.za/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2092959?q=contredanse&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)> [accessed 12 July 2015]. Freda Burford & Anne Daye state that: ‘Early 19<sup>th</sup>-century dance-tunes show a predilection for ‘reel’ rhythm, and Beethoven followed this trend in his 12 Contredanses for orchestra (1812).’ Pauline Norton states: ‘The music for country dances has generally been arranged from existing tunes, such as jigs (in 6/8) and reels (in 2/4), and performed on the fiddle and/or transverse flute.’

<sup>341</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 14 September 1999. District Six Museum Archive.

<sup>342</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 29 July 1999, District Six Museum Archive. Willie Jales mentions when interviewed that he had a recording of the Harmony Kings dance band playing the squares.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>344</sup> Refer to Footnote 432.

<sup>345</sup> Vincent Kolbe, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town*, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

early local equivalent at the Cape of the African American styles and syncopations that were occurring in New Orleans jazz in America at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Speculatively, local *vastrap* syncopations could have been introduced to dance music much earlier than the development of jazz in America, which could mean that the rhythmic syncopations in the Cape Malay Quadrille string bands could very well have pre-dated its American jazz equivalents.

It is important to note that in the Cape these musical and rhythmic innovations were made in the realm of Ballroom dance music and to some extent also paralleled the development of jazz as dance music when saxophones and trap drummers were brought into Cape Ballroom or 'Langarm' bands in the 1920s or '30s.<sup>346</sup>

## Conclusion

District Six, which developed alongside central Cape Town from the mid-nineteenth century through the twentieth century, was a multi-racial and multi-cultural urban society comprised of among the poorest inhabitants of Cape Town who invariably rented from wealthy 'slum lords'. It was within this milieu that Coloured Ballroom or 'Langarm music and dancing flourished and persisted. The Quadrille and other Square Dances were central to Ballroom or 'Langarm' dancing throughout this period; the music and dances being maintained in various states of continuity and change until the demise of the 'Squares' in the late-twentieth century. A common narrative amongst informants was that the Coloured Ballroom or 'Langarm' musicians and dancers livened up the Square Dances in relation to the way the Europeans would have played and danced them to suit the spirit of their own culture. The vehicle for this lively so-called *jol* (or fun part of the dances), was the *vastrap* rhythm.

The time frame in which the Quadrille tunes were adapted with the creole *vastrap*-ghoema rhythm-complex remains speculative and lost in history. What can be gleaned from interviewees is a common thread that places the *vastrap* rhythm in the Square Dances from

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<sup>346</sup> District Six Museum. 'Fairyland' is quoting the famous graffiti that appeared on a District Six wall declaring 'You are now in Fairyland' and not the title of the musical by David Kramer and Taliep Petersen which appropriated this quote.

early in the twentieth century. However, judging by the estimated chronology of David Coplan, it is quite possible that the essential syncopation of the *vastrap* beat was already intact by the second half of the nineteenth century. Whether it developed within the Quadrille (which had been danced at the Cape since the 1780s) or even in the English Country Dances (which predated the Quadrille) can only be conjectured. There is a strong possibility that the beat was developed in the so-called 'Rainbow Balls' and picnics that were a constant part of life in Cape Town, as the local Coloured variations on the Scottish or Irish reels of the Quadrille.

## CHAPTER 4

### ‘Langarm’ Bands at the Cape: Twentieth Century Historic and Twenty First Century Contemporary Cameos<sup>347</sup>

#### Cameo I: The Ballyhooligans; Tem Hawker and the Harmony Kings

One musician who straddled the worlds of both Coloured and Black culture in Cape Town and who was hugely instrumental in the development of sophisticated Big Band Ballroom Dance Orchestras amongst the Black population of both District Six and Langa, was Frazer ‘Temmy’ Hawker. Tem Hawker can be considered one of the earliest pioneers of the American jazz style of dance music at the Cape, contemporary with trends emanating from the USA.

Tem Hawker was born on 23 December 1909 to parents James ‘Jim’ Hawker and Mittah, who was reportedly from Bashee in the Eastern Cape and spoke Xhosa and Afrikaans.<sup>348</sup>

Tem Hawker was born and grew up in Beaufort West, where he was taught violin.<sup>349</sup> He moved to Cape Town as a young man and based himself in District Six, where according to Mittah Sotiya, Tem’s third child, he must have been classified a Coloured and ‘[a]ll his conducts were amongst the coloureds.’<sup>350</sup>

Hawker was a merchant seaman and probably acquired his taste for the latest styles in the new jazz music coming out of America during his world travels and through other merchant seamen. He was also reportedly acquiring sheet music of new jazz arrangements during these travels. As well as travelling, Tem was also working in the docks where contact with

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<sup>347</sup> Compiling a fully comprehensive history of the activities of all the ‘Langarm’ dance bands in the Cape throughout the twentieth century is well beyond the scope of this thesis. I therefore offer an overview that has been made possible by the documentation and research of a number of individuals, in particular Willie Jales and Valmont Layne, as well as the interviews of the present author and research of primary and secondary sources.

<sup>348</sup> Ruth and Una Hawker, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town, op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 82, 87.

American and British sailors would facilitate his acquisition of shellac discs and sheet music of the latest music from abroad.<sup>351</sup>

Hawker played the alto saxophone in his group the Ballyhooligans, and by all descriptions also played saxophone for bands that accompanied the Cape Malay troupes, the *Nagtroepe*, the *Klopse* or Coons like many other Coloured dance band musicians.<sup>352</sup> An extremely talented Coloured musician, Walter Henry 'Glider' Jacobs from Athlone, who had an African American father, became Hawker's pianist from the early days of the District Six Ballyhooligans, through to the incarnations of his most famous band, 'The Harmony Kings', later based in Langa.<sup>353</sup>

In 1941, Hawker and his family moved from District Six to Kensington and finally to Langa, where he acquired most of the instruments for a band from a certain foreign Black shop owner called Mac. These instruments became the cornerstone for Tem to build a band in Langa by undertaking to teach all those young men who were interested in playing the American style swing jazz dance music in which he was already very experienced.<sup>354</sup> Moses Molelekoa, one of the founder members of the Harmony Kings, remembers:

We played basically ballroom, orchestrated ballroom. I had taken a diploma in syncopation, Teddy Garrett. Actually we were impressed and followed these bands, Glen Miller, Duke Ellington, Tommy Dorsey. Fortunately, they had written music which was sold in the music shops. We would like to follow them, and we also bought records with Tommy Dorsey and those bands, music like *In the Mood*, *String of Pearls*, *'Deed I Do*, those were the numbers we used to play. They were the standards when we started playing orchestrated music.<sup>355</sup>

Because Hawker moved easily between both Coloured and Black cultures, his insight into the latest trends in American Jazz music was to have a far-reaching influence on both Coloured and Black dance band music. This would include the Alf Wyllie Band and Jimmy Adams and His Swing Orchestra in the Coloured community in the 1950s, and the flourishing Big Band Swing Orchestras of Langa in the 1940s. One of his original pupils from Langa and founding member of the Harmony Kings, Joel M'Brooks Mlomo, broke away to form the Merry Macs who included more African jive music in their dance repertoire. In M'Brooks's

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<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 87; Gassert, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 86-89.

<sup>354</sup> Moses Molelekoa, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town*, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

words: ‘we used to play ballroom dancing, jive, all that stuff. It’s a mix-up. American stuff, Glen Miller.’<sup>356</sup>

## Cameo II: The Collins Dance Orchestra

August Collins was born in Paarl in 1903 and began playing the violin and cello at the age of nine under the tutorage of the music teacher Willie Cupido. A few years later the Collins family moved to Cross Street, District Six, where August grew up. At the age of eleven, in 1914, he was apprenticed as a cooper with the Castle Wine and Brandy Company, situated in Somerset Road, Cape Town. With his outstanding ability on the violin, at a young age he won a position in the St. Helen’s Christmas Orchestra.<sup>357</sup>

August Collins’s talent was spotted at a St. Marks Church picnic in Stellenbosch by Paddy Moses. August was especially keen on dance music, which in those days meant mastering the Square Dance Sets. Moses, who ran a dancing school at the top of Wale Street in the old Friendly Hall, offered August a position in his dance band. According to George Manuel, ‘[t]he big night at the old Friendly Hall was Wednesday, when domestic servants were free. The admission charge was one shilling (ten cents) and the girls used to pay their accounts at the end of each month when they got their wages.’<sup>358</sup>

In 1922, at the age of nineteen, August started the Collins Dance Band. August Collins remembers that his first engagement was for the St. Marks Sunday school dance party.<sup>359</sup> According to George Manuel, during the 1920s,

[...] all the Cape bands consisted of string instrumentalists. There was only one cornet player. August Collins was the lead violinist and the other musicians would have been a drummer, a bassist, a banjo player and possibly a second violinist. Then in the early 1930s the saxophone made its appearance in South Africa, Collins was among the first to play it and later he introduced the instrument into his band.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168; Joel M’Brooks Mlomo, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town, op. cit.*, pp. 155-160.

<sup>357</sup> George Manuel, ‘August Collins knows what dancers want—and he gives it to them...: 50 years of making music’, in *The Cape Times Weekend Magazine*, Cape Town, 7 July 1973, p. 10.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>359</sup> Unknown, ‘August Collins het vir Koning Gespeel’, in *Ekstra, Bylae tot die Beel*, Cape Town, 26 January 1969, p. 4.

<sup>360</sup> George Manuel, ‘Cape men and memories: Bandmaster who played for the Royal Family’, in *The Cape Times Weekend Magazine*, Cape Town, Willie Jales Collection.

According to Manuel, the Collins Dance Band played for dances every Friday and Saturday night and the band was often booked a year in advance, attesting to its popularity. The Collins Dance Band also won first prize at all ‘the dance competitions organized by the Cape Town municipality and held at the pier’ in the 1930s. The first competition trophy his band won at the Pier stated: ‘The City of Cape Town Coons Dance Band Competition 14 January 1936; First Prize – The Collins Dance Orchestra.’ The old pier in those days was situated somewhere in the vicinity of the bottom of the present day Adderley Street in central Cape Town and on Sundays the bands would entertain the public with live open air concerts on the pier.<sup>361</sup>

Greg Collins, August’s youngest son, relates that his dad was never one for playing by ear; everything was played strictly according to sheet music, except the Square Dances, which he memorized entirely.<sup>362</sup> The Collins Dance Band was renowned for having been chosen in 1947 to play for the Royal Ball arranged for the Coloured community at the Cape Town City Hall and hosting the British Royal Family on their visit to Cape Town in that year. Manuel offers a description of events: ‘The orchestra started with the music for the “State Quadrilles” and Queen Elizabeth, mother of the present Queen, beat time with her white feather fan in the quick gay rhythm as the dancers whirled merrily in the “all-round”.’<sup>363</sup>

August Collins remembers the popularity of his band of follows:

In my youth I learned all the old fashioned dance music but I did not leave it at that. I kept abreast of all the musical developments right up to present day pop tunes. At the start of any dance session I gauge the tastes of the dancers and the audience chiefly by their ages. If there are a goodly number of oldsters I play a fair number of old favourites such as the fox trot and barn dance. If the young are in the majority, I concentrate on pop.<sup>364</sup>

In 1927 August Collins joined the Cape Corps Band, which had been established in Egypt during World War I. He studied clarinet and saxophone for the Cape Corps Band and when the Second World War broke out he joined the forces as a bandsman and rose in rank to sergeant-major and acting-bandmaster under the bandmaster, the Irishman Tom Jones.

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<sup>361</sup> Manuel, ‘August Collins knows what dancers want—and he gives it to them...: 50 years of making music’, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>362</sup> Greg Collins, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 6 June 2000, District Six Museum Archive.

<sup>363</sup> Manuel, ‘August Collins knows what dancers want—and he gives it to them...: 50 years of making music’, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*

After the war Collins became the bandmaster for about thirty years until his death, for what was then known as the Cape Corps Regimental Band and would later become the Cape Corps Ex-Servicemen's Band.<sup>365</sup>

### **Cameo III: Attie Davis and His Blue Moon Orchestra<sup>366</sup>**

Arthur 'Attie' Davis was born in Plumstead in the southern suburbs of Cape Town in 1914. He was a violin player and became a professional musician at a young age, venturing to Johannesburg where he joined Sonny Groenewald in Sonny's Jazz Revellers in the mid- to late-1930s. Davis was one of a small group of Coloured musicians who were able to maintain a lifelong professional career as a performing dance band musician through the twentieth century. He supplemented his performance career as a private music teacher as well as becoming an impresario in the southern suburbs during the 1950s, with a large network of venues and patrons drawing on five or six bands that he ran under the title of 'The Attie Davis Dance Band'.

Davis married in Johannesburg and he and his wife had four sons, three of whom were born in Johannesburg, and all of whom would grow up to be musicians. Davis played for Sonny's Jazz Revellers in Johannesburg during the 1930s and 1940s as a violinist, alternating on banjo. At some time during this period he started playing the saxophone. Davis was possibly the first of the Ballroom or 'Langarm' band saxophonists to play the soprano saxophone or, in the local vernacular, what was called 'the straight saxophone'. Sonny's Jazz Revellers also toured, with Durban being one of their principal touring destinations.

According to Ivan Davis, Attie Davis' son, his father returned to Cape Town a few times during the 1940s and played for the Willie Max Dance Band, as well as Nicky Parker's Dance Band. The Davis family eventually moved back to Attie Davis' native Cape Town in the early 1950s and settled in the southern suburbs in the vicinity of Wynberg and Plumstead. Once in Cape Town, Davis formed his own band under the titles of The Attie Davis Dance Band or, at times, Attie Davis and His Blue Moon Orchestra—apparently named after his stints at the

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<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>366</sup> Ivan and Cyril Davis, interviewed by Valmont Layne and Willie Jales, 29 January 2000, District Six Museum Archive. All the information in this section on Attie Davis was taken from this one interview.

Blue Moon venue in Hout Bay. As Ivan Davis relates, the Attie Davis Dance Band 'had the run of Hout Bay' for a period of time.

Davis taught all his sons and their friends to be musicians, resulting in a large pool of skilled musicians who made up the five or six 'satellite' dance bands that Davis would send out to play on weekends under the banner of the Attie Davis Dance Band. Davis taught himself to read and write music over time and he eventually scored all the arrangements for his bands.



Figure 5 Sonny's Jazz Revellers, circa 1941. (Attie Davis, top left)<sup>367</sup>

The Attie Davis Dance Band became one of the principal bands called on to play for Ballroom competitions in Cape Town, such as those held by the Salt River Railway Institute. These Ballroom competitions hosted Ballroom Dance exhibitions by Coloured dance champions, such as Jackie and Mercia Price and later Dennis Grove of Kensington.

By the end of the 1950s, Attie Davis' sons were already focusing on the small bebop 'Jazz Circle' in Cape Town, as Willie Jales called it. The oldest son, Dennis Davis, was a jazz guitarist. The second son, Ivan Davis, who was born in Johannesburg around 1937, was a multi-instrumentalist playing the drums as well as leading on saxophone and playing piano. The third son, Edwin Davis, was one of the top professional jazz drummers of the 1960s,

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<sup>367</sup> Sonny's Jazz Revellers, photo courtesy of Jerome Jales and the Willie Jales Collection.

playing with Henry February on piano, Norman de la Harpe on guitar and Mike Abrahams on bass . He also performed with Kenny Jephthah.<sup>368</sup> The youngest son, Cyril Davis, played accordion and piano in his father's bands.

Attie Davis continued to run his dance bands until they were forced to leave their home in the southern suburbs. As Ivan Davis remembers, 'we were thrown out by the Group Areas', and the family was relocated to Mannenberg. Ivan Davis also mentioned that the 'removals' broke up the Christmas Choirs as well as the dance bands. Jales expressed how these removals were a very sore point and were experienced as such by every band and all band members who he had obviously contacted. While he lived in the southern suburbs, Attie Davis played saxophone for the Southern Stars Christmas Choir, but after the 'removals' he played with the Newlands Independents, who, according to Jales, had the top saxophonists in Cape Town amongst their ranks. These included Wally Petersen (who was from Claremont in the southern suburbs) and Wally Ruiters. Both these men were also dance band leaders. Ivan also played in the Choirs with his father for many years.

Attie Davis was later contacted by the New Ballerinas under leadership of drummer Charlie Parker and played with them for a number of years while his sons continued to play jazz with Bebop and Hardbop jazz clique in the nightclubs and jazz venues around Cape Town.

## **Cameo IV: Alf Wyllie's Dance Band**

Alf Wyllie's Dance Band was started in 1931 when Alf Wyllie was seventeen years old. Wyllie was a businessman who also had a Barbershop in District Six, which would become a hub for musicians and for Wyllie's contacts for dance engagements. Contrary to most band leaders in Cape Town, who were usually lead instrumentalist such as violinists and subsequently saxophonists or pianists, Wyllie, like Willie Max, led his band as the drummer. Wyllie therefore gathered quality musicians around him and he acquired some of the top musicians in Cape Town for his band through all of its incarnations.<sup>369</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> Henry February, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town, op. cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>369</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 29 July 1999, District Six Museum Archive; Willie Jales, 'Story Source for the Collector', p. 1, the Willie Jales Collection.

According to Les Steiger, Wyllie started out on his own with only one Bruimpie on banjo. Later, Dougie McGowan on violin joined. According to Steiger, McGowan '[w]asn't a jazz musician, he was a classical man.'<sup>370</sup> At the time that Steiger was playing piano for Alf Wyllie's Dance Band from 1939 to 1941, Wyllie had Harry Wakefield on saxophone, Dougie McGowan on violin, Alf Wyllie's brother Marnie Wyllie on bass, Vicky Schwartz on piano accordion and Bruimpie on banjo.<sup>371</sup>

In June 1944, what Steiger called 'a scratch band' of some of these musicians and some others, was gathered together for a tour to Kimberley where they played for the opening of the Kimberley City Hall. They were billed as Alf Wyllie and his Rhythm Serenaders on this tour, along with Swartz's Follies Dance Band.<sup>372</sup>



Figure 6 Alf Wyllie's Dance Band, Durban circa 1952.<sup>373</sup>

<sup>370</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, p. 13.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>372</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, pp. 2, 13-17; Willie Jales, 'Story source for The Collector', p. 1, the Willie Jales Collection; Gassert, *op. cit.*, p. 26. By 'a scratch band' Les Steiger was implying a hastily assembled group of musicians essentially for the occasion.

<sup>373</sup> Alf Wyllie's Dance Band, this photo is from an original copy courtesy of Jerome Jales and the Willie Jales Collection. An original print appears in Rasmussen, *op. cit.*, p. 85, with copy right to Gabriel's Studio.

By the time the band toured to Durban in 1952, it was made up of Cornelius Adonis on alto saxophone (who had previously played during the 1940s for Tommy Lee and his Merry Revellers on piano accordion); Leslie Gemmel on alto saxophone; Tem Hawker on tenor saxophone (who had started the Ballyhooligans in District Six in the 1930s and later founded the Harmony Kings in Langa); Marnie Wyllie on bass; Jeff Abrahams on piano and Alf Wyllie on drums. This band 'played at the opening of the Tafelberg Hotel in Constitution Street in Cape Town' in the early 1950s. After the opening, they became the resident band at the hotel for some years.<sup>374</sup>

By the late 1950s, personnel in the band had completely changed. Wyllie had taken up the alto saxophone and became the leading saxophone player. Coming from the Jimmy Adams Swing Band, Willie Jales joined the band on tenor saxophone. Alf Wyllie's son, Tony Wyllie, was very impressed by Jales's saxophone style and tone and Jales taught Tony Wyllie to play the second alto saxophone in the band. P. Hendricks was the drummer, R. Momberg was the guitarist and J. Avontuur was the pianist. Jales concluded that 'Alf Wyllie's band still went on and on until he retired and closed his band in the year 1979, emigrated to Australia with some of his family and died there on the 30 June 1993 aged 78'.<sup>375</sup>

## **Cameo V: Les Steiger and the Senators of Swing<sup>376</sup>**

Willie Jales remarked about the late Les Steiger: 'Interviewing Les Steiger was like a dream come true, as we refer to Vincent Kolbe as a walking encyclopaedia on District Six, Les Steiger is a walking encyclopaedia on Dance Bands from the year 1930 to 2000.'<sup>377</sup>

Steiger was born in Salt River on 21 September 1923 and the family moved to Vasco in 1926. The Steiger family also had property in Maitland, which meant that from this time they were moving between the newly developing area of Vasco and the slightly older Maitland, which were both referred to as the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town. Steiger was an only child and

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<sup>374</sup> Willie Jales, 'Story source for The Collector', the Willie Jales Collection, p. 1.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>376</sup> The bulk of information on Les Steiger comes from one interview conducted by Valmont Layne and Willie Jales, 9 November 1999, with a transcription pp. 1-41, the District Six Museum Archive.

<sup>377</sup> Willie Jales, 'Story source for The Collector', the Willie Jales Collection, p. 1.

played violin as a boy. His violin teacher, Mr. Lottriet, was the father of Johnny Lottriet, who would eventually play viola in Steiger's first band.

Steiger learned many Square Dance tunes from his mother and father who whistled or sang them around the house. He recalled lying on his back on the couch on Sundays after church, picking out on the violin an aria or a hymn and then a Square Dance tune that his mother would sing. Steiger explained that it was through his uncle, who played in Tommy Lee's band, that his mother learned all the Square Dance tunes. He claimed to have 'a brilliant memory for memorising these things'. His mother played the piano and he was able to start playing piano professionally in Alf Wyllie's Dance Band at the age of sixteen, from 1939 to 1941.<sup>378</sup>



Figure 7 Tommy Lee and his Merry Revellers, circa late 1930s.<sup>379</sup>

The earliest bands and band leaders that Steiger refers to were Willem Jones, Arries Gool, Sammy Hendricks and Tommy Lee and his Merry Revellers, which he reckoned to be 'two generations [of bands] before us', which would place them pre-First World War.<sup>380</sup>

According to Steiger, the bands that were operating just before him in the 1920s and 1930s

<sup>378</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, pp. 2, 3, 36.

<sup>379</sup> Photo Copy taken from a fragment of an original photograph courtesy of Jerome Jales and the Willie Jales Collection.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17. Steiger would obviously have meant two generations of dance bands before his own band.

were Wally Petersen and the Aces (which he rated as the number one band), and Joe Murray and his Philharmonic Orchestra (which he rated as the number two band). There were also Paulse's Big Six, Nicky Parker's Dance Band, Alf Wyllie and his Rhythm Serenaders and Kosie Kennel and his Maestros.<sup>381</sup> Records also confirm that the Collins Dance Orchestra was started in 1922.<sup>382</sup>

Steiger recalled that Tommy Lee and his Merry Revellers, a band from Kensington, were active in the early 1930s and that his uncle (his mother's brother) played in the band. Steiger recounted that he accompanied his uncle to a party when he was only eight years old and played piano for Tommy Lee's band. He remembers: 'That was already violin days, it wasn't sax days yet'.<sup>383</sup> Tommy Lee was eventually the saxophone player when the saxophone was brought into the band. Passie Fry played the piano and Attie Platt played the drums. Tommy had Vernie Abrahams, who went on to form his own band as saxophonist in the 1940s, playing the banjo as a youngster. Frank Bezuidenhout played violin and went on to play clarinet and saxophone in Davy May's Ballroom Band after the war. Cornelius Adonis was the piano accordion player before he later went on to play alto saxophone for Alf Wyllie's Band.<sup>384</sup>

According to Steiger, it was Boetie Paulse's Big Six that played for the Royal Ball at the Cape Town City Hall to celebrate the visit of the young Prince of Wales in 1925. He also remembers that they were one of the first bands to introduce a saxophone into the Dance Band line-up and also the first to add electric guitar at a later stage.<sup>385</sup> Prior to this time, violins were the lead instruments in most Dance Bands, and hence the bands were commonly referred to as String Bands.<sup>386</sup> One can speculate that there must have been a number of other smaller, more low profile String Bands still operating during the 1930s.

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<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-5.

<sup>382</sup> Newspaper Article, August Collins het vir Koning Gespeel, in Ekstra, Bylae tot die Beel, 26 Januarie 1969, Willie Jales Collection, p. 4.

<sup>383</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, p. 17.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*; Willie Jales, 'Story source for The Collector', the Willie Jales Collection, p. 3.

<sup>385</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, pp. 1-3.

<sup>386</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, pp. 3, 17; Jimmy Adams interviewed by Lars Rasmussen, in *Jazz People of Cape Town*, *op. cit.*, p 7. Jimmy Adams mentions his father Arnie Adams's Dance Band and refers to it as a 'String Band'.

These included Jimmy Adams's father's band called the Arnie Adams' Dance Band, using cello bass, banjo and violins.<sup>387</sup>

As soon as Steiger left Alf Wyllie's Dance Band in 1941, he started his own band in the Vasco area, called the Senators of Swing. He was only thirteen years old. He brought in Vicky Swartz on piano accordion and Johnny Lottriet on a unique viola which had a trumpet horn attached to it. Other musicians invited by Steiger included Davy De La Harpe on guitar, Ben Swart on banjo, a young Jimmy Adams on bass (and sometimes banjo) and Davy Steyn who, according to Steiger, was 'a genius on the saxophone'. Steiger remembers that Steyn's father also had the Follies.<sup>388</sup> At nineteen Steiger was the leader of the band and played the piano, even though he was essentially trained as a violinist. He relates how 'Davy went on with us, but he had a problem. He was wine, women and then comes the song and that didn't work...They stabbed him to death at 52. He pawned our saxophone, I had to go and get it.'<sup>389</sup> With no one to play the saxophone, Steiger ended up on saxophone. Davy De La Harpe later brought in Reggie Hendricks on piano, and Steiger recalls: 'I had a guy that played drums for me—eventually also ended up with his own band, but he became a saxophonist. He was a very good drummer, and between us, we learned together, you know we were *laaities* together and we grew.' Towards the end of the war years, Willie Dennis was recruited on trumpet.<sup>390</sup>

The Senators of Swing lasted until 1949 when they disbanded, but during their run of seven to eight years they were by all accounts (and according to Steiger himself), one of the 'hottest' Dance Bands in Cape Town. Steiger relates many incidents where they stole the show or the evening from the top bands in Cape Town at the time: 'I tell you, we were four months old when I took Joe (Murray and his Philharmonic Orchestra) off. I took Wally (Petersen and the Aces) off. Ag, we messed with dingis. What's that boy's name? Nicky Parker, we messed him up. We started taking the bands off their pedestal.'<sup>391</sup> Steiger

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<sup>387</sup> Jimmy Adams, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town*, *op. cit.*, p. 7; Layne, *op. cit.*, p. 418.

<sup>388</sup> This could refer to the Follies Dance Band.

<sup>389</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, p. 3.

<sup>390</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, pp. 2-5; Willie Jales, 'Story source for The Collector', the Willie Jales Collection, p. 2.

<sup>391</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, p. 5

explained that one of the reasons why this happened, was that a lot of the top bands were ‘very straight laced’ and their melody line was there, but ‘no rhythm’.<sup>392</sup>

At the height of their popularity, the Senators of Swing were playing seven nights a week. Steiger relates that there was a certain Kenny Felix, who owned two clubs (The Palm Grove, which was what they called a ‘non-stop’) and the Aurora Club (which was a ‘sophisticated’ venue for ‘society’). According to Steiger, Felix wanted The Senators to become the top band in Cape Town and so played the Palm Grove where they had two bands ‘fixed, one start, one stop’.<sup>393</sup>

Steiger also recalls how he toppled Joe Murray of the top at a Rosmead Netball Union Gala evening, called the Rose Ball, at Cape Town City Hall. He estimated there were two thousand people at the Ball and dinner was served next door in the Drill Hall, which was connected by an enclosure. The Senators of Swing were playing with Kosie Kennell and his Maestros as well as Joe Murray and his Philharmonic Orchestra. The DC couldn’t believe the members of the Senators were so young and Steiger recalls telling him that the first man to reach twenty-one gets kicked out of the band. Steiger remembers the DC’s introduction: ‘under the leadership of Les Steiger and they bring you now their signature tune, “Lady Be Good”. We started swinging. Well, don’t forget its bebop time. We were the first band to do it.’ Apparently the dancers wouldn’t go through to eat in the Drill Hall because of the swinging dance music.<sup>394</sup>

Queried by Valmont Layne over bebop, Steiger had this to say:

Yes it was just hitting Cape Town—Ja, bebop in Cape Town, 1941, ‘42. But what pushed it further on was the films we were getting here. The Golden Horseshoe and all those Fox films, all the musicals. That was pushing it. There was a time that we were playing all the bioscopes running those films because none of the other darn bands could do it. You know, different numbers like Kalamazoo and Chattanooga Choochoo, things like that.<sup>395</sup>

Steiger describes the Square Dances in some detail, recalling facts from his own experience in the late 1930s until the 1950s. When the band played what he called ‘half a night’, which

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<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>394</sup> Les Sreiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, p. 6.

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*

would be until midnight, they would play three squares. If they played until two o'clock, a 'whole night', they would play four squares. Steiger also remembers that 'if you play till four o'clock, you play eight squares':

You have your single sets and you have your double sets. Now from eight to twelve you play single sets. That gives you what, your Quadrille, your Commercials, your Pageant and maybe your Lancers. But after that, after one o'clock, if you play now a four o'clock show, now you play your first dingis [...] to start off the ball you play an Irish Quadrille. Then you play the Caledonians [...] then you play the Second Set [...] you can play the D'Alberts, the Royal Alberts, the Prince Alberts, it's all squares [...]<sup>396</sup>

Steiger mentions a Quadrille that he calls 'the D Quadrille, what we in other words call Die Slamse Quadrille, you got it all from part one to part six without mixing it up with other squares parts, even if it fits, you must play the right thing, anders is jy, Ou Boy! [...] And those things I got schooled in. That's why, and what made me extra heavy on the squares for fingering and that...I could out-finger any guy, especially in the squares. And that's where I get my training from, I play [...] the key I play on the violin, I play in my squares on the saxophone too.' He explains that these keys like Key D or Key A are 'the heavy keys for the saxophone', and he could still play easily in these keys that were difficult for other saxophone players.<sup>397</sup>

Musicians who started with Steiger and would go on to become the core of the handful of Coloured jazz musicians in the Cape Town jazz circle, include Jimmy Adams, Kenny and Harold Japhtah, Gary Kriel, Davy de la Harpe and his brother Norman de la Harpe. A young twelve year old Harold Japhtah came to Steiger while he was still at school and Steiger acquired a clarinet for him, taught him to play and had him play in the Senators of Swing. Harold's older brother, Kenny Japhtah, played guitar at some time with the Senators of Swing, as did Gary Kriel.<sup>398</sup>

Top jazz bassist who played for Abdullah Ibrahim, Sammy Maritz, had this to say about Steiger: 'He was the best, way ahead of all the other alto players. He was the teacher of

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<sup>396</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, p. 16.

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>398</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, p. 7; Willie Jales, 'Story source for The Collector', the Willie Jales Collection, p. 2.

Harold Japhtah. Les was the Charlie Parker of dance music, the way he improvised he was fast!<sup>399</sup>

## Cameo VI: The Philadelphia Rhythms

The Philadelphia Rhythms Dance Band was started in 1947 by Arend Hendricks. Two of the founding members Leslie 'Bones' Abrahams and Johnny Pause were still playing saxophone with the band in 1997, fifty years after its founding. A quote from Gary Van Dyk, writing for the *Athlone News*, echoes the views of the late Willie Jales and affirms his view that many Cape jazz musicians started out and made a living honing their skills in dance bands:

A look at the list of people who have played with the group demonstrates the close link between the jazz and ballroom scene in Cape Town and at one stage or another the group has included jazzmen Richard Schilder and Gary Kriel.<sup>400</sup>



Figure 8 The Philadelphia Rhythms, circa mid to late 1950s.<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>399</sup> Sammy Maritz, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town*, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>400</sup> Gary Van Dyk, *Athlone News*, Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 1997, p. 17.

<sup>401</sup> The Philadelphia Rhythms, photo courtesy of Jerome Jales and the Willie Jales Collection.

In 1971, Arend Hendricks retired from the band for health reasons. When Arend passed away, his son Gerald took over leadership and administration of the band. In 1974, for the recording of their album *For The Good Times* for Teal on the WRC label, the line-up of the band was: Gerald Hendricks on lead alto saxophone, Dan Davids on second alto saxophone, George Hermanus on tenor saxophone, Fred Africa on piano, Sam Smit on guitar, John 'Joepie' Thomas on banjo, Ismail Tala on bass and Fred Adams on drums.<sup>402</sup> The 'Philadelphias' were one of the last of the top bands to keep the banjo as an integral part of their sound.<sup>403</sup>

John 'Joepie' Thomas had been the band's banjo player from the start, and he recalls that in 1947 they were invited by the Cape Town City Council to play at the Royal Gala Ball in the Cape Town City Hall for the King and Queen of England who were touring South Africa. Joepie Thomas retired as the banjo player for the 'Philadelphias' in 1981 and continued to play for the Valiant Hearts Christmas Choir until 1988. Thomas recalls that the saddest part of his dance band career was:

Playing week after week at venues like the Banqueting Hall in Cape Town, the Wynberg Town Hall, the Weisman Hall in Sea Point, the Rondebosch Town Hall and the Woodstock Town Hall with all those lovely ladies wearing long flowing dresses, all so tragically came to an end in the early Sixties when the Group Areas Act prohibited coloured people from hiring these venues. It was a sad day not only for the dance bands like the Philadelphias, but also for young people who enjoyed their regular weekend of dancing.<sup>404</sup>

Rene du Preez asked Thomas in 1988 whether he felt 'Langarm' music had changed since 1947. He replied:

The style of langarm music has remained the same. But the tastes in music have changed. Until the late Sixties, the Square Dance and the Commercial were a must at every function you played. Today, young people have either never heard or performed the Square or the Commercial. This I find extremely sad because I believe, and I think I'm correct in saying this, that these two dances were created by the coloured people of Cape Town and should be performed by each new generation.<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>402</sup> The Philadelphia Rhythms, *For The Good Times*, Teal, 1974, LP Album Cover, District Six Museum Archive.

<sup>403</sup> Gavin Davis, interviewed by the author, 24 July 2015.

<sup>404</sup> Rene Du Preez, 'The Banjo Man calls it a day', in *Sunday Times Extra*, Johannesburg, 10 April 1988.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid.*

When Gerald passed away in August 1996, his three sons Christopher, Ivan and Reuben carried on with the band. In November 1997, the 'Phillies' celebrated their fiftieth anniversary with a party and the release of a first recording in about twenty years. The release was on CD and entitled 'The Philadelphia Rhythms Live At The Goldfinger'. Members of the band at the time were: Chris Hendricks on drums, Ivan Hendricks on guitar, Reuben Hendricks on keyboards and Leslie 'Bones' Abrahams on saxophone. Other members included Lance Abrahams, Arnold Johannes, Lloyd Kerschhoff and Victor Edem.<sup>406</sup>

Jazz Guitarist Lloyd Kerschhoff had this to say about the band and being a member:

There have been times over the years when I have joined the guys, but now I'm with them on a permanent basis because I feel the Phillies have played an important part in the ballroom scene like all the others who have been in existence for a long time. Something you must realise is that here in Cape Town every Langarm group has its own sound and many followers identify with it. There are regular followers you will always find at their dances and they are quick to tell you that the sound of the group is changing—and then you have to capture it again. At dances nowadays you will find the emphasis is not only on the strict-tempo stuff. You have to be able to handle a wider range of music because normally at the end of the evening the people want to have a bit of a jol. But even that jol music must be done in the Phillies' style.<sup>407</sup>

## **Cameo VII: The Paramount Dixies Dance Band**

The Paramount Dixies Dance Band was started in the late 1940s by Mattie Van Niekerk of Russell Street, District Six. Uncle Mattie, as he was known by Willie Jales and the generation of musicians who were slightly younger than him, was taught to play the clarinet by his father Matt Senior.

Mattie joined the Young Eastern Stars Christmas Choir as a clarinettist. The captain of this Choir was Davey May, the leader of a top Dance Band at the time and a saxophonist, violinist and banjo player.<sup>408</sup>

May inspired Uncle Mattie van Niekerk to get a saxophone, which he taught himself to play, soon thereafter becoming the second saxophone in the Young Eastern Stars. At the age of 24 he formed the Paramount Dixies 'with his younger brother Davy on drums, Charlie

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<sup>406</sup> Jeremy Lawrence, *Athlone News*, 26<sup>th</sup> November 1997, p. 38.

<sup>407</sup> Gary Van Dyk, *Athlone News*, '50-year tradition doesn't miss a beat', The Willie Jales Collection.

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.*

Walker on guitar, Wally Abrahams on banjo, Jimmy Carollesen on bass and Dennis “Timing” Smith on piano accordion’. Eddie George and Uncle Mattie played alto saxophone.

Uncle Mattie used to consult Boetie Paulse, who also lived in District Six, for professional advice about the band. Boetie Paulse had lead the Paulse Big Six Dance Band back in the mid-1920s. In 1954, Vincent Kolbe, who had been instrumental in consolidating the small group of bebop jazz loving musicians in District Six, joined the Paramount Dixies Dance Band and brought a sophistication of chordal harmony to the band. Another saxophone player, Henry van Rensberg, joined the band at this time and they recorded their first 78 RPM disc called *Paramount Samba*, composed by Vincent Kolbe, and *Kriefsluip Jol*, composed by Uncle Mattie van Niekerk.



Figure 9 The May-Wedel Troubadours, circa mid to late 1950s.<sup>409</sup>

By the end of the 1950s, the band had Aggies Martin on guitar, Karriem on bass guitar and ‘Papa’ Allie, who had run his own band, the Rialto Dance Band in the Bo-Kaap, joined the Paramounts on saxophone. In the early 1960s Uncle Mattie van Niekerk closed the Paramount Dixies and left for London with his family.

<sup>409</sup> The May-Wedel Troubadours, photo courtesy of Jerome Jales and the Willie Jales Collection.

## Cameo VIII: The Ikey Gamba Orchestra

A quote from Ikey Gamba Senior, taken from the cover of a 1988 LP Record by the Ikey Gamba Orchestra named *Strike Up The Band*, says much about a number of key aspects of this band:

Started 38 years ago by myself, my late father and mother and friends. From the start up till today, this is still a family band. Although this album is dedicated to me, tribute must be given to all the members of the group, especially Mr Leslie Steiger (one of the greatest musicians of my musical career) who was responsible for getting this band on the map. Secondly my brother Mr Gys Gamba, who features on 'Gone With The Wind' and Mr Tony Cervati who stuck with the band during the difficult period of the band and thirdly Mr Wally Witbooi for his composition of 'Get Into Step' and arrangements, especially of 'Manhattan' and 'Rainbow Connection'. Lastly my two sons Andre and Ikey (Jnr) who I hope will carry on when I retire, which will be in the near future.<sup>410</sup>

The Ikey Gamba Dance Band was started in 1950 under the guidance and leadership of Les Steiger, who had closed his band the Senators of Swing the previous year. Steiger relates how old man Ikey Gamba asked him to come over and look at a group of youngsters that he had in Kensington who wanted to start a band. When he got there, only Ikey Gamba (snr.) had a piano accordion, one chap had a box-bass and another had an old guitar. Cassiem Mia had a banjo that, according to Steiger, he couldn't play. Basil Powell wanted to play the saxophones and so Steiger gave him lessons for four months and ended up playing with him in the band for four years. He became a brilliant saxophone player. Steiger also brought in Saatjie Fortune, a pupil of Wally Peterson, on saxophone, as well as he drummer, Nic 'Klaas' Makriel.<sup>411</sup> The bassist was Johnny Thuys, Henry Davids was the guitarist and Ikey Gamba's (snr.) mother Lillian played piano. Lillian had played some years before in the Robertson band, 'Paddie's Big Six'. When Lillian eventually left the band, Ikey Gamba (snr.) took over the piano.<sup>412</sup> Steiger is quoted in Holtzman as relating the following about Ikey Gamba (snr.):

Since the time I know, he always had the big-band sound in his mind—four saxophones, trumpets, trombones plus rhythm section...he told me, when he heard the Jimmy Adams big-band sound in the Cape Town City Hall in 1956, he said to himself, 'That's the kind of band I would like to have.'<sup>413</sup>

<sup>410</sup> Ikey Gamba Senior, from the back cover of the LP Record, *Strike Up The Band*, by the Ikey Gamba Orchestra, 1988.

<sup>411</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, p. 11.

<sup>412</sup> Holtzman, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>413</sup> Les Steiger, quoted in Holtzman, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

Eventually Steiger left the band and brought in another saxophone player whom he had trained, called Ernie, who was Ikey Gamba's (snr.) brother-in-law. Ikey Gamba (snr.) went on to create his big-band sound. Initially he had his brother Gus and Ernie (brother-in-law) and Basil Powell on saxophones.<sup>414</sup> By the late 1950s Ikey Gamba had a new set of players, including Les Gemmel on tenor saxophone and Henry Mokoni on trumpet, Otto on guitar and Cyril Samaai on drums.<sup>415</sup> Wally Witbooi, who was an outstanding arranger, also played saxophone in the band through the 1970s and again in the 1980s. Ikey Gamba's sons, Ikey Gamba (jnr.) and André, joined the band in the 1970s.<sup>416</sup> On their LP record, *Strike Up The Band* from 1988, the band line-up is: Ikey Gamba (snr.) on electric piano, Charles Botes on bass, Colin May on drums, Tony Cervati on trombone and guitar, André Gamba on trumpet and flugel horn, Wally Witbooi on 1<sup>st</sup> alto saxophone, Gasant Abrahams on 2<sup>nd</sup> alto saxophone, Greg Noble on 1<sup>st</sup> tenor saxophone, Ikey Gamba (jnr.) on 2<sup>nd</sup> tenor saxophone, Melvyn Jacobs and Robertha Jacobs on vocals.

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<sup>414</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, pp. 11-12.

<sup>415</sup> Willie Jales, 'Story source for the Collector', the Willie Jales Collection, p. 4.

<sup>416</sup> Holtzman, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

## Cameo IX: Willie and the Starlite Orchestra



Figure 10 Willie and the Starlite Orchestra, circa 1960.<sup>417</sup>

My ethnographic research into dance music and social dancing at the Cape, really begins with the late William Henry Jales who passed away untimely on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013. Willie Jales was the principal informant for my honours thesis on Christmas Choirs in 2004. It was he who, during my first interviews on the subject of Christmas Choirs in Cape Town, broached the subject of string bands and dance music to me. A question I asked Jales at the time belied my ignorance and curiosity in the subject: ‘What is the *vastrap*? Actually I haven’t seen it being done.’ I obviously thought it was a dance step.<sup>418</sup>

In addition to my interviews in 2004, I was fortunate to have had a long interview with Jales in late 2012. Many long telephone conversations we had, were never recorded, except for the very last conversation, when I hit the record function of the fax machine in desperation. The quality is atrocious, but the document remains.

<sup>417</sup> Willie and the Starlite Orchestra, photo courtesy of Jerome Jales and the Willie Jales Collection.

<sup>418</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by the author, 18 November 2004.

It was a significant conversation and I was honoured and privileged that Jales called me to tell me about the concert that he had just played at the Baxter Theatre in Rosebank, Cape Town, as a special guest of Abdullah Ibrahim. It was certainly a great occasion for Jales at this time of his life in his seventy fourth year. He had been keeping me informed, prior to this call, of the band practices that had been called for the Friday and Saturday morning before the concert. Jales always still referred to Abdullah affectionately as 'Dollar', as all his contemporaries had known him in District Six and Kensington as Dollar Brand' back in the 1950s and early 1960s. Jales informed me that 'Dollar' had called him from New York to invite him to play the concert at the Baxter about ten days prior to the concert and that he would receive a call when 'Dollar' had arrived in Cape Town, to set up further arrangements for practices. Jales was so very excited about this turn of events and would phone me every couple of days wondering how 'Dollar' had got his number, why had he chosen him, and would it even happen, as the days drew closer to the date. It was truly an honour and a highlight for Jales, who had played for so many years in dance bands and although they had grown up as contemporaries in the jazz scene in Cape Town in the late 50s, he still spoke of 'Dollar' with a great reverence, for a musician who had achieved so much musically in his lifetime on the international stage.

Jales was keen to point out to me that 'Dollar' had played for Willie Max's dance band early in his musical career and on occasions mentioned a number of other top local Jazz musicians who had also started playing in dance bands. Jales showed me a photo of Henry February's sister playing as a young woman for the Collins Dance Band and intimated that these musicians who had become prominent in the jazz scene in Cape Town, were slow to publically divulge that some of their initial musical training was in Ballroom or 'Langarm' dance bands. In fact Jales called it 'a silence', as though it was a secret that they would rather no one knew about. This was an issue that irked Jales and it is noticeable in the interviews that he gave and also conducted. He mentions this point a number of times in the interview with Les Steiger.

Until I had the privilege of having access to Jales' notes, with the kind permission of his son Jerome Jales, I was unaware that Jales had previously been working on a project since 1999, in conjunction with Valmont Layne from the District Six Museum, to document the Ballroom or 'Langarm' dance bands for posterity. Jales had been confronted in the early years of his

musical development by a polarity between the dance music that he heard all around him and so-called main stream Bebop or Hardbop jazz, developed in America in the early 1950s, that a very small number of his peers from District Six and the Kensington-Vasco area were pursuing at the time.

Jales' teacher Jimmy Adams was at the forefront of pioneering a more sophisticated presentation of dance music in the form of intricately arranged Big Band Swing jazz music, just as Adams' mentor Tem Parker had done before him. Jales, who after his early apprenticeship with Jimmy Adams chose Alf Wyllie's Dance Band, a Ballroom or 'Langarm' dance band as his musical direction, was constantly aware that the musicians from the so-called 'jazz circle' received a lot of local and international recognition especially from academics. He was also aware that the small group of musicians who constituted the so-called jazz circle had an elitist stance regarding their choice of Hardbop music and tended to distance themselves from the dance band fraternity Jales' main theme throughout his notes was to redress this remiss and show that most of the jazz musicians from Cape Town, who had achieved some fame or recognition, had started their musical careers in the Coloured Ballroom or 'Langarm' dance bands.

Jales was born in Oak Street District Six on the 8 May 1939, and grew up in Russell Street. Jales spent his formative years during the 1940s and 50s in the strongly community based and culturally mixed society of District Six. He was 'crazy about dance music' as he described it and very fond of listening to the radio. At first they had no electricity at home but as soon as they got electricity his father bought a radio. He recalled that he got to recognise Dan Hill's music as well as Nico Carstens. As a boy, on Sundays Jales would walk down into the centre of town to the Waldorf restaurant, a White establishment, and stand outside listening to Nolan Ranger and his Orchestra playing. He would walk further down to the Delmonica Hotel in Van Riebeeck Street and listen to Vic Davis playing.<sup>419</sup>

Jales' mentor was family friend and neighbour, Matie Van Niekerk, who has lived in London from the early 1960s and who was the founder of the Paramount Dixies Dance Band and leader of a couple of Christmas Choirs including the Trojans. Many friends and family lived in Russell Street in District Six and another musician related to Matie Van Niekerk was Vernie

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<sup>419</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 29 July 1999, District Six Museum Archive.

Abrahams who also played saxophone and led his own band The Vernie Abrahams Dance Band. Jales recalled how Uncle Matie's father Mat senior, would encourage him musically on a little white plastic flute with a red mouth piece, which he got as a present in a 'Lucky Packet' from the OK Bazaars in Adderley Street. Jales' parents thought that he would become a drummer because he was always bashing on pots and pans and consequently being reprimanded.<sup>420</sup>

Jales recalled that Christmas and New Years were the most exciting time, not because of the presents but because of the Christmas Choirs that he could hear coming in the distance and would arrive sometime after midnight on Christmas Eve and he would watch and listen to the Christmas Choirs spellbound from the window. When he was old enough, on the return of the Christmas Choirs on Christmas afternoon, he used to follow them for miles down the streets with droves of other children, intrigued by all the instruments and vibrant movement and sound. New Year's Eve from 12 midnight was equally if not more exciting with the bands (mostly drawn from dance bands) leading the Malay Choirs or *Nagtroupe* through the streets. They would march until about 8 o'clock in the morning and then come out again in the afternoon from about 12 noon until 3 o'clock dressed in their smartest jackets and flannels. Jales and the other children would walk from District Six to the Bo-Kaap and back and then on to Salt River following the bands and *Nagtroupe*.<sup>421</sup>

This exposure to live bands at a young age, Jales cited as being his greatest inspiration to play the saxophone. Mat Van Niekerk senior had a clarinet that he let Jales practice on. At fifteen years of age, Jales went to work in Nicholson's clothing factory in Ravenscraig Road where Matie Van Niekerk had found him a job. Matie had already bought himself a saxophone and formed the Paramount Dixies Dance Band, the practices of which Jales was able to go and watch. Matie Van Niekerk invite him to go on an Easter weekend outing with the band, which would cost five Pounds but just before the weekend Jales saw a second hand saxophone advertised in Tobias' music shop in Long Market Street for five Pounds. Jales went down with the five Pounds, only to be told he needed his father, who he duly

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<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*

went to fetch from work and so he was able to purchase his first saxophone and immediately started to teach himself.<sup>422</sup>

Working at Nicholsons was Stanley Alexander, Maties Van Niekerks brother-in-law, who also played the saxophone. Jales related that Stanley Alexander said to him, 'Willie, come with me, I'm going to take you to a guy who will teach you music, and I'll tell you, you'll like what you're going to hear!' So Stanley Alexander took Jales to a house in Silvertown and Jales recalled, 'And lo and behold, when I went into that room, that guy was sitting on the table, and they were playing a number there, waiting for the other guys to turn up, and this guy was playing. But I tell you Valmont, when I hear that guy play, I thought to myself, "That's the one! That's the type of music I want to play." Not the music that I heard in the streets, what you call "*gham*" music. That's the music, American music [...].' The saxophone player that was sitting on the table and playing the saxophone was the late Jimmy Adams. Jales elaborated that the so-called '*gham*' or District Six style of playing saxophone was not swinging, was very straight and with a heavy vibrato.<sup>423</sup>

Jimmy Adams said to Jales that he should forget anything he had learned so far about the saxophone and put it away in the case. So Jales had to start all over again from the beginning, regularly blowing into the mouthpiece to develop his embouchure. According to Jales, he was not supposed to play for three months but unbeknownst to Jimmy Adams, Jales and his friends were playing in the National Bioscope and taking part in variety shows in the Star Bioscope. Jimmy Adams didn't want Jales to develop the local Cape style or '*gham*' style of saxophone playing.<sup>424</sup>

In 1955 when Jales came to Jimmy Adams, Jimmy Adams was already starting to build his Big Band by teaching a group of young players. Jimmy Adams already had three alto saxophonists and he was looking for a tenor saxophone player, so Jales was the obvious choice to learn on the tenor saxophone. Jimmy Adams had an unfortunate motor car related accident and was incarcerated, which terminated his Big Band project prematurely after it had only been viable for a year or two.<sup>425</sup> He took Jales to meet Joe Ulster and

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<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>425</sup> Jimmy Adams, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 18 June 1992, District Six Museum Archive.

recommended him as a promising tenor saxophone player. But Jales being young and energetic was keen to play as often as he could and Joe Ulster's Dance Band was only playing once a month because according to Jales, Joe Ulster was actually more interested in playing jazz at the Blue Peter nightclub.<sup>426</sup>

Jales related that during his time with the Jimmy Adams Swing Band, they might have played a maximum of five dances in a year and then some were only in a school hall. Jimmy's style of swing jazz was not popular amongst the 1950s Coloured dance crowd in District Six, although Jimmy Adams himself was popular as a saxophone player amongst the jazz fraternity. Jales proffered that the Coloured 'dancing public' was responsible for the lack of success of the Jimmy Adams Swing Band, not being able to accept a different style of music for dancing.<sup>427</sup>

It was at a Dance Band Competition at the Somerset West Town Hall, sometime in 1956 or '57, where Jimmy Adams had taken his Big Band to play, that Jales met Alf Wyllie, the leader of the Alf Wyllie Dance Band, the band that won the competition that day. According to Tony Wyllie who was a teenager accompanying his father on the day, Tony befriended Jales on the coach trip home and later told his father that Jales was the player that he admired and from whom he would like to learn play the saxophone. Soon after this, Alf Wyllie approached Jales at home in District Six and asked him if he would like to play tenor saxophone in his band.<sup>428</sup>

Jales related vehemently, that this was where he learned what it was like to play in a popular band. After starting with Alf Wyllie, Jales resolved that the popular dance band environment would be more fulfilling for him musically because he would get to play often and he preferred the evening dances to the late-night club scene where jazz was more popular. The Alf Wyllie band played every Friday and Saturday night, every Wednesday night they played at the Rio Hotel in Athlone and on Sundays they played at picnics for the Malay community.<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 29 July 1999, District Six Museum Archive.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*; Tony Wyllie, interviewed by the author, 29 May 2016.

<sup>429</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 29 July 1999, District Six Museum Archive.

Jales commented that Alf Wylie was not an exceptional musician himself but that he was always able to draw the best musicians around him. The late Kenny Japhtah played guitar for him, Henry February had played piano for him as well as Dollar Brand on occasions. Before Jales joined the band Alf Wylie had three top saxophone players playing for him; Les Gemmel was the lead alto player, and Cornelius Adonis was the second alto, the famous band leader Tem Hawker who taught Jimmy Adams to play, had been playing tenor in the band in the preceding years of the early 1950s. It is probable that Jales was Tem Hawker's eventual replacement, Tem having left for Beaufort West in 1954.<sup>430</sup> Tem Hawker and Les Gemmel were a formidable combination of saxophone players especially being able to play the African style jive and early kwela styles together. Vincent Kolbe had this to say about the time:

And because we were young, we liked to jive, we liked to boogie, and we were attracted to kwela, and we got to know Temmy Hwaker as dancers. And also his friend [Leslie] Gemmel, a coloured guy from Kensington, in Kensington black and coloured people mixed much more freely than in District Six. Abdullah [Ibrahim] is very experienced in that, because he grew up in Kensington. And Temmy and Gemmel were like a duo. When they got up – we couldn't wait for the jive numbers and the shoe-shuffle numbers and the kwela numbers, and we couldn't wait for Temmy to take a solo because he had that American jazz sound where all the other saxophonists sounded like Freddy Gardner and Victor Silvester.<sup>431</sup>

Jales mentions that the combination of saxophones in Alf Wylie's band was impressive and that in the fifties the Ballroom or 'Langarm' dance bands relied on the saxophones for their sound. 'The band with the best saxophones was the best band', he said. This was in all likelihood an acoustic as well as a harmonic factor, because at this time the dance bands were mostly still playing unamplified, also the richer harmonies created by three saxophones was a popular sound.

It was in Alf Wylie's band that Jales learned to play the 'Squares' because with Jimmy Adams' band, Jimmy played the 'Squares' alone. It was not really possible to orchestrate the kind of melodies that made up the figures of the 'Squares'. Jales related that with the other

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<sup>430</sup> Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town*, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

dance bands 'three or four saxophones, they all jammed in, all jammed in because the "squares" was a lively dance, everybody played his part there, you know.'<sup>432</sup>

Alf Wyllie, who had played for years as the drummer in his own band until the mid-1950s, learned to play the saxophone and eventually became the lead saxophonist in his band. Jales stayed with Alf Wyllie from 1957 until late 1959, when he was encouraged by his peers to start a band of his own. Jales opened his own band known variously as: Willie and the Starlites; Willie and the Starlite Orchestra; Willie's Starlite Orchestra or Willie's Starlites as they were popularly known.

Around this time, Jales was approached by the members of a Christmas Choir, the Trojans, he recalls, 'That Choir the Trojans, they were a strictly string band and in 1959 they decided to go brass. Heaven knows why. So one or other friends said, "Willie, but we're looking for a saxophone player, come and join me".'<sup>433</sup> The leader of the choir at the time was Davey May who was the leader of his own popular dance band The Davey May Dance Band and he had also lead a band with the Wedel brothers named The May and Wedel Dance Band.<sup>434</sup> Later, Jales recalled that when Davey May left Cape Town for Namaqualand his friend Matie Van Niekerk became the leader of the Trojans Christmas Choir.

Willie and the Starlite Orchestra was started by Willie Jales in early 1960 with Herbie Walters on drums, Ronnie Stevens on double bass, Victor Chisolm on guitar, Denis Mitchell on piano, Trevor Dantu on tenor saxophone, Billy Baadjies on alto saxophone and Willie Jales on lead alto saxophone.

Jales, who had been groomed by Jimmy Adams as a tenor saxophonist, took up the alto to lead his new band, fearing the he couldn't find the right player to play the leading alto saxophone parts. The band, despite comprising of youngsters, was immediately successful. They prided themselves in being able to read music, which gave them an edge as far as introducing new repertoire was concerned. Jales remembers how Wally Witbooi from Ikey

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<sup>432</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 29 July 1999, District Six Museum Archive. It is interesting to note that this jamming quality of the two or three saxophones as well as banjo and piano improvising, gave the music for the 'Squares' an almost Dixieland-like quality. Refer to p. 99.

<sup>433</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by the author, 18 November 2004.

<sup>434</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by the author, 10 May 2012. The May-Wedel Troubadours, photo from the Willie Jales Collection. Refer to Figure 9, p. 105.

Gamba's band used to stand in front of the Starlites and watch them intently, as if impressed by these youngsters reading music.<sup>435</sup>

Jales recounted how he had to write out the entire Quadrille and Commercial in order to make sure that he knew them inside out. He stressed that any error in the performance of the Square Dance sets would result in an instant bad reputation and that a bad evening for foxtrots or waltzes could be forgiven, but if you played the Square Dance Sets well, you were the best band. In the early 1960s the Quadrille was played before interval and the Commercial was played after interval as the finale for the last half of the evening. By the end of the 1960s, with the proliferation of guitar-based bands emulating the Shadows and the Beatles and increasing popularity of loose dances like the twist, the crawl and the mashed potato, the Square Dance Sets were adversely affected. With fewer leaders of the 'Squares' available, each square requiring a leader and fewer people knowing the 'Squares' sequences, only the Commercial was danced in the last half of the evening. According to Jales, before the mid-1970s the 'Squares' had disappeared as a regular part of Ballroom or 'Langarm' dancing.

The Starlites recorded and released three LP Records from 1973 until 1976. As explained by Joe Schaffers, these albums only contained one or two tunes in the *vastrap* rhythm of the 'Squares', which he said were often extracts of tunes that had previously been played specifically as figures of the Square Dance Sets but were now isolated on the albums as *vastrap* tunes.<sup>436</sup> Jales was careful to point out that his band needed to keep up with the times and provide the dancing public who attended the Ballroom or 'Langarm' dances with the latest popular tunes, which was the thinking behind his last two LP Records, *Willie's Party* and *Another Willie's Party*.<sup>437</sup> This awareness to stay abreast of the times as far as repertoire is concerned has been stressed by all of the band leaders from August Collins starting in 1922 to the contemporary leaders, Kenny Wentzel of Strand Combo and musical leader of Kallie's Dance Band, Clive Paulse.<sup>438</sup>

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<sup>435</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by the author, 10 May 2012.

<sup>436</sup> Joe Schaffers, interviewed by the author, 28 September 2016.

<sup>437</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 29 July 1999, District Six Museum Archive.

<sup>438</sup> August Collins, quoted in Manuel, 'August Collins knows what dancers want—and he gives it to them...: 50 years of making music', *op. cit.*, p. 10; Kenny Wentzel, interviewed by the author, 19 October 2016; Clive Paulse, interviewed by the author, 27 November 2016.

## Cameo X: The Strand Combo

The Strand Combo was started in the Strand in 1977 by the Wentzel brothers, Kenny Wentzel and his elder brother, the late Herbert Wentzel, who were from a family, known in the Strand area for their musical abilities. Kenny Wentzel's two eldest sons were also founder members of the band. Herbert was a music teacher and an outstanding musician, mainly a pianist and he read and wrote music well. It was Herbert who approached Kenny Wentzel back in 1977, with the idea of starting a dance band.<sup>439</sup>

Kenny Wentzel describes it this way:

But I said to my brother [...] my brother was four years older than me [...] I say, 'Herbie, yes, I'll play in a Ballroom band on condition we play Ballroom music and not this *deurmekaar* music, man, that everybody just play, you know, *Klopse* music.' So my brother said to me, 'No, no, no, you know I'm into the music as well!'<sup>440</sup>

I suggested that it was a more sophisticated style of dance music that Kenny Wentzel wanted to play. Kenny Wentzel agreed enthusiastically, 'More sophisticated music for the people to enjoy and understand.'

The Strand Combo was based around Kenny Wentzel as the lead alto saxophone player, but from the outset they created a harmonised three saxophone sound based around the arrangements of Herbert Wentzel. The original band was formed with Kenny Wentzel on first alto saxophone, Johnny Koopman on second alto saxophone, Sulaiman Cassiem on tenor saxophone, Herbert Wentzel on piano, Kenny Wentzel's two sons, Neugen Wentzel on the electric bass, and Noel Wentzel on keyboards, the band included guitarist Edwin Smith and David Williams on drums as well as Isaac Newman on percussion. So the band started out as a Nine Piece band, they kept the three saxophone line-up until Sulaiman Cassiem left to play in the Montreal Sounds in the late 1980s. Kenny took a young man Lawrence Felton from the Boys Brigade who he trained on tenor saxophone and so they maintained the three saxophone sound. Kenny Wentzel related:

'I've listened to many saxophonists in fact I've played with [...] in Strand Combo, my band [...] I've played with two other guys also on saxophone. I played the alto (Sax) and I had another saxophonist playing the alto and I had a guy playing the tenor. I played the lead part

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<sup>439</sup> Kenny Wentzel, interviewed by the author, 27 August 2015.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*

on the alto saxophone [...] the lead soprano part [...] and we did three part harmony. And my brother scored the music, when he was a teacher in music, so you can imagine the chords was to the T, and the music was fantastic!<sup>441</sup>

Eventually in the early 1990s Kenny and Herbert Wentzel decided to revert to the single saxophone which was in the same style as the Bobby Hendricks Sound from Caledon who were becoming one of the most popular Ballroom or 'Langarm' bands of the 1990s. Another of Kenny Wentzel's five sons would join the band on drums, but eventually all three of Kenny Wentzel's sons left the Strand Combo to form their own band called N2, playing music for a younger crowd of people in the form of what was then and is still currently known as Smooth Jazz and R & B. Kenny Wentzel refers to their band simply as a jazz band, but it is not a jazz band in the sense of playing mainstream Bebop or Cool Jazz as taught at Music Colleges worldwide. Kenny Wentzel related:

'But eventually I ended up in a Ballroom band. But to crown it all, three of my sons have got a Jazz band. They started in the Strand Combo. My boys can play 'Langarm' anytime, anytime! They're a Jazz band, but if you ask them to play a Slow Foxtrot or a Waltz, they can change like that. They can do it for you.'<sup>442</sup>

The Strand Combo has gone through a number of personnel changes throughout its 39 years of existence. Kenny Wentzel is the only founder member left in the band. In 2012 when I first met the band, the line-up was Kenny Wentzel on alto and soprano saxophone, Jeff Hendricks on drums and vocals, Garryth Hendricks and Reagen Solomons on keyboards, Vincent February on bass guitar, and Denver Du Plessis and Ruschdi Solomons on vocals. Since I've had contact with the band in late 2012, the current line-up has twice seen a change in the vocalist, and the drummer Jeff Hendricks, who was the longest running member besides Kenny Wentzel himself, also left in 2015 having been with the band from the early 80's. The current drummer is a youngster called Timmy and the new vocalist is Reneuce Van Der Merwe.

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<sup>441</sup> Kenny Wentzel, interviewed by the author, 20 November 2012.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid.

Kenny Wentzel stressed on numerous occasions that all the members of the Strand Combo read music, besides the drummer and vocalist that is. Kenny Wentzel also points out that this sets his band above others Ballroom bands that don't read music.

Now myself, the two keyboardists and the bassist, all of us, we read music. Now our Waltzes are numbered, our Quicksteps are numbered, all the Ballroom songs are numbered in different books. Just, "OK, we're going to play Quickstep number 5." Just turn the page...even if we've never played it yet, we can read. The drummer don't need to read, he just keeps the tempo. I count, "A one, a two, a one, two, three, four!" [...] So that also helps the Strand Combo to really go up the ladder. Cause they [...] people say, "The Strand Combo has got a strict Ballroom tempo!" What more do you want, you know.<sup>443</sup>

Kenny Wentzel talked a little about the past and recalled that when his parents were going dancing in the 1950s, the events were called a Grand Dance and tickets were issued, you could not come to the dance without a ticket, and assume you could pay at the door. Dress was very formal, the ladies in long evening dresses and the men in suits, entrance was also reserved if you were not dressed appropriately.

In discussing the future of the Strand Combo and the Ballroom or 'Langarm' dance scenario in the Cape in general, Kenny Wentzel is not over-optimistic. He sees the standard of Ballroom Dancing steadily deteriorating which is in contrast to the opinion of Cape Town dancing teacher Shireen Steenekamp who believes with so many active dancing schools in and around Cape Town the general scenario can only improve.

Kenny Wentzel cites his son Lucian as an example of someone who got very far in the amateur Ballroom dancing world as South African champion but who never dances at Ballroom or 'Langarm' events. Kenny Wentzel believes that it is possibly a different group of people who frequent Ballroom or 'Langarm' events and that the higher level of amateur might never attend these events.

One of the main factors that perpetuates the current Ballroom or 'Langarm' scene and is the financial basis upon which everything rests and is likely to have rested for the largest part of the twentieth century, is fundraising. The vast majority of events that are organised and held at civic and town halls are for fund-raising, mainly by church organizations, schools, sports clubs and welfare organizations. The Anglican churches from Cape Town such as St

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<sup>443</sup> Kenny Wentzel, interviewed by the author, 20 November 2012.

Pauls will event host an event in the Strand Town Hall. The Anglican and Methodist churches from the suburbs of the Cape Town Metropole are the most active fundraiser and there are numerous rugby and soccer clubs that call annual dances. The remainder of the dances throughout the year are made up of Weddings and High School 'Matric' dances.

Every year at least six month in advance these churches call the bands to book a date. Kenny Wentzel then sends them a contract to sign with a request for a Thousand Rand deposit. When the contract and the deposit is sent to Kenny Wentzel then the venue and time is set out. The venues that are most popularly used now are the Stellenbosch, Somerset West and Strand Town Halls and the Ottery, Athlone, Witteboom, Brackenfel, Parow, Goodwood, Bellville and Paarl Civic Centres.

There are currently about eight top Ballroom or 'Langarm' bands playing in the Cape Town Metropole and surrounds and there is currently enough work available to keep these bands playing. So between the demand for the bands from fund-raisers, the bands and their members who are willing to play for remuneration and the dancers who are still willing to pay for an evening's 'Langarm' dancing to a good band, the Ballroom or 'Langarm' scene in Cape Town and surrounds, lives on and maintains.

## **Cameo XI: Kallie's Dance Band**

A case study was conducted on Kallie's Dance Band, its owner Mark Joorst and its members during 2015 and 2016. Much of the information on the band was taken from interviews with the current member of Kallie's Dance Band who are: Clive Pause of Sir Lowry's Pass on alto saxophone, Moiëd Gordon from Strand on drums, Eric Skuni from Villiersdorp on bass guitar, Stanton Meiring from Grabouw on keyboards, Rodrigues Vlotman on rhythm guitar, Trevinia Jafta from Grabouw on vocals and Mark Joorst from Grabouw on tambourine.

Kallie's Dance Band was founded around the year 2000 by Oom Kallie Joorst from Grabouw, who had already established the Elginaires in the early 1980s. When Oom Kallie passed away, he left his two bands to his two remaining sons. Kallie's Dance Band is owned and managed by Mark Joorst, Oom Kallie's youngest son. The Elginaires Dance Band is owned by

Oom Kallies middle son Vernon Joorst who was also the bass guitarist in the band until he retired recently.

The story of Kallie's Dance Band really begins with two bands that have had an intertwined and related history over the last half century. The Melodics Dance Band and The Elginaires originate from different sides of the Hottentots Holland Mountains, The Melodics being from Sir Lowry's Pass below the mountains and The Elginaires from over the mountains in the Elgin and Grabouw district. The Melodics Dance Band was formed in Sir Lowry's Pass in 1959 by Clive Paulse's father Jack Paulse, an organist and Maurice Peterson, a saxophonist. The Elginaires were formed by the late Oom Kallie Joorst in Grabouw in the early 1980s. Oom Kallie Joorst was known as an outstanding banjo player and contributed this sound to the Elginaires for some time but later became saxophone player for The Elginaires, while Anthony Joorst played the lead alto saxophone. Vernon Joorst the eldest brother played bass in the Elginaires from its inception until recently and now functions purely as the owner and manager of the Elginaires. A number of the current members of Kallie's Dance Band have previously played for the Elginaires: Clive Paulse played guitar and later saxophone for the Elginaires, Stanton Meiring played keyboards, Trevinia Jafta sang and Moiëd Gordon also played drums for the Elginaires at some point in the early 2000s.

When Mark Joorst took over Kallie's Dance Band, the largest proportion of the original band were made up of a family from the Strand. Jan the father on guitar, Johnny, Jan's son on drums, Reggie, Jan's other son on keyboards, Busi on guitar and Johnny's girlfriend Nor on vocals. The only original founding member of the band still playing today is Eric Skuni who was asked to play bass from the founding of the band around the year 2000 by Oom Kallie Joorst. Mark Joorst's brother-in-law Trevor Delcarme, who was originally from Oceanview on the Cape peninsula, was called upon to play saxophone. This band played together for eight years. Jan passed away and soon after Busi decided to leave the band to start his own band and ended up taking the whole band with him except for Eric Skuni.<sup>444</sup>

So in 2008, Mark Joorst gathered another group together who are the members of the present Kallie's Dance Band. Clive Paulse is the senior member and can now be considered the musical leader of Kallie's Dance Band, being in charge of choosing the repertoire and

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<sup>444</sup> Mark Joorst, interviewed by the author, 5 August 2016.

regularly introducing new tunes to the weekly practice sessions. Paulse was born in 1954 in the Helderberg area. Clive Paulse and his brother Lionel Paulse grew up playing for their father's band the Melodics, where they played guitar and bass respectively as teenagers in the early days. Paulse confesses that he never felt that playing dance music was his chosen passion, but intimated that it was more something that was just there and that, on account of his family, he was ipso facto involved in.

I asked Paulse what motivated his initial interest in the music, he replied: 'I grew up with the music. Of course the guys practiced at my house (Father's house), so I grew up with it, actually, ja.' He also said, 'I wasn't so much interested in those days, I was young and on the road...I was young, I just like to learn, I like to play.' Paulse went on to tell me 'I actually came very into it when I started playing saxophone.' That was about 1996 that he started practicing the saxophone and by 1998 he was playing saxophone for the Elginaires. This he told me, was when his real passion for the music began. 'I love the saxophone!' he said.<sup>445</sup>

I asked Paulse who his mentors were and he replied, 'I think, first of all my father, ja and a guy I admired was that Anthony Joorst, a good saxophone player, yes. He was a mentor of mine.' Paulse told me that the late Anthony Joorst also played saxophone in the Melodics while he was still a novice learning to play the saxophone. That would have been in the early 1980s before Oom Kallie Joorst started the Elginaires with his three sons.

After Clive Paulse, Moiëd Gordon is senior to the other members having been born on 1961 in the Strand. He was inspired as a boy sneaking into his brother-in-laws band practice and watching the drummer. Gordon has had a long career as Ballroom or 'Langarm' drummer having had his first long professional position in the Montreal Sounds through the 1980s appearing on a couple of their recordings from the period. After this Gordon played with the Elginaires until he was called to join Kallie's Dance Band. He is a consummate professional as far as dance band drummers are concerned. Always punctual and very careful with the miking-up of his drum kit and his sound.<sup>446</sup>

Stanton Meiring was born in George in 1978 and went to school in Bellville at the School for the Blind. He had quite a comprehensive music training under a British music teacher who

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<sup>445</sup> Clive Paulse, interviewed by the author, 27 November, 2015.

<sup>446</sup> Moiëd Gordon, interviewed by the author, 5 August 2016.

schooled the pupils in early jazz and big band arrangements. Meiring's first professional job was playing keyboards for Geoff October and the Montreal Sounds from the Strand from about 1993. At that time the late Jimmy Adams was playing alto saxophone for them and Moiëd Gordon was still the drummer. From about 1998 Meiring played keyboards for the Golden Sounds under Wally Witbooi for a few years and he recalled the four part saxophone harmonies that they had at the time. After this Meiring spend a few months playing for the Cool Sounds under China Van Rensburg and subsequently Meiring played for the Elginaires before joining Kallie's Dance Band in 2006. Meiring confessed that Ballroom or 'Langarm' was not his music of choice as he would prefer to be singing and playing solo or in a more smooth jazz orientated band in Dubai but there was a regular income from the dance music.<sup>447</sup>

Mark Joorst was born in Grabouw on 1 April 1968 and although he played saxophone in the Bright Stars Christmas Choirs with his father and brothers when he was very young, he never pursued music through his life and has only become involved after his father bequeathed him Kallie's Dance Band. Mark Joorst takes the management of the band very seriously and it requires him to make efforts to keep the booking schedule as full as possible, to make sure all members are aware of venues and dates as well as calling regular weekly practice sessions. It can be quite stressful as all the financial responsibility for the band rests squarely on his shoulders. Should a member be sick before a dance date, it is Mark Joorst's problem to sort out before the band take the stage that evening. Although Mark Joorst works a regular job with BMW Helderberg, he is happy to supplement his income with earnings from the band and thereby also to maintain the legacy of his father's musical career.<sup>448</sup>

## Conclusion

Ballroom Dancing at the Cape followed very similar trends to those in England and America both in the nineteenth and twentieth century. One major difference during the twentieth century, especially in the Coloured communities of the Cape, was the importance of the

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<sup>447</sup> Stanton Meiring, interviewed by the author, 5 August 2016.

<sup>448</sup> Mark Joorst, interviewed by the author, 5 August 2016.

Quadrille and other 'Squares' or set dances and how they were maintained for many decades through the twentieth century as the most popular aspect of an evening of Ballroom dancing. Whereas it is purported that Country Dancing in the form of lines or squares has been maintained in various parts of the Western world in rural areas, it is unusual that an entire urban community kept alive these practices until such a late date in the twentieth century.

The available historical data on the activities of Coloured 'Langarm' dance bands in the twentieth century, begins with some references to a few bands that were working in the 1920s. Although further research is required to elaborate on the time before the 1920s (going back to the mid-1800s), indications are that Coloured or Cape Malay dance bands were operating at a high level of proficiency from the mid-nineteenth century. One example, recorded by Bouws, is of Van Der Schyfe's String Orchestra or Quadrille Band.<sup>449</sup>

By the 1930s there were at least ten prominent Coloured Ballroom-Langarm bands that were playing regularly in Cape Town and surrounds. They were playing for Coloured and White functions and more than likely mixed functions as well. Every one of these bands had to be fully versed in five or six different Square Dance Sets which were the highlight of every dance. The Square Dance Sets were the conduit through which the *vastrap* rhythm entered the world of Ballroom-Langarm in the Cape as one of the various rhythms of the figures of the Square Dance Sets and there the *vastrap* rhythm remained, as is now evident, for the greater part of the twentieth century until the demise of Square Dancing in the 1970s. Even as the Square Dance sets were fading through the 1960s, this rhythm survived as the life of the party in the form Line-Dancing and loose dancing (where anything goes) and has maintained this position until today.

The late Willie Jales explained the process of the disappearance of the Square Dance, saying that as the number of leaders (who were vital to the functioning of the 'Squares') dwindled, so more and more people sat out the 'Squares', watching. Those who couldn't contain themselves would get up and start imitating the 'Squares' or fooling around on the side of the dance floor, until eventually as the 'Squares' faded more, it became normal for people

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<sup>449</sup> Bouws, *Die Musieklewe van Kaapstad 1800-1850: En sy verhouding tot die Musiekkultuur van Wes-Europa*, op. cit., p. 92.

to simply dance loose to the *vastrap* rhythms. The 1960s ushered in an era of loose dances such as the twist and the era of guitar based pop bands such as the Beatles had a huge impact on changing the dance bands' focus in Cape Town away from the saxophone based sound.

The 1950s was the golden era of Ballroom-Langarm dancing at the Cape. Dances were formal and men dressed in suits of jackets and ties and shoes were shined. Women wore long evening dresses or ballroom gowns and high heels. There were dances in innumerable venues and on almost every night of the week. This decade had the largest number of Coloured Ballroom-Langarm dance bands playing of any other era. Every weekend was anticipated eagerly for the dance on Friday after work or on Saturday afternoon or evening and the 'Squares' were still central to the enjoyment of the evening as they facilitated meeting new people and making new friends. This was the most social and favourite environment in Cape Town for people, especially Coloured people, to meet and mix together. Although the 'Squares' faded away as pop and disco changed modes of dancing and venues catered for different tastes, Ballroom-Langarm dancing continued to prosper through the 1980s until the present, with old bands closing and new bands starting out.

During the 1940s and '50s most Ballroom or 'Langarm' bands favoured the two or three saxophone line-up. Some bands were less sophisticated in their arrangements and only played in unison but other bands followed the lead of American swing and Dixieland bands by playing harmonies and a certain amount of improvisation. The harmonic arrangement of the three horns was influenced by the experience of harmonised singing which was found in AME Gospel music harmony and popular vocal group harmony influenced by American Barbershop singing and groups like the Inkspots who influenced a generation of young Black South African musicians. The piano had to be arranged to be available at the venue for the evening of the dance. The pianist was an essential player in the bigger dance bands of this era. The banjo was still the rhythmic instrument of choice and the double bass and simple trap drum set made up the rest of the rhythm section of the Ballroom or 'Langarm' dance bands.

Amplification of dance bands in the 1960s and '70s began to change some of the dynamics of the earlier acoustic sound production of the bands. Apart from the early PA systems of the 1940s and '50s for 'miking up' the entire band, the electric bass, the electric guitar as

well as the electric organ were the first amplified instruments to be added to the dance band line-up through the early 1960s.

The PA system allowed for smaller combo's to fulfil the same function as the larger bands, as in the practice of Alf Wylie's and Attie Davis' dance bands in the early 1960s, which split up into smaller combo's to cater for multiple venues on a weekend night. By the early 1980s a number of bands such as Strand Combo, Jimmy's Big Five and the Bobby Hendricks Sound, had reverted to one saxophone as the lead instrument of the band. The implementation of synthesizer keyboards for strings and numerous other instrumentations also changed the sound of the bands through the past two to three decades as with the Strand Combo who chose two synthesizer players over the traditional guitarist in order to fill out their sound. In order to be in line with current trends, bands in 2016 play at very loud volumes and it is a constant logistical problem to control the sound in the highly reverberant civic centres of Cape Town, most of which have a large percentage of bare brick or cement wall to contend with acoustically.

Keeping up with current trends is very much an ever present concern of dance band leaders as put forward by one of the early band leaders of the twentieth century, August Collins and band leaders feel it necessary to cater for every generation, especially to keep the younger generation happy to attend 'Langarms'. Current Ballroom or 'Langarm' dance bands invariably have a vocalist who can sing what is known as 'Old School' and includes Soul and Disco numbers from the 1960s and '70s, often played to the *vastrap* rhythm, as well as singing the latest R&B songs for the younger generation who attend the dances. Joe Schaffers who sang for Backchat remarked that they could have been one of the first Ballroom or 'Langarm' bands to sing so-called Ballroom tunes for the Foxtrot or Waltz which would commonly be taken from a jazz standards but this is still relatively uncommon, the saxophone still traditionally holding sway for the Ballroom dances.

## CONCLUSION

The term 'Langarm' has a tendency amongst the general population of South Africa, especially Whites, to conjure up a myriad of differing ideas. The majority of Afrikaans-speaking White South Africans to whom I have posed the question, 'What does "Langarm" mean to you?', say that it is the kind of dance people do at a *Sokkie Jol*.

It is arguable that the term could have been coined as far back as the early to mid-nineteenth century, which is as long as closed dancing first reached the shores of South Africa in the form of the Waltz, but the early history of this term might forever remain speculative. For English speakers, the term would translate directly to English as 'long-arm' dancing. In Afrikaans it is vaguely humorous and somehow endearing. It definitely conjures up images of unsophisticated country folk, dancing in a rather ungainly stance, arms extended at full stretch on one side and with great exuberance rocking from side to side.

In this thesis the term 'Langarm' has been used in inverted commas in order to highlight its possible contention. What problematizes the term 'Langarm' for use as a specific genre of music or dance, is its use by various groups of Afrikaans-speaking South Africans from both the White and Coloured communities to denote differing aspects of their particular dance practices. More significantly in terms of the present discussion, it has been presented by recent academic research as defining a unique genre of Coloured social dancing which, in their view, is not Ballroom dancing but only includes some steps taken from Ballroom dancing. What then actually constitutes this genre, is left largely unclear. I contend that in the light of the history of Ballroom dancing presented in this thesis, and the unbroken legacy of Ballroom dancing at the Cape, one cannot separate these events from Ballroom dancing, as this is what the largest proportion of patrons, musicians and dancers currently classify these events to be and 'Langarm' dances are what they colloquially refer to them as in casual English or Afrikaans conversation.

Willy Jales was adamant that from his perspective as an urban Coloured dance band leader from the early 1960s in Cape Town, these 'Langarm' dances had always been seen as and thought of even by Afrikaans speakers as Ballroom dances. Willy Jales offered an example of how the term 'Langarm' might be used in conversation: "Watter dans gaan julle toe vanaand? Nee, ons gaan na n' 'Langarm' toe!" (Which dance are you going to tonight? No, we're going to a 'Langarm'!) He explained that it was only used as colloquial slang to distinguish Ballroom from, let us say, a disco or a bop that you might be going to attend.<sup>450</sup> In further conversations with other members of the Coloured community, it becomes clear that 'Langarm' was used more frequently in conversation by Afrikaans-speaking Coloured people than by English speakers in Cape Town to refer to Ballroom dance occasions.

The decision to view the history of Coloured Ballroom dancing as continuity rather than change has been guided by the assertions of dance band musicians in Cape Town and surrounds that they are playing for Ballroom dances at the highest level of the tradition of Ballroom dance and that the Squares Dances were maintained intact until their demise in the 1970s. After much research and many interviews I can conclude that as seen from the personal view points of the majority of the practitioners of Coloured Ballroom dance, both musicians and dancers, the term 'Langarm' is used in the vernacular of the Coloured communities of the Cape as an Afrikaans term equivalent to the English term Ballroom dancing. Ballroom dancing amongst the Coloured population of the Cape has certain unique and specific performance practices as noted above, but what has been reiterated by all interviewees is that 'Langarm' dance amongst the Coloured community is of the highest level of traditional amateur Ballroom Dancing as set out by the English standards of the mid-twentieth century.

The terms, Ballroom dance and 'Langarm' dance, have both been utilised by people from the Coloured communities of the Cape, either in separate instances of conversation or sometimes even in the same sentence, but not often in combination. As previously elaborated they are most often used as English and Afrikaans equivalents to refer to exactly the same event. The late Willie Jales formulated a title to one of his note pages (written somewhere between the late 1990s and early 2000s), that provides an apt solution to the

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<sup>450</sup> Willie Jales, interviewed by the author, 2012.

definition of these bands, events, music and dances that constitute Ballroom dancing in the Coloured communities of the Cape. By utilising the English and Afrikaans monikers Ballroom and 'Langarm' simultaneously in combination, whether in collaboration with his fellow researchers or individually, Willie Jales struck on the perfect description: Ballroom Langarm Bands.

I have taken the decision in this thesis to add a hyphen to the combination utilized by Willie Jales in order to strengthen the singularity of meaning that the combination denotes. The term Ballroom-Langarm can then be applied to all aspects of the music, dances, events, dancers and musicians as they occur specifically in the Coloured communities of the Cape and throughout South Africa. No other cultural group in South Africa manifest an evening of Ballroom-Langarm dancing in the same way that the members of the Coloured community do, with a high level of traditional Ballroom skills as well as the remnants of the 'Squares' utilising the *vastrap* rhythm which has now been adapted to modern versions of the American Line-Dance, echoing strongly the old Longways of the English Country Dances. The music which evolved from the Coloured Quadrille band string orchestras of the nineteenth century into the saxophone driven dance bands of the twentieth century remains unique in many aspects of its origins, sounds and rhythmic delivery and in every way embodies the appellation: Ballroom-Langarm.

This thesis has attempted to trace the colonial roots of Ballroom-Langarm social dancing at the Cape amongst the slaves and subsequent creole Coloured population, in ways that connect these colonial beginnings and their evolution through the next three and a half centuries with the manifestations of Ballroom-Langarm dancing as it is found in the present day.

David Coplan, writing about music in Kimberley at the time of the diamond rush of the late 1860s, has asserted that 'it was the Coloureds, arriving from the Cape with traditions of professional musicianship extending back more than two hundred years,' who according to Coplan, had a lasting affected on indigenous African music. But what is more significant about this statement in terms of the current context, is that it confirms the tradition of professional musicianship amongst the Coloured population at the Cape; a tradition, as stated by Coplan, that extended back more than two hundred years from the late 1800s and

therefore from the first decade of colonialization.<sup>451</sup> This present research attempts to uncover and discover historical texts that could support this assertion, especially in relation to Ballroom-Langarm music and dancing, while at the same time linking this history to current dance practices amongst the Coloured community of the Cape.

Social music and dance, especially Ballroom dancing at the Cape, has always been one of the most popular (if not the most popular) form of recreation and entertainment throughout the history of the Cape within all strata of society until the late twentieth century. From 1652 until its demise in 1795, the VOC thoroughly dominated every aspect of life at the Cape: politically, economically, socially, morally and religiously. Their decision to utilize slavery to support the economy was a devastating undertaking; the effects of which are still prevalent today in a pluralistic society characterised by highly polarised racial and cultural groups existing on extreme ends of the economic spectrum.

It was under the oppression of slavery that a creole music evolved at the Cape. European musical instruments were made available to the slaves, most of whom were gifted musicians and could learn the music of European origin by ear. They were from the start the musicians of choice to entertain both in *tafelmusiek*, chamber music for listening and music for dancing.

The French evolved the Contredanse from the English Country Dances in the late eighteenth century and further evolved the Square Dance formations, the Quadrille and the Cotillon or Cotillion from the Contredanse. It is highly likely that the French garrisons at the Cape in the 1780s, first introduced the Quadrille to the Cape as the Cape ladies were already dancing the Quadrille when the British occupied the Cape.

By 1822, the Quadrille and the Waltz were high fashion at the Cape and the Country Dances had been relegated to 'kitchen dances'. Assembly rooms had been arranged which were called the 'Society house' where subscription balls were regularly held for the middle class of Cape Town. The 'grand dinners' hosted by the Governor at Government house were called 'public balls' and were usually large affairs of two hundred people or more and the

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<sup>451</sup> Coplan, *op. cit.*, 1985, pp. 13-14.

music was usually provided by the military orchestras, but by mid-nineteenth century often paired with a local Coloured Quadrille String Band.

The lower orders attended dances on the edge of town, where dances that were named 'Rainbow Balls' were regularly held. Here, the slave girls of the best quality, who had learned all of the latest dances by watching their mistresses, would mix with soldier, sailors, even officers and other members of the lower orders. Here, as well as at the Sunday picnics held at Camps Bay or other nearby beaches, the local Cape Malay Quadrille Band string orchestras would have the freedom to innovate the Scottish and Irish reel rhythms used in the Quadrilles to suit their own dancing and rhythmic styles. Speculatively, these rhythmic innovations could have led to the development of the local vastrap-ghoema rhythm-complex, which incorporated an essential syncopation of duple time rhythm with a unique variation of accentuated beats. This rhythm was then used at all tempos for different dances, especially in the figures of the Quadrille and other Square Dance Sets until late in the twentieth century.

When we take up the narrative from twentieth century aural and written sources covering the early decades of the century, we find the Ballroom dance bands still functioning as string bands reminiscent of the Quadrille string bands of the nineteenth century. At a point during the 1920s, in line with contemporary African American dance bands, bass and reeds were introduced to the dance band line-ups at the Cape along with a trap drummer. By the late 1930s some smaller dance bands were still functioning as string bands with the violin as lead instrument but the bigger bands had all reverted to saxophones, clarinets and trumpets.

The music of the Quadrille and other Square Dances being the most popular part of a Ballroom or 'Langarm' dance had to be modified to the new instrumental line-up. Listening to recordings of the Squares by 'Langarm' bands from the mid to late twentieth century it is still possible to imagine the bowing rhythms of the violins in the saxophones' approach to the melodies which had originally been played by violins (many of the saxophonist having originally been violinists themselves). Banjos were the rhythm instrument of choice until late in the 1950s when they were replaced by guitars. Transport of instruments for large bands always being a logistical nightmare, most Ballroom or 'Langarm' dance bands functioned without amplification until the late 1950s and early 1960s which in many ways

dictated the choice (for volume) of the three saxophone line-up which dominated the 'Golden Era' of the 1950s.

The dance steps of the Quadrille and other Square Dances were passed down from generation to generation through the dancers and square leaders who had to know the steps perfectly. Many international publications of dance manuals were no doubt available in bookshops and music shops but in all likelihood from indications of aural histories, the dances that were maintained at the Cape were mainly aurally and visually transmitted and handed down. The primary venues for dances throughout the twentieth century until the 1960s were the town halls which existed in most suburbs from Cape Town to the Southern suburbs, the Cape Town City Hall being the preeminent venue for Grand Balls. The 1960s which brought the advent of rock music and a new generation of rock musicians and loose dancers put an end to the 'Golden Era' of Ballroom or 'Langarm' at the Cape but a small number of dance bands persisted through the 1960s and '70s. The 1980s saw the largest number of Ballroom or 'Langarm' bands recording LP Records some bring out a new LP every year or two.

The survival of the Ballroom or 'Langarm' dance circuit through the late twentieth century, depended and still depends in the twenty-first century on the initiative of fundraising organizations to put on dances at all the civic centres and a few of the remaining town halls. The money required to operate a dance band is mainly acquired through these functions which are arranged by Churches, Football and Rugby Clubs and other welfare organizations. Dance bands seldom arrange functions for their own promotion, the exceptions often being New Year's dances or for the promotion of a new CD launch.

During the 1960s and '70s, the youth of the rock and soul generation and the disco generation respectively, failed to learn and commit to the complex steps and music of the Square Dances, the number of older leaders declined and the Squares subsequently disappeared. A smaller percentage of the youth population from Coloured communities in the Cape still make the effort to learn formal Ballroom dancing. According to a leading Ballroom teacher in Cape Town, Shireen Steenekamp, there are possibly as many as fifty small Ballroom dance studios in the Greater Cape Town Metropole. This points to a significant number of people still interested in maintaining Ballroom-Langarm dance culture in the area in 2016.

If a so-called 'Langarm' event in the Cape does not feature a band or DJ that plays or caters for Ballroom dances like the Waltz, the Foxtrot and the Quickstep, supported by even a small number of Ballroom dancers, then many Coloured patrons of Ballroom-Langarm in the Cape would concur that the event could not not be considered a 'Langarm' event. It is a romantic notion that a new genre of music and dance called 'Langarm' has emerged from the Coloured communities of the Cape. However, 'Langarm' is still firmly rooted in Ballroom dance traditions, and has not yet become what could be considered a new and entirely distinct genre.

Ballroom-Langarm dancing, according to some of its participants (both musicians and dancers), is currently seeing what appears to be the inkling of a renewed interest of the younger generation and a slight resurgence as a popular form of weekend recreation amongst the Coloured communities of the Cape, despite fears of the older generation of musicians that we might be witnessing the last decade of this particular form of cultural event. Only time will tell if we are witnessing the last decade of an unbroken cultural practice, amongst the Coloured population of the Cape, that reaches back well over two centuries or whether the **new generations** of fundraisers, Ballroom dancing enthusiasts and musicians, will ensure its continuation into the decades beyond 2020.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

*Afrikaans* – The Creole language developed from interrelations of Dutch and slaves and now spoken mainly by those of White Afrikaner ethnicity as well as the rural Coloured population.

*Afrikaner* – Appellation largely reserved for those of White Afrikaans speaking ethnicity.

*Afrikander* – Appellation first used to describe the Cape-born Creole population of ex-slaves in the 1800s.

*Boer* – Dutch term used from early in the colonial times to denote a farmer, later used by those of White Afrikaner ethnicity to describe themselves particularly if rural. Currently also used by the Coloured population to refer slightly derogatorily to White people in general.

*Boeredans* – Dances dating from the early to mid-1800s, danced to *Boeremusiek*.

*Boeremusiek* – A mainly instrumental dance music of the White Afrikaner, utilising mainly the concertina and accordion as lead instruments. In the past, violins were also utilised as lead instruments.

*Boesman* – Afrikaans for Bushman. An appellation given to the race of San hunter-gatherers who were at the Cape millennia before Europeans arrived and distinct from the Khoikhoi pastoralists. The original and earliest inhabitants of Southern Africa.

*Burghers* – Citizens

*Cape Malay* – This term used in early colonial time to denote those of Indonesian and Malaysian origin and later in the 1800s utilised to denote all followers of the Islam religion.

*Coons* – Moniker utilised by the members of the Klopse to describe themselves and originally derived from the American Zip-Coon used in Black and White Minstrelsy.

*Deurmekaar* – Afrikaans for mixed up, out of control or confused.

*Gham* – In relation to the saxophone – the playing style that utilises the fish-horn sound of the street bands of the Cape Malay community, often referred to as the Cape sound.

*Ghoema* – A drum developed at the Cape from a small liquor cask with an animal skin stretched over one side played by the slaves. Embraced by the Cape Malay musicians as their instrument and used for accompanying dance at their picnics and street marches. In the early twentieth century the term was used to describe a dance and in the late twentieth century it has been used to describe the rhythm used by the *Klopse* troupes.

*Jol* – A party, a fun and wild time.

*Jolling* – Having energetic, lively and wild fun especially in relation to dancing.

*Laaities* – Afrikaans slang meaning youngsters, literally meaning light-weights.

*Langa* – The first formally established Black township situated on the outskirts of Cape Town after Black people were forced to leave District Six for the informal township of Ndabeni with the outbreak of Bubonic Plague in 1901.<sup>452</sup>

*Langarm* – Afrikaans literally translated as ‘longarm’. A Coloured term for Ballroom dancing specifically in the Coloured community. A White Afrikaner term for Boeredans to Boeremusiek and Sokkie.

*Langarm Dans* – Amongst the Coloured community it is Afrikaans for a Ballroom dance. Amongst the White community it means a Sokkie or Sakkie-Sakkie dance.

*Langarm Musiek* – Amongst the Coloured community it is Ballroom music which today includes some pop, disco, R’n’B and *vastrap* medleys. Amongst the White community it is Boeremusiek and Afrikaans pop and ballads.

*Loopdans* – Walking dance.

*Khoikhoi* – The name given to the race of pastoralists and fishermen or *Strandloopers* who populated the Cape for centuries before European colonialists arrived. They were distinct from the Bushmen and given the appellation of Hottentot by the early colonialists.

*Klappers* – Claves or wood-blocks for beat out rhythm patterns.

*Klopse* – Afrikaans for clubs. Originally referring to the sports clubs formed by members of the Coloured community of Cape Town in the late 1800s and now referring to the troupes of

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<sup>452</sup> Schoeman, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

the largely Cape Malay Coons who once used these clubs to congregate and practice, and also for monikers for their troupes.

*Moppie* – A humorous up-tempo song, played and sung by the Cape Malay musicians apparently from the time of slavery and utilizing the so-called *ghoema* beat. It remains central to the Malay Choir and *Klopse* repertoire.

*Nagtroepe* – Distinct from the Coons or Klopse these troupes originally called themselves ‘Privates’ at the beginning of the twentieth century. They are traditionally dressed in conventional sports jackets, ties and tailored trousers and traditionally march the streets at night from midnight on New Year’s Eve.

*Oorlams* – A term first utilised by the Dutch to denote ‘an old hand’ especially for sailors but eventually for the VOC employees of long standing and then in the mid to late nineteenth century for Coloured men with skills or street-wise knowledge brought from the Cape.

*Ramkie* – A Euro-indigenous instrument made by the Khoikhoi and Bushmen, purported to have been inspired by the Portuguese rabequina. Also named *ravekinge* or *xguthe*, it is a three stringed guitar or banjo like instrument, some with a tin resonator and some with a skin covered gourd resonator.

*San* – The name of the race of Bushmen hunter-gatherers.

*Sokkie Jol* or *Sakkie-Sakkie* – A dance event with Boeremusiek and other Afrikaans popular music genres. *Sakkie-Sakkie* also refers to a type of one or two note ostinato created by the Boeremusiek concertina players, especially in setting of the polka and settees.

*Strandloopers* – Beach-walkers or a tribe of Khoikhoi from the Cape peninsular who didn’t own cattle in 1652 but lived from the sea, also known to themselves as the ‘Watermen’.

*Tafelmusiek* – Literally table-music. Music played during mealtimes for the entertainment of the diners at a banquet or an ordinary lunch or dinner.

*Tickiedraai* – The Afrikaans term literally to turn on a tickie (three pence), utilised for a form of dance developed in the late 1800s by Cape Coloured musicians performed to the beat of the *vastrap*.

*Vastrap* – The Afrikaans term literally meaning to stamp down hard. This fast dance beat is utilised both by White Boeremusiek performers and Coloured Ballroom-Langarm Dance Bands. North of Mossel Bay and further eastwards up the Garden Route the *vastrap* beat is slower than in Cape Town and is considered by Coloured musicians and dancers as well as White musicians and dancers to be the equivalent of a Quickstep both in musical terms as well as in dance steps, in fact most White dancers consider the *vastrap* to be a type of dance step. For Coloured musicians and dancers from Cape Town and surrounds the rhythm is played generally too fast for a Quickstep and is never considered to be a dance step but rather a type of beat or rhythm. The *vastrap* beat was traditionally the rhythm for the Squares Dances in the Ballroom setting and which was considered the *jol* part of the Ballroom dance. Now that the ‘Squares’ are gone the *vastrap* beat remains today as the *jol* rhythm for loose dancing and Line-Dancing at Ballroom-Langarm events.

*Velviool* – The Afrikaans literally means skin violin.

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# ADDENDUM 1

## List of 'Langarm' Bands from the Cape through the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries<sup>453</sup>

### In the 1920s or earlier:

1. The Willem Jones Dance Band.<sup>454</sup>
2. The Arries Gool Dance Band.<sup>455</sup>
3. The Sammy Hendricks Dance Band.<sup>456</sup>
4. The Paddy Moses Dance Band. We know that August Collins played violin in this band prior to starting his own band in 1922.<sup>457</sup>
5. The Collins Dance Band started in 1922 by August Collins on violin, later on alto saxophone. (Active through to the late 1980s)
6. The Paulse Big Six started by Boetie Paulse and his four brothers. They played for the Royal Ball at the Cape Town City Hall on the visit of the young Prince of Wales, 1925.<sup>458</sup>

### In the 1930s:

7. The Arnie Adams Dance Band started by Arnie Adams on violin with a young Jimmy Adams on banjo. Instrumental string dance band. (Jimmy Adam's father)
8. Tommy Lee and his Merry Revellers were active in the 1930s.
9. Stan Lombard's Society Band with Stan Lombard on piano, Clarence Mania on banjo, Kosie Kennel on Trumpet, and Cecil Martin on saxophone.
10. Joe Murray and his Philharmonic Orchestra were rated by Les Steiger as the number one dance band of the 1930s.
11. Kosie Kennell and his Maestros with Eddie Samuels on violin.<sup>459</sup>
12. The Nicky Parker Dance Band.
13. Van Willingh Dance Band started by Van Willingh on trumpet. (Active into early 1960s)

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<sup>453</sup> 'Band's Titles List', A number of the band's titles in this list come from one anonymous author of a page that contains 36 titles on side A and 18 further titles, most of which are illegible on side B, The Willie Jales Collection.

<sup>454</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, p. 17.

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>457</sup> Manuel, 'August Collins knows what dancers want—and he gives it to them...: 50 years of making music', *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>458</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, p.

<sup>459</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, p. 6.

14. Alf Wyllie's Dance Band started in late 1930s by Alf Wyllie on drums, in the 1950s on alto saxophone. (Active until late 1960s)

## In the 1940s:

15. Les Steiger and the Senators of Swing started in 1941/42 by Les Steiger on piano, violin, and later soprano, alto and tenor saxophone, Reggie Hendricks on piano, Davy de la Harpe and later Kenny Japhtah on guitar, Jimmy Adams and later Jan Abrahams on bass, Hennie Abrahams on banjo, Harold Japhtah on clarinet, Vicky Schwartz on accordion, Les Steiger closed the band in 1949.<sup>460</sup>
16. Wally Petersen and the (Melody) Aces started by Wally Petersen on alto saxophone. (Started in 1930s, active into the 1960s)<sup>461</sup>
17. The Claire Reed Dance Band.<sup>462</sup>
18. Tem Hawker and the Harmony Kings started in Langa in the early 1940s by Tem Hawker on alto saxophone, closed by late 1940s.
19. The Cape Corp Dance Band with August Collins on alto Saxophone, Van Willingh on trumpet and Cecil Martin on saxophone, functioned uring war years until 1945.<sup>463</sup>
20. The Philadelphia Rhythms started in the 1947.
21. The Willie Max Dance Band started in the late 1940s.
22. The Rialto Dance Band with Papa Allie as leader.
23. Paddies Big Six from Robertson with Lillian on piano (Mother of Ikey Gamba Snr)<sup>464</sup>
24. The Wally Ruiters Dance Band.
25. The Harmony Kings (the name) taken over from Tem Hawker. Band started by Oupa Fred Jacobs on banjo.
26. The Paramount Dixies Dance Band started in the late 1940s by Mattie Van Niekerk on alto saxophone.
27. Davey May's Ballroom Band with Frank Bezuidenhout on clarinet and saxophone and Fred Jacobs on banjo before he took over the Harmony Kings.<sup>465</sup>
28. Vern Abrahams and his Tempo Band started in late 1940s.<sup>466</sup>
29. The May – Wedel Troubadours with Davey May on 1<sup>st</sup> saxophone, Vern Abrahams on 2<sup>nd</sup> saxophone and clarinet, and the three Wedel brothers on piano, double bass and piano accordion.<sup>467</sup>
30. The Wally Ruiters Dance Band (Played into the 1960s)
31. The Rock River Boys with a young Jimmy Adams on saxophone and Gary Kriel on guitar.<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, pp. 1-18.

<sup>461</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, pp. 17, 30.

<sup>462</sup> Willie van Bloemestein, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town, op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>463</sup> Greg Collins, interviewed by Valmont Layne, 6 June 2000, District Six Museum Archive.

<sup>464</sup> Holtzman, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>465</sup> Willie Jales, foolscap notes, 'Tommy Lee and his Merry Revellers', The Willie Jales Collection; Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, p. 30.

<sup>466</sup> Notes from back of photo of the Vernie Abrahams Dance Band, The Willie Jales Collection.

<sup>467</sup> Notes from back of photo of the May-Wedel Troubadours, Willie Jales Collection.

<sup>468</sup> Willie van Bloemestein, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town, op. cit.*, p. 43.

## In the 1950s:

32. The Columbian Serenaders were active in the early 1950s. Alfie De Wet on saxophone. The Band closed in 1954.<sup>469</sup>
33. The Jimmy Adams Swing Band. Started in the mid-1950s by Jimmy Adams on alto saxophone with Stanley Alexander on alto and Willie Jales on tenor saxophone. (Lasted until 1957)
34. The Ikey Gamba Dance Band started by Ikey Gamba Snr. (active)
35. Tony's Jazz Rhythms.
36. The Palladium Dance Band started by Cliff Vincent on saxophone and Bobby Vincent.<sup>470</sup>
37. The Harmony Hits played mostly at the Holy Cross church hall in District Six, formed by Henry February on piano, Kenny Japhtah on guitar, Harold Japhtah on saxophone, Jimmy Adams on saxophone, Vincent Veste or Stan Cupido on bass, Cecil Smith on drums, Vicky Schwartz on accordion and Beattie Benjamin on vocals.<sup>471</sup>
38. The Bluemoon Ballroom Band founded by Attie Davis on alto saxophone, after he closed the band he played for the Willie Max Ballroom Band. Later after closing another band in 1968 Attie Davis went to play for the New Ballerinas.<sup>472</sup>
39. The Gay Swingsters.
40. The Joe Ulster Dance Band started by Joe Ulster.
41. The Ballerinas Dance Band with Dickie Swartz as leader.
42. The Gemstones Dance Band with Willie van Bloemestein on drums.<sup>473</sup>
43. The Enterprise Dance Band started by Cecil Martin with Willie van Bloemestein on drums, Gary Kriel on guitar.<sup>474</sup>
44. The Omega Dance Band.
45. The Cliff Davis Dance Band.<sup>475</sup>
46. The Young Rhythm Chordettes started in Langa in 1958.
47. The Blue Gardenias Dance Band from Retreat in the Southern Suburbs.<sup>476</sup>
48. The Noel Connolly Dance Band.<sup>477</sup>
49. The Melodics Dance Band started in 1959 in Sir Lowry's Pass village by Jack Paulse and Maurice Petersen.<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>469</sup> Willie Jales, foolscap notes, '2/2/2000 Wed', The Willie Jales Collection.

<sup>470</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, p. 15.

<sup>471</sup> Jimmy Adams, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town, op. cit.*, pp. 10-11; Henry February, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town, op. cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>472</sup> Willie Jales, foolscap notes, 'Ivan Davis, Re-Attie Davis', The Willie Jales Collection.

<sup>473</sup> Willie van Bloemestein, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town, op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>474</sup> Gary Hendrickse, interviewed by Lars Rasmussen in *Jazz People of Cape Town, op. cit.*, p. 95.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>478</sup> Clive Paulse, interviewed by the author, 27 November 2015.

## In the 1960s:

50. The Willie and the Starlite Orchestra.
51. The Sonny Peterson Dance Band.
52. The Young Broadways started in Grabouw by Kallie Joorst on banjo.<sup>479</sup>
53. The Telstars started and lead by Les Steiger on alto saxophone.<sup>480</sup>
54. The Alpha Rhythms started by Ben Lodewyk as leader.<sup>481</sup>
55. The New Ballerinas started by Louis Rhode.
56. The Blue Note Dance Band.
57. The Kay Simmons Dance Band.
58. The Neville Corker Dance Band.
59. The Hannes Van Rooyen Dance Band.
60. The Rudi Daames Dance Band from Worcester.
61. The Broadway Dance Band from Strand with Dougie McClons as leader on saxophone.
62. Les Versatiles.
63. The Gallotone Hotshots with Christy Arendse.<sup>482</sup>

## In the 1970s:

64. The Strand Combo started in Strand in 1977 by Herbert and Kenny Wentzel Wentzel. (Still active)
65. The Bobby Hendricks Sound from Caledon.
66. The Cupido Brothers Band.
67. The Family Affair Dance Band.
68. The Regents.
69. The Montreal Sounds from Strand were formed by lead guitarist Geoffery October. Members included Moiëd Gordon on drums, Jan Europa on bass, John Hartnick, Vincent Smith and Tony Revell on keyboards, Johannes Swartland on rhythm guitar and Sulaiman Kassiem on lead alto saxophone. Jimmy Adams would play alto saxophone for them in the late 1990s.
70. The Savoy Dance Band.
71. The Del Monica Dance Band started by Eddie George.
72. The Dallas Dance Band.
73. Danny's Rhythm Combo from Worcester with Danny Apollis on saxophone.
74. The Golden Sounds started in 1976, with Wally Witbooi as leader with Ruddy Hendricks on 1<sup>st</sup> alto saxophone, Neville Lewis on 2<sup>nd</sup> alto saxophone, Errol Carelse on 1<sup>st</sup> tenor saxophone, Wally Witbooi on 2<sup>nd</sup> tenor saxophone, Pat Tembe on piano, Chris Adams on guitar, Keith David on bass and Raymond Davis on drums.<sup>483</sup>

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<sup>479</sup> Vernon Joorst, , interviewed by the author, 19 August 2016.

<sup>480</sup> Les Steiger, *op. cit.*, transcript, p 32.

<sup>481</sup> Willie Jales, foolscap notes, '2/2/2000 Wed. Dickie Swartz Re Ballerinas Dance Band', the Willie Jales Collection.

<sup>482</sup> Willie Jales, foolscap notes, 'Dance Bands', the Willie Jales Collection.

<sup>483</sup> The Golden Sounds, 'Presenting: The Golden Sounds', LP Record Cover, District Six Museum Archive.

75. The Worcesterians Jazz Dance Band, with Louis 'Boetie Bas' Efta the leader on organ, Davey Van Wyk on saxophone, Jeffery Goliath on saxophone and trumpet, Adam 'Pierring' Baadjies on banjo, Christie 'Dolla' Appolis on drums, Cyril Lucas on lead guitar, Adam Fransman, on rhythm guitar and Peter le Roux on bass guitar.<sup>484</sup>
76. Narina Brass from Worcester with Johnny Apollis as leader on alto saxophone.
77. The Persuaders
78. The Eldorado Dance Band

### **In the 1980s:**

79. Jimmy's Grand Six with Jimmy Newman as leader on alto saxophone.
80. The Elginaires Dance Band started in Grabouw in 1983 by Oom Kallie Joorst on banjo, with sons Anthony on alto saxophone, Vernon on bass and Johnny on drums. Earlier members included Moiëd Gordon on drums, Raymond Petersen on guitar, Karin Kortjie on vocals. (active)
81. The Modernaires with Kenneth Church on alto and tenor saxophones, McDonald Arendse on keyboards, Julius Albert Roach on lead guitar, Errol Isaacs on rhythm guitar, Arthur Van Reenen on bass guitar, Alistair Ludick on drums and Emmanuel Gomez on percussion.
82. Gloworm with Frank Bezuidenhout on alto saxophone.
83. The Kinsmen.
84. The Rhythm Kings.

### **In the 1990s:**

85. Backchat with Willie Jales on alto saxophone, Denis Mitchell on piano and Joe Schaffers on vocals.
86. The District Six Museum Band with Willie Jales on alto saxophone, Valmont Layne on guitar, Mac McKenzie on guitar and banjo, Hilton Schilder on keyboards, Robert Sithole on pennywhistles and Alex van Heerden on accordion and trumpet. The Band took part in a cultural exchange in Hong Kong in November 2002.
87. Mystique Dance Band. (Active until late 2000s)
88. The Cool Sounds Dance Band started by China van Rensberg on drums and vocals with Gavin Davis on guitar. (active)

### **In the 2000s:**

89. Kallie's Dance Band from Grabouw with Clive Paulse on alto saxophone. (active)
90. The Rainbow Connection.<sup>485</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> The Worcesterians Jazz Dance Band, *'The Worcesterians Jazz Dance Band: Wonderland by night'*, LP Record Cover, District Six Museum Archive.

<sup>485</sup> Vernon Joorst, interviewed by the author, 19 August 2016.

91. The Emeralds.<sup>486</sup>
92. The Top Five (active)
93. The Five Stars Dance Band started by Gavin Davis on guitar. (active)
94. The Trevarians Dance Band. (active)
95. The Sweet Sounds. (active)<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>486</sup> Gavin Davis, interviewed by the author, 24 July 2015.

<sup>487</sup> Shireen Steenekamp, interviewed by the author, 29 May 2016.

## ADDENDUM 2

### Discography

Harlem Darkies, *Hier Kom Die Klopse & Karnival Jol*, Captain-William Lewis, Melody Music, Trutone, RA 197 (4350. X; 4351), (78 RPM), 1955.

Harmony Kings, *Ballroom Favorites*, Produced by Wally Webb and Harold Gilbert, Warner Bros Records, WBH 7702, 1974.

Ikey Gamba Orchestra, *Strike Up The Band*, Tusk Music Company, 1989.

Jimmy's Grand Six, *That's what friends are for*, Produced by Robbie Woodward, Gallo/GRC, COL 40123, 1986.

Jimmy's Grand Six, *We wish you a merry xmas*, Produced by Robbie Woodward, Gallo/GRC, COL 40124, 1986.

Jimmy's Grand Six, *My Mother's Eyes*, Produced by Robbie Woodward, Gallo/GRC, COL 40197, 1989.

Les Versatiles, *Somewhere Between*, Music Incorporated Pty Ltd., CCP/EMI, MINC (E) 1052, 1982.

Nerina Brass, *Let's Dance*, Produced by Johnny Apollis EMI, EMCJ (E) 11527

The Blue Gardenias, *Partytime!* CBS LAB 4045.

The Bobby Hendricks Sound Dance Band, *Gentle on my Mind*, Produced by Bobby Hendricks, A Vortex Production.

The Bobby Hendricks Sound, *Too Soon To Know*, A Vortex Production, Trio Records Pty, Ltd., VLP (0) 0042.

The Bobby Hendricks Sound, *Down Memory Lane*, Produced by Gerry Sloan, Teal Record Company, TEL 2141, 29 September 1986.

The Bobby Hendricks Sound, *My Love*, Produced by Bobby Hendricks, Teal Trutone Music, 3 April 1989.

The Bobby Hendricks Sound, *Driving Home For Christmas*, Produced by Bobby Hendricks, Teal Trutone Music, Dephon Music, 1989.

The Collins Dance Orchestra, *Invitation to dance to the Collins Dance Orchestra*, circa late 1960s. (Collins Dance Orchestra 1<sup>st</sup> LP)

The Collins Dance Orchestra, *At Home with the The Collins Dance Orchestra featuring Tafelberg Quadrille*, CBS LAB 4058.

The Dallas Dance Band, *In the Mood for Dancing*, Produced by Gerry Barnard, Trio Records Pty Ltd.,

The Golden Sounds, *Presenting: The Golden Sounds*, Produced by Harold "Fish" Gilbert, WEA Records Pty Ltd.

The Melodics Dance Band, *Party Time*, Produced by Gerry Sloan, Teal Record Company Ltd., 1979.

The Montreal Sounds, *Almost have it all..*, Umkhonto Records, RPM Record Co Pty Ltd., KHON 1016.

The Montreal Sounds, *Especially For You*, Produced by Geoffrey October, Umkhonto Records, RPM Record Co Pty Ltd., KHON 1040, 1989.

The New Ballerinas, *Swing to The New Ballerinas*, The Gramophone Record Company Ltd., 1974.

The Philadelphia Rhythms, *For The Good Times*, Produced by Butch Bottaro, Teal WRC, ORL 7701, 1974.

The Strand Combo, *Sunshine*, the CCP Record Company,

The Worcesterians Jazz Dance Band, *Wonderland by Night*, Produced by Richard Black, WEA International.

Willie's Starlite Orchestra, *Strictly by Starlite*, Trutone, LP 702 (355502), October 1973.

Willie's Starlite Combo and Orchestra, *Willie's Party!* Produced by Lawrence Koonin, A Logo Motif Production, 1974.

Willie's Starlite Combo and Orchestra, *Another Willie's Party!* Produced by Lawrence Koonin, A Logo Motif Production, 1976.

*A Night to Remember: 20 Great Dance Hits*, featuring Nerina Brass, Persuaders, Eldorado Dance Band, A.C.C.P. Record and Tape Release, CCP (M) 1014, 1981.