

# On Record

POPULAR AFRIKAANS  
MUSIC & SOCIETY

1900-2017

S.D. VAN DER MERWE



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SUN PRESS



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**POPULAR ARIKAANS  
MUSIC & SOCIETY**

1900-2017

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VAN DER MERWE

ELEKTRIESE VERVAARDIGING

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*To Ilse and Valki*

# INTRODUCTION

## Kent gij dat volk vol heldenmoed en toch zo lank geknecht?<sup>1</sup>

These are the well-known opening lines of the national anthem of the erstwhile Transvaal Republic. Invoking it here is not intended as a form of praise for what others have surmised as “one of the greatest national anthems of all time”<sup>2</sup> or to set a hagiographic tone to Afrikaner<sup>3</sup> history. Rather, it is to quote the first two lines ever recorded of a piece of music with Afrikaner roots.<sup>4</sup> In January 1900 three European singers of no particular renown each made a recording of the song – J.C. van den Berg in The Hague, and Ewald Brückner and H. Cornelli in Berlin. On the same day that Van den Berg visited the studio in The Hague, E. Spieksma also went there to record two other songs with Boer origins – “Transvaal en Nederland” and “Volklied van den Oranje Vrijstaat”, the national anthem of the other Boer republic, the Orange Free State.

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1 Trans. “Do you know the nation full of heroes and yet so long enslaved?”

2 A. M. Swanepoel, “Music inspired by the Afrikaner cause (1852–1902), with special reference to the Transvaal Volklied”, Unpublished M. Thesis (University of South Africa, 1979).

3 It has become custom to qualify the term “Afrikaner”. It is used here as a description of someone who is white and speaks Afrikaans. Certainly not all white Afrikaans speakers self-identify as “Afrikaners”, but preference is given to “Afrikaner” and not “white Afrikaans speaker” since the former has historical traction and has served as a nucleus around which such things as “Afrikaner nationalism” was formed. It also suggests racial exclusivity and a racial hierarchy that has been at the centre of Afrikaans language politics and has some direct bearing on the contents of this book. It is also important to point out that white Afrikaans speakers, despite having historically claimed curatorship over the language, constitute a minority (about 40%) of all first-language Afrikaans speakers.

4 Ian Colquhoun recorded “We are marching to Pretoria” in 1899, which is, as far as can be ascertained, the earliest reference to South Africa in recorded music. In this case, of course, the roots lie with the British.



These were the first Africana gramophone recordings, more Dutch than Afrikaans, yet marking an inadvertent start to the Afrikaans recording industry. Why did they choose to record these songs? Were they expressing some form of solidarity with, or appreciation for, the Boers who were fighting the British on the faraway fronts of the Anglo-Boer War? It is commonly known that the two Boer republics had at least the moral support of many Europeans at the time. More than one hundred years later, in October 2006, the fastest selling debut album in Afrikaans music history was released. Its popularity was due to a hit song named after a Boer general in the very same war and bore a remarkable similarity to the sentiments of Van den Berg, Brückner, Cornelli and Spieksma. That song was “De la Rey” by singer Bok van Blerk. Of course, a lot happened between 1900 and 2006. Anyone even remotely familiar with the history of South Africa in the twentieth century would be aware of the racist politics of apartheid, its abolition, and subsequent transition into democracy in 1994. It is therefore a curious feature of Afrikaner society in a post-apartheid context that the invocation if not literally, then metaphorically, of *volk vol heldenmoed en toch zo lank geknecht*, would resonate the way it did. Or perhaps not. *Volk* infers Afrikaner nationhood and hegemony, a charged, but not extinct, feature of South African history.

The link between music and nationhood is nothing new and was already a topic for discussion in ancient Greece. In Plato’s *The Republic IV*, Socrates, in his conversation with Adeimantus, echoed Damon’s belief that “When modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the State change with them.”<sup>5</sup> Whether or not this was a slight exaggeration – after all, he came to roughly the same conclusion regarding gymnastics – or a gross oversimplification, there have been a number of historic periods where social change resonated with the music of the time. The social movements of the 1960s and their links to popular music (Bob Dylan comes to mind) serve as a good example. Being both a historian and a musician, these links have interested me for a long time.

As a first-year at Stellenbosch University in 1995, I joined an experimental prog rock student band called the Wild Possums and my first show with them was an opening slot for legendary Voëlvry<sup>6</sup> rocker/poet Koos Kombuis. Despite running up an almighty bill on his drinks tab (we were the *Wild Possums* after all) and playing quite badly, he invited us onstage to join him in his song “Katie”. It might not have been a highlight in the history of South African music performance, but it was a momentous occasion for me. What I failed to realise at the time was that I had by pure chance stumbled into an especially vibrant Stellenbosch music scene (for a while, radio DJs jokingly called it “Stellenattle”, after the grunge explosion out of Seattle in the early 1990s) that was thriving in the newly democratic South Africa. The scene was led by local rock band Springbok Nude Girls (all five members were Afrikaans, but the songs in English), and singer/songwriter Valiant Swart who was quickly gaining a national following with his Afrikaans blues rock, or as he calls it, “Boland Punk”. “Dagga” Dirk Uys, organiser and road manager of the Voëlvry tour, founded the Trippy Grape record company, signed numerous local

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5 This translation seems to have become the most popular version quoted in a range of material, from mother’s blogs to websites on music education and even Christian pamphlets. For anyone interested in other translations, the line is 424 c in Plato’s *The Republic, Book IV*.

6 Voëlvry (“Free as a bird”, among other possible connotations that will be discussed later) was a rebellious and anti-regime Afrikaans rock movement/music tour in 1989 with artists Johannes Kerckorrel, James Phillips (singing as his Afrikaans stage persona, Bernoldus Niemand) and André Letoit (later Koos Kombuis) at its centre.

bands and organised the yearly *Wingerdrock* music festivals (1995–1998, and again in 2003). Although the Wild Possums quickly faded, I was lucky enough to find humble employment with other bands in the scene and with a mixture of English and Afrikaans solo artists over the next 20 years. I cannot say with any certainty how many shows I have played, or how many albums, festivals and tours there were. Suffice to say it has kept me busy enough.

This book, however, is not a biography of the artists I have worked with, or, heaven forbid, an autobiography of my career as bassist. It is also not about South African jazz, *marabi*, *kwela*,<sup>7</sup> *mbube*, *mbaqanga*, *maskandi*, *isicathamiya*, hip hop or *kwaito*. These are all dynamic music genres developed by local black and coloured musicians and have long been favoured topics for scholars interested in South African popular music and resistance.<sup>8</sup> This book stems from being embedded in a specific section of the Afrikaans music industry and observing over a long period how its music is produced, performed and consumed by everyday people.

The hundreds of Afrikaans concerts and arts festivals (and I employ a broad definition here to include festivals that are more ‘local variety’ than ‘art’) I have been to over the years exposed me to a number of mainstream Afrikaans pop stars who make a very good living from touring the circuit in South Africa, often armed with just a microphone and backtracks (the practice of singing along to pre-recorded music instead of using live musicians). The enthusiastic audiences that await them in the cities as well as many rural towns large enough to host such events are almost exclusively white and regularly number in their thousands. Admittedly, having listened to them, I have often wondered why some Afrikaans pop artists were doing so well while many of the best (to my mind) songwriters in Afrikaans were struggling. Plainly put, as someone who has mostly been on the rock periphery looking in, I was struggling to understand the dynamics of the cultural buy-in into mainstream Afrikaans pop music by so many Afrikaners. Although one’s own normative judgement is hardly a valid epistemological point of departure for what is supposed to be an objective work, it has remained one of my primary motivations for this book. Fortunately, it was rewarding since the social dynamics of mainstream Afrikaans music, especially towards the end of apartheid and beyond, represent a confluence of wider social issues and tensions that are deserving of closer scrutiny.

Furthermore, these relationships offer an alternative glimpse into the lives of Afrikaans speakers away from key political and economic events and elite individuals, and attest to the agency of artists and ‘ordinary’ individuals. Considering the interaction of these ‘normal people’ with dynamic, external structures of power and influence is fundamentally important to understanding the development of Afrikaans culture throughout the twentieth century. It is also a necessary exercise when considering language and cultural identities today.

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7 Although it does touch on *kwela*’s influence on Afrikaans music.

8 For example, see V. Erlmann, *Nightsong: performance, power, and practice in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) on *isicathamiya* and *African stars: studies in black South African performance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) on early ragtime, *ingoma*, and *isicathamiya*; C. Devroop and C. Walton (eds.), *Unsung: South African jazz musicians under Apartheid* (Stellenbosch: SUN PReSS, 2007) on jazz, as well as G. Ansell, *Soweto blues: jazz, popular music, and politics in South Africa* (New York, Continuum, 2004) which also looks at other popular music styles; D. Coplan, *In township tonight! South Africa’s black city music and theatre* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985) on black performing arts and L. Meintjies, *Sounds of Africa!: Making music Zulu in a South African studio* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) on the studio production of a *mbaqanga* album; and also C.A. Muller, *Focus: music of South Africa* (New York: Routledge, 2008) on popular music in South Africa during the twentieth century.

The primary focus here is on recorded Afrikaans music, since records are surprisingly useful sources which function as artefacts that reflect – to varying degrees – the relationship between the individuals who produce and/or consume them and the societies with which they associate themselves. In short, there are links between the music people listen to (and buy) and the society (or specific part of society) they live in. And also, recorded music, with its ability to be heard over the radio and television (both were heavily contested mediums in the South African context) and reach hundreds of thousands of listeners, historically functioned on a much larger scale and under different conditions from unrecorded music. Of course, the story of popular Afrikaans music is complicated, in no small part due to the socio-political context of its development. Research on the trove of Afrikaans cultural treasures locked in the unrecorded music of the *platteland* (rural areas) and also in the history of the Cape in particular will undoubtedly focus more on the music of coloured and black Afrikaans speakers. Therein lies one of the central focus points of this book – the way in which recorded popular Afrikaans music reflected and accommodated the wider narrative of racial separation and white domination in South African society. To a great extent then, commercial Afrikaans music records have functioned as artefacts that portray a history of white leisure.

### A fragmented historiography

A quick glance at the literature reveals a surprising lack of comprehensive studies of wide historical span. One potted version is the Gallo Record Company archivist Rob Allingham's insightful summary of the history of popular Afrikaans music in his contribution to the African, European and Middle Eastern section in *World Music: The Rough Guide*.<sup>9</sup> On one page, he highlights many of the most important historical themes in the development of popular Afrikaans music in the twentieth century. These include the influence of imported American music on the “concertina-led brand of dance-music” of the 1930s (and later country music), the background of Afrikaner nationalism, the post-war imitation of middle-of-the-road European light music styles, the emergence of alternative Afrikaans music during the 1980s and 1990s, and the link between music revivalists and right-wing politics after 1994. This is a commendable feat. Were it published ten years later, it would undoubtedly also have included the success story of Afrikaans pop music after 2000 and the impact of “De la Rey”. Another example is the 2003 documentary, *Kom laat ons sing*, presented and co-produced by singer Laurika Rauch.<sup>10</sup> Although its main focus is *Musiek-en-Liriek* (“Music and Lyric” – referring to a TV-programme aired in 1979 and the subsequent music phase), it also provides a wider historical perspective on popular Afrikaans music from the 1930s to the 1990s. A number of the artists interviewed talked of the tension between the more ‘serious’ artists and the pop mainstream, especially when it came to translating European hits into Afrikaans, as the latter was (and still is today) wont to do. There was also a longstanding belief that one could not make good music in Afrikaans, a view that only started to change with *Musiek-en-Liriek*, while there was also a general consensus that apartheid and censorship prohibited a lot of music innovation and that the post-apartheid era represents a time of liberation from these restrictive circumstances.

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

10 Laurika Rauch, Johan Badenhorst and Annelize Bothma: “Kom laat ons sing: ’n musikale reis deur Laurika Rauch – ’n Dokumentêr”, (Laurika Rauch Produksies, 2003).

Neither Allingham's summary nor *Kom laat ons sing* inspected the era before the 1930s and, because of their times of publication, did not get to comment on the more recent developments in popular Afrikaans music.

Pat Hopkins's book on the Voëlvry tour,<sup>11</sup> and the accompanying DVD produced by Shifty Records boss Lloyd Ross, also refers to the historical relationship between Afrikaner nationalism and Afrikaans music. It does well to position the Voëlvry artists against a background of a conservative Afrikaner society with deep historic roots that spread beyond the 1980s. Koos Kombuis's *Sex, drugs en boeremusiek*<sup>12</sup> and *Short drive to freedom*<sup>13</sup> also give autobiographical accounts of his experiences as part of Voëlvry. Slabbert and De Villiers's *David Kramer, 'n Biografie* is an authoritative source on the influential artist, David Kramer.<sup>14</sup> Then there are works like Danie Pretorius's *Musieksterre van gister en vandag: Lewensketse En Foto's Van Meer as 100 Musieksterre*<sup>15</sup> and Ilza Roggeband's *50 Stemme: Die grootste name in Afrikaanse musiek*<sup>16</sup> that provide interesting biographic and discographic information about prominent Afrikaans singers, but do not necessarily place them in their respective social contexts. A rare example of an academic investigation into popular Afrikaans music is Willemien Froneman's musicological work on *boeremusiek*,<sup>17</sup> which is of special significance for the period from the 1930s to the 1950s, when it was one of the most popular genres of recorded Afrikaans music. Wilhelm Schultz's work on the origins of *boeremusiek*, which contains a section on the earlier history of the recording industry in South Africa, is also informative.<sup>18</sup> Other recent musicological studies have focused on the historiography of classical Afrikaans music during and preceding apartheid,<sup>19</sup> but not *popular* Afrikaans music per se.

Denis-Constant Martin's *Sounding the Cape* is a notable work that provides a long historical account of the social complexities that played a role in the development of music traditions in the Cape and beyond. It pays detailed attention to the enormous cultural contributions of coloured and black musicians across a variety of genres and also highlights the role of racial segregation in breaking musical relations that have historically transcended such boundaries. One of its greatest achievements is to bridge the lasting insularity that persists in the music industry to give a comprehensive and balanced view of the music of the Cape. The focus of this book, however, is not balanced in such a way. Its purpose is to inspect and critique the very insularity of popular Afrikaans music. This insularity is the result of the influence of history on the one hand, but also indicative of contemporary political and societal forces.

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

12 *Seks, drugs en boeremusiek: die memoires van 'n volksverraaier* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 2000).

13 *Short drive to freedom: a personal perspective on the Afrikaans rock rebellion* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 2009).

14 (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2011).

15 (Pretoria: JP & Son van der Walt, 1998).

16 (Cape Town: Delta, 2009).

17 W. Froneman, "Pleasure Beyond the Call of Duty: Perspectives, Retrospectives and Speculations on Boeremusiek", (Unpublished D.Phil thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2012). See also S.H.R. Louw, "Nico Carstens as innoveerder van Suid-Afrikaanse populêre musiek", (Unpublished M.Mus dissertation, University of the Free State, 2013). *Boeremusiek* literally translates as "Farmer's music" – a music genre known for its use of the concertina.

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

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

While there is a lack of studies on popular Afrikaans music that employ a *wide* historical lens, there is a substantial body of academic work on popular Afrikaans music that have more specific foci. Recently, the controversial *zef* (“common” or working class) rap group, Die Antwoord, has attracted wide academic interest. Borrowing much from coloured and black gangster culture even though they are white, Die Antwoord’s appropriation of the cultural practices of the ‘other’ was the topic of discussion in a special roundtable edition in the journal *Safundi*.<sup>20</sup> Other articles on Die Antwoord have focussed on issues of authenticity, whiteness, cultural appropriation and the like.<sup>21</sup> Adam Haupt has looked at both Bok van Blerk and Die Antwoord (specifically the latter’s use of blackface) while exploring issues of race and agency in post-apartheid music, media and film.<sup>22</sup> Their South African working class image, mixed with a rich display of gangster culture in an urban African setting is exotic for an international audience, and an integral part of their success. However, apart from their name, their use of Afrikaans is sporadic, and they do not really fit comfortably under the banner of Afrikaans music, however vague that might sound. As a result, they feature only briefly in chapter seven.

Voëlvrý, on the other hand, has direct bearing here and apart from Hopkins’s book, Jury,<sup>23</sup> Grundlingh,<sup>24</sup> Bosman,<sup>25</sup> Viljoen<sup>26</sup>, Laubscher,<sup>27</sup> Suriano and Lewis,<sup>28</sup> and Baines<sup>29</sup> have all also focused either on the movement directly, or the artists associated with it. This interest stems from the overt political protest in their music – a rare thing in popular Afrikaans music prior to the movement. Typically, protest singers, poets (through literature studies of their lyrics), or Afrikaans music movements tend to dominate discourse on popular Afrikaans music.<sup>30</sup> As a result, artists like Koos Kombuis, Johannes Kerkerrel (and later bands like Afrikaans punk rock

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- 20 A. Haupt, “Part IV: Is Die Antwoord Blackface?” *Safundi* 13: 3-4 (2012), pp. 417–423; A. Kreuger, “Part II: *Zef*/ Poor White Kitsch Chique: Die Antwoord’s Comedy of Degradation”, *Safundi* 13: 3-4 (2012), pp. 399-408; S. O’Toole, “Part I: Die Antwoord’s state of exception”, *Safundi* 13: 3–4 (2012), pp. 393– 399; L. Van der Watt, “Part III: Ask no questions, hear no lies: Staying on Die Antwoord’s surface”, *Safundi* 13: 3-4 (2012), pp. 409–416.
- 21 H. Marx, and V.C. Milton, “Bastardised whiteness: ‘zef’-culture, *Die Antwoord* and the reconfiguration of contemporary Afrikaans identities”, *Social Identities* 17: 60 (2011), pp. 723-745; C. Scott, “Die Antwoord and a delegitimised South African whiteness: a potential counter-narrative?”, *Critical Arts* 26: 5 (2012), pp. 746-761; A. Haupt, “Citizenship without representation? Blackface, misogyny and parody in Die Antwoord, Lupé Fiasco and Angel Haze”, *Communicatio* 39: 4 (2013), pp. 466-482; S. Smit, “Enter the imperceptible: Reading Die Antwoord”, *Cogent Arts and Humanities* 2: 1 (2015), pp. 1-9.
- 22 *Static: Race and Representation in Post-Apartheid Music, Media and Film* (Cape town: HSRC Press, 2012).
- 23 B. Jury, “Boys to Men: Afrikaans Alternative Popular Music, 1986–1990”, *African Languages and Cultures* 9:2 (1996), pp. 99-109.
- 24 A. Grundlingh, “Rocking the boat? The ‘Voëlvrý’ music movement in South Africa: Anatomy of Afrikaans anti-apartheid social protest in the eighties”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 37: 3 (2004), pp. 483-514.
- 25 M. Bosman, “Die FAK-Fenomeen: populêre Afrikaanse musiek en volksliedjies”, *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* 41:2 (2004), pp. 21-46.
- 26 M. Viljoen, “Johannes Kerkerrel and post-apartheid Afrikaner identity”, *Literator* 26:3 (2005), pp. 65-81.
- 27 L. Laubscher, “Afrikaner identity and the music of Johannes Kerkerrel”, pp. 308-330.
- 28 M. Suriano and C. Lewis, “*Afrikaners is Plesierig!* Voëlvrý Music, Anti-apartheid Identities and Rockey Street Nightclubs in Yeoville (Johannesburg), 1980s–90s”, *African Studies*, 74:3 (2015), pp. 404-428.
- 29 “Popular Music and Negotiating Whiteness in Apartheid South Africa”, in G. Olwage (Ed.), *Composing Apartheid: Music for and Against Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), p. 108. Baines also looked at the satirical elements in work of David Kramer that undermined whiteness during the 1980s.
- 30 B.A. Senekal and C. van den Berg, “n Voorlopige verkenning van postapartheid Afrikaanse protesmusiek”, *LitNet Akademies* 7:2 (2010), pp. 98-128.

group, Fokofpolisiekar),<sup>31</sup> have featured more in academic work. “De la Rey” has also attracted much scholarly attention over the last decade.<sup>32</sup> The song provided an irresistible opportunity to look at the relationship between popular music and Afrikaner identities and their relation to the past. What brought the song to the attention of so many was its reference to the Anglo-Boer War general, Koos de la Rey, the fact that it was the fastest selling debut Afrikaans album in history, and that it seemed to have struck an undeniable chord with Afrikaners. Among all the complexities surrounding the “casting off of old identity moorings”, to paraphrase Leswin Laubscher,<sup>33</sup> here was a song that brought many Afrikaners together. This level of popularity led to some concluding that it had become a symbol of Afrikaner unity in a time when there were precious few cultural spaces – apart from sport and *braais* (barbeques) – left in post-apartheid South Africa that enjoyed the support of a significant percentage of Afrikaners. It also sparked widespread comment in the media and academia on various aspects of Afrikaner identity, leading to debates on whether or not Afrikaner nationalism was again on the rise and if this was a form of guilt-free assertion of an identity with its roots in a time when the Afrikaner was the victim, not perpetrator.<sup>34</sup> Right-wing Afrikaner groups attempting to hijack the song as a call to arms aside (and from whom Van Blerk publicly distanced himself),<sup>35</sup> there seemed to be a sudden awareness of a wider cohesive element in Afrikaner society. Judging by population figures, and assuming (for no other purpose than speculation) that its popularity was limited to white Afrikaans speakers, then roughly one out of every ten bought the album. It was even featured in the *New York Times*<sup>36</sup> and was briefly discussed in parliament.<sup>37</sup>

While it is understandable that the song attracted the attention it has, its popularity was not extraordinary if seen in the wider context of commercial/mainstream<sup>38</sup> Afrikaans music. In fact,

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- 31 A.E. Kloppe, “Die opkoms van Afrikaanse rock en die Literêre status van liriek, met spesifieke verwysing na Fokofpolisiekar”, (MA Dissertation, Stellenbosch University, March 2009); as well as *Biografie van 'n bende: Die storie van Fokofpolisiekar* (Cape Town: Protea, 2011).
- 32 See K. du Pisani, “Puritanism transformed: Afrikaner Masculinities in the Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Period”, in R. Morrell (ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Durban: Zed Books, 2001), pp. 157-175; D. Pretorius, “The Visual Representations of Masculinities in Huisgenoot Tempo Magazine”, *COMMUNICATIO* 39:2 (2013), pp. 210-232, A. Bezuidenhout, “From Voëlvry to De La Rey: Popular Music, Afrikaner Nationalism and lost irony”, Stellenbosch University seminar, 2007; G. Baines, “De La Rey Rides (Yet) Again: Afrikaner Identity Politics and Nostalgia in Post-Apartheid South Africa”, Paper presented to the IASPM Conference, Liverpool, July 2009; D. Roodt, “The ‘De la Rey’ Song: Is it a sign of Afrikaner resistance?”, *American Renaissance* 18:10 (2007); M. Wines, “Song Wakens Injured Pride of Afrikaners”, *New York Times*, 17 Feb, 2007; L. Lambrechts and J. Visagie, “De la Rey, De la Rey, sal jy die boere kom lei?”, *Litnet Akademies* 6:2 (2009); C. Lotter, “The De la Rey Phenomenon – More than a Song?”, *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* 7:2 (2007), available at <https://voices.no/index.php/voices/article/view/490/397>, accessed 10 April 2012.
- 33 L. Laubscher, “Afrikaner identity and the music of Johannes Kerkorrel”, *South African Journal of Psychology* 35:2 (2005), p. 308.
- 34 Bezuidenhout, “From Voëlvry to De La Rey”, p. 4; see also K. van der Waal and S. Robins, “‘De la Rey’ and the Revival of ‘Boer Heritage’: Nostalgia in the Postapartheid Afrikaner Culture Industry”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37:4 (2011), pp. 763-779.
- 35 Bezuidenhout, “From Voëlvry to De La Rey”, p. 3.
- 36 M. Wines, *New York Times*, 17 Feb, 2007.
- 37 *Ibid.*
- 38 There is no clear definition of “commercial” or “mainstream” music and it is used here to describe the top-selling section of popular Afrikaans music, rather than a specific genre. Stylistically, “mainstream” has always been diverse, but has tended to be dominated by pop music styles, rather than say, Afrikaans rock, which tends to have a smaller audience. The dynamics of writing, recording and releasing popular Afrikaans music that caters for a wide market is determined by the tastes of that market. Historically, this market was subject to different social forces during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries which will be discussed in the following chapters.

several artists have released albums that have sold just as many, or more, copies than “De la Rey”, but the connection between them and how representative they are of specifically white Afrikanerhood still needs to be placed in context. The post-apartheid era especially has seen a boom in the Afrikaans music industry, but there is no academic discourse on, for instance, Theuns Jordaan’s albums *Vreemde Stad* and *Tjailatyd*, both selling more than 200 000 copies. Or of Steve Hofmeyr’s *Toeka*, (with the hit, “Pampoen” that sold more than 200 000 copies).<sup>39</sup> Robbie Wessels also had a hit in the same year “De la Rey” was released, called “Die Leeuloop”, from the album *Halley se Komeet*, which sold more than 100 000 copies.<sup>40</sup> Juanita du Plessis had a massive hit with “Ska Rumba”, as did Kurt Darren with “Meisie Meisie” (Girl Girl) and “Kaptein” (Captain) – the albums featuring these songs also sold more than 100 000 copies each. Leon Schuster’s “Hier Kommie Bokke” sold an estimated 275 000 copies in 1995 when South Africa hosted the Rugby World Cup. Stylistically, these artists represent different styles – Theuns Jordaan and Bok van Blerk, for instance, lean more toward Afrikaans folk-rock, while Kurt Darren sings straight-up Afrikaans dance pop. “Ska Rumba” is also a pop tune, while “Die Leeuloop” is comedic and “Pampoen” a more nostalgic song. “Hier Kommie Bokke” is, for want of a better description, rugby-pop (and South Africa is probably one of the very few countries in which such a genre would sell ...). To provide a complete and acceptable spectrum of the different music genres released by Afrikaans recording artists would, in my opinion, be a futile exercise. Boundaries blur and opinions differ too much.<sup>41</sup> What these artists do have in common however, is their enormous popularity among white Afrikaans speakers.

Historically speaking, these Afrikaans artists are not the only ones that have sold well. Bles Bridges was one of the most popular Afrikaans singers of the 1980s and 1990s. Nico Carstens had a very long career and is probably the all-time best-selling Afrikaans music artist (although strictly speaking, he was an instrumentalist who employed singers on his records). He sold an incredible 1000 000 LPs in less than five years during the late 1950s alone. Al Debbo had a massive hit with Carstens and Anton de Waal’s first co-write, “Hasië”, which sold more than 100 000 copies in the early 1950s. Die Briels released very popular sentimental songs during the 1950s and 1960s. Other big names include Gé Korsten who rose to prominence during the 1960s and had a top seller with Min Shaw in the soundtrack to the movie *Hoor my lied*, in 1968. Shaw herself had a very successful music partnership with country singer Lance James during the 1960s. Groep Twee, with Gert van Tonder and Sias Reinecke, had many hits during the 1960s and 1970s. Hendrik Susan was extremely popular between the late 1930s and early 1950s. During the 1930s, Chris Blygnaut (who also went on to sell more than a million albums) and David de Lange (who sold in excess of 300 000 copies of “Suikerbossie” in 1936) were the big names in Afrikaans music. Cissie and Willie Cooper were also important during this era, as was Danie Bosman. There is a need to link the mainstream Afrikaans music stars of the post-apartheid era with these artists.

Although very popular, not everyone appreciated (or appreciates today) the Afrikaans music mainstream. Jury and Byerly have mentioned it in passing, accompanied by unflattering adjectives

39 I. Roggeband, *50 Stemme: Die grootste name in Afrikaanse musiek* (Cape Town: Delta, 2009), p. 241.

40 T. Ridgeway, “Is Local nog lekker?”, *Pomp*, 2011, p. 145.

41 For an informative analysis of the problematic definition of ‘pop’ and ‘popular’ music, see C. Rojec, *Pop Music, Pop Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011).

such as “trite and banal”,<sup>42</sup> and “bland”,<sup>43</sup> but their respective studies focused specifically on the most superficial Afrikaans pop stars of the latter years of apartheid. From an artistic point of view, these opinions might have some merit, but they do not take into account the social significance of mainstream Afrikaans music. While the existing discourse is by no means irrelevant, and often motivated by a search for dynamic cultural processes, it runs the risk of accepting the mainstream as static and meaningless, which is problematic. The artists representing this group have been much more successful in packaging “desire” – to borrow from Michael Drewett<sup>44</sup> – for consumption by the majority of white Afrikaners. Robust sales figures, along with the dissemination of their profiles into most areas of mass media, like endorsing sports teams and appearing in films (the first to do so was Chris Blignaut as early as 1931, when he appeared in *Sarie Marais*) and television series, make Afrikaans pop stars some of the most recognisable Afrikaans public figures of the past and present. This mainstream says much more about Afrikaners than one song about a long-dead Boer general.

### The backdrop of language politics

Dating back to the start of the twentieth century, the history of recorded Afrikaans music bears witness to the complex socio-political backdrop of the development of the language itself, a topic that has so often been written about, yet still deserves some brief comment here.<sup>45</sup> It is, however, a complex issue not least because it was a major source of pride for, and one of the cornerstones of, white Afrikaner nationalist mythology from the 1930s onwards.<sup>46</sup> Claims of racial and linguistic purity, constructed to serve political needs, have at least for some time now been discarded in favour of ethno-linguistic explanations that are unencumbered by such agendas. The complex development of Afrikaans had, by the end of the nineteenth century, been some 250 years in the making and the distinct differentiation between the three original groups involved in this development – European settlers, the Khoikhoi, and imported Malay slaves – had eroded.<sup>47</sup> This erosion, however, stopped short of true creolisation due to the presence of racial oppression and power struggles that were more reflective of the colonial racial hierarchy than “smooth and gentle transactions generating societies harmonious in their plurality”.<sup>48</sup>

A central theme was the historical racial dominance of Dutch colonists who imposed their language on imported slaves and indigenous local populations.<sup>49</sup> Dutch, thanks to the

42 Jury, “Boys to men”, p. 99.

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

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

45 The link between Afrikaans language development and Afrikaans popular music has previously been addressed by the author in “Kruger’s lost voice: Nation and race in pre-World War I Afrikaans music records”, *Historia* 6:1 (2015), pp. 110-128.

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

47 P. Roberge, “The Formation of Afrikaans”, *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics* 27 (1993), p. 48.

48 D. Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa* (Somerset-West: African Minds, 2013), p. 55.

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



*Statenbijbel*, was dominant in religious practices, while the colour consciousness of whites further limited the process.<sup>50</sup> Despite this racial hierarchy, the diverse historical origins were influential in establishing varying degrees of cultural differentiation among Afrikaans speakers. The language became the mother tongue of Christians and Muslims, of whites, coloureds and blacks, in the cities and on the farms, of workers and landowners. Its earliest written texts even appeared in two different alphabets: Arabic and Roman.<sup>51</sup> It was, however, a specific group of white Afrikaans speakers during the latter half of the nineteenth century who involved themselves intimately with establishing a linguistic identity that denied its mixed racial roots. They were sensitive to accusations that Afrikaans was the bastardised language of “Hotnots” and “Asian and Mozambican maids”.<sup>52</sup> Against a colonial background that turned its gaze towards Europe while disregarding everything African, they argued for the racial purity of the language, thereby repudiating its African elements.<sup>53</sup>

The emerging white version of Afrikaans had to therefore withstand the influence of the racial “other” to maintain its European cultural identity, whilst simultaneously resisting the challenges of British imperialism.<sup>54</sup> The linguistic development of Afrikaans bears significant similarities to the development of Afrikaans music, which was subject to similar social forces. Its diverse cultural heritage saw music sung in Afrikaans and played by musicians from across the racial spectrum.<sup>55</sup> Imported Dutch and German (to a lesser extent English) liturgical and secular songs left their mark, as did minstrel songs from America brought to the colony in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Here it was translated, and partially creolised into the emerging vernacular.<sup>56</sup> Traditional *boeremusiek*, especially, represented a complex mixture of the urban and the rural and of race and class, much like the language itself.<sup>57</sup> However, when it came to recorded Afrikaans music, a number of barriers restricted coloured and black Afrikaans speakers. For instance, the earliest Afrikaans music recordings (before 1912) were – apart from the touring Springbok rugby team – mostly made by Afrikaans speakers who managed to secure bursaries to study in London. Such opportunities were extremely rare for coloured and black Afrikaans speakers at the time. In fact, coloured and black Afrikaans musicians, despite a rich and unique music heritage (especially at the Cape), remained outside the Afrikaans recording industry for most of the twentieth century. During the emergence of a new phase of Afrikaner nationalism from the 1930s onwards, it was even less in the interest of ideologues to preserve this shared music heritage.

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

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

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

53 *Ibid.*

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

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

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

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

Such a long history of separation has made a lasting impact on commercial Afrikaans music. In 2017, the mainstream remains overwhelmingly white and caters specifically for a largely white audience, despite the fact that they constitute a minority of first-language Afrikaans speakers. Although one can certainly argue that the Afrikaans recording business is, and always has been, driven by a profit model, it has undoubtedly functioned – to varying degrees of compliance that beg investigation – within the parameters determined by a socio-political history of exclusion. It mostly tended to ignore and deny, sometimes pragmatically, the multi-racial roots of many Afrikaans music genres as well as vital areas of music innovation outside of the Afrikaans music mainstream. This sterilisation from “other” influences was not always complete. For example, certain genres of popular music, like *kwela*, have shown signs of resisting such division at times of increasing racial segregation. Recorded Afrikaans music, however, mostly did not reflect the contributions of coloured Afrikaans musicians. Historically, white Afrikaans speakers have dominated the Afrikaans recording industry in terms of output and consumption. Furthermore, white Afrikaans language politics dominated the Afrikaans music industry since the very first recordings of Afrikaans music. Ultimately, the history of recorded popular Afrikaans music varies from shared spaces between racial groups and their music (where the racial hierarchies established in the wider society – through various historical agents – did not necessarily apply) and a whitewashed gaze diverted towards Western Europe, including translated *Schlager* music.

### *Schlager*

By the 1960s it had become common practice in the Afrikaans music mainstream to take European *Schlager*, or “hit”, melodies and to provide them with Afrikaans lyrics. Even long before *Schlager*, Afrikaans singers recorded Afrikaans lyrics for other original compositions in other languages. Gallo sent artists to London in 1930 to record a large batch of Afrikaans songs that eventually included Afrikaans versions of English hits as well, probably due to a lack of original material. Even earlier, in 1910, Annie Visser recorded Afrikaans *Gezangen* over English hymnals, which had copyright consequences under the new laws of 1912.<sup>58</sup> This practice is still common today.<sup>59</sup>

*Schlager* has been a prominent pop genre in northern Europe for decades and has taken on many different forms in different countries, including Finland, Hungary, Turkey, Sweden, Austria, the Netherlands, Germany and the former Yugoslavia. Of these, Dutch, German and Austrian *Schlager* songs seem to have been the most popular among Afrikaans artists.<sup>60</sup> *Schlager* had limited popularity in Britain and the US, most probably due to the prevalence of other popular music genres. These European melodies with Afrikaans lyrics would collectively be included in the body of Afrikaans *lekkerliedjies* (nice listening songs with superficial lyrics). From the late 1970s, but especially from the 1980s onwards, *lekkerliedjies* drew strong criticism from more serious Afrikaans songwriters and journalists. Academics criticised the *lekkerliedjie* for its superficiality,

58 See chapter one.

59 Kosie van Niekerk (Select record company boss), in Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 157.

60 D.C. Pretorius, *Musieksterre Van Gister En Vandag: lewensketse en foto's van meer as 100 musieksterre*. (Pretoria: Van der Walt, 1998), pp. 271-275.

but more importantly, its compliance with the apartheid regime.<sup>61</sup> The criticism against the *lekkerliedjie* is similar to the criticism, specifically in Germany, against *Schlager*. *Schlager* – in various developing forms – has been a popular genre in Germany since the 1950s, but has attracted criticism from German musicians and songwriters of more sophisticated music. Klaus Nathaus's study provides valuable insight into how this genre was favoured through a system of "payola" (paying radio DJ's to play the songs) by the gatekeepers of the music industry to the detriment of other, more dynamic music styles.<sup>62</sup> He defines *Schlager* as:

... a form of music that aimed at a mass audience unable or unwilling to discriminate by means of artistic criteria. Hit songs were devised to charm, amuse or move the broadest possible spectrum of people with catchy melodies and uncontroversial lyrics. Most hit songs dealt with romantic love; other *Schlager* referred to sunny and more or less exotic places from Italy to Hawaii or latched on to novelties in a quirky way.<sup>63</sup>

This definition of *Schlager* is very similar to most commercial light Afrikaans releases from the 1950s onwards. In Europe, skilled musicians tend to look down on *Schlager* music and prefer more challenging genres like jazz. A notable critique of *Schlager* came from the jazz publicist Alfred Baresel in 1964, when he suggested that it was actively promoted by Joseph Goebels through the *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength through Joy) organisation during the Second World War. According to Baresel, sentimental songs were used to keep the population calm during wartime.<sup>64</sup> In this way *Schlager* constituted something "harmful", instead of something "worthless".<sup>65</sup>

This bears a striking resemblance to the state of the Afrikaans music industry during the later years of apartheid. The idea of *Schlager* music as a tool of population control during times of national duress might be an extreme accusation. However, when one considers Carike Keuzenkamp's translated *Schlager* hit, "Dis 'n Land" (It's a country), along with the timing of its release (during the third year of the South African State of Emergency in 1987), as well as the music video accompanying the release, such an accusation seems appropriate and legitimate. The imagery used in the video is poignant: scenes of the apartheid regime's military power during an extremely volatile political time, which conveys to the Afrikaans listeners and viewers a less than subtle message that their way of life is in good and powerful hands; South Africans of other races in apparently happy scenarios, like a black couple laughing and dancing, Cape minstrels making music during a carnival, and farm labourers in the Boland seemingly content with their poverty.<sup>66</sup> All this, as well as the lyrics, broadcasted a utopian image

61 Jury, "Boys to men", pp. 99-100; Byerly, "Mirror, Mediator, and Prophet", p. 14.

62 K. Nathaus, "From dance bands to radio and records: Pop music promotion in West Germany and the decline of the *Schlager* genre, 1945-1964", *Popular Music History* 6:3 (2011), pp. 287-306.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 292

64 Cited in Nathaus, "From dance bands to radio and records", p. 302.

65 *Ibid.*

66 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8r2uLdSlyg0>, accessed 10 August 2012.

of white South Africa which stood in stark contrast with the political realities of the time. “Dis ’n Land” was put on high rotation on television and the radio by the SABC, along with other songs by artists such as the crooner Bles Bridges, who was so popular among Afrikaans audiences, he managed to sell out the Superbowl at Sun City for two consecutive nights in 1987.<sup>67</sup> Bridges, and other Afrikaans artists such as Gé Korsten, attracted criticism from a new generation of Afrikaans artists during the 1980s, of which the Voëlvy artists with their “Ek verpes Bles” (“I detest Bles”) t-shirts were the most vehement. This bore some similarity to the criticisms of artists opposed to the privileged position *Schlager* enjoyed in the German music industry. It also supported concerns that deliberately superficial Afrikaans music had a negative impact on Afrikaans culture.

The use of Afrikaans *Schlager* hits for dubious political purposes by the state broadcaster had its limits, however. During the 1980s, the SABC wanted to promote the more serious genre of Afrikaans cabaret since it better embodied their aspirations for developing high-brow Afrikaans culture. *Schlager* was seen as too low-brow. The SABC often also strongly opposed *Schlager* on the basis that it preferred “authentic” Afrikaans music.<sup>68</sup> German surnames among the composer credits did not please them. This gives the use of *Schlager* some perspective and undermines the idea that the SABC favoured imported and reworked *Schlager* music over more local genres. However, the industry was small and with limited original material available, the choice to translate European hit songs was plainly pragmatic, despite the apparent risks. The prominent Afrikaans record label, Decibel, alone had about twelve artists on their roster during this period – among them some of the biggest names in Afrikaans music, like Gé Korsten, Carike Keuzenkamp, Anneli van Rooyen and Leon Schuster – and there were just not enough Afrikaans songwriters who could contribute hits. Twelve albums consisted of at least 144 songs, selected from a much higher number, and artists needed to release albums almost every year, which meant that this process needed to be repeated annually.<sup>69</sup>

Danie Pretorius’s list of the 100 biggest hit songs in Afrikaans music history provides some useful further information on the origins of popular Afrikaans music compositions.<sup>70</sup> The list is based partially on album sales, but also includes performances and radio and television airtime where applicable. He does not, however, provide specific sources and excludes traditional Afrikaans folk songs, *boeremusiek*, and FAK-songs.<sup>71</sup> The book was published in 1998, so excludes the wave of Afrikaans pop hits after 2000. From the 100 songs on the list, 36 are foreign music compositions given Afrikaans lyrics. In a number of instances, only the Afrikaans lyricist’s name is given, but cross-references

67 Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 27.

68 Boet Pretorius, telephonic interview with author, 22 July 2013.

69 *Ibid.*

70 Pretorius, *Musieksterre Van Gister En Vandag*, pp. 271-275.

71 *Ibid.*

confirm that the music was imported.<sup>72</sup> Of the 36 songs in question, three were released between 1930 and 1959, nine were released in the 1960s, seven in the 1970s, fourteen in the 1980s, and two after 1990.

All of Gé Korsten's eight hits on this list had foreign origins. "Algoabaai" was based on Olivia Newton-John's "Banks of the Ohio", "Liefeling" (Darling) on Peter Maffay's "Save Me", "Reën" (Rain) on "Mister Love", while "Sing, seeman, sing" (Sing, sailor, sing) was an adaptation of a German sailor song, and "Wees lief vir my" (Love me) was based on a song by Austrian composer, Udo Jürgens.<sup>73</sup> Apart from these well-known hits, the practice of taking European hits and writing Afrikaans lyrics to them was very common. Individuals like Heine Toerien (who worked at the SABC),<sup>74</sup> and André Viljoen,<sup>75</sup> were often commissioned by Brigadiers record company to write the lyrics for Afrikaans singers. When read in conjunction with the 2012 version of the FAK Songbook,<sup>76</sup> which also contains a list of the most popular Afrikaans songs, including songwriting credits, a clearer picture emerges on the background of many Afrikaans songs. There is a tendency to prefer songs of continental Europe – where *Schlager* is popular – over British and American music as source materials. This tendency has continued unabated. In an article in *Huisgenoot Tempo*, Roggeband quoted the following statement by an anonymous SAMA (South African Music Awards) judge in 2012:

When you listen to what the rest of the South African artists offer, you realise how far behind we are. Some of the Afrikaans albums sound as if they were made six, seven years ago. There is too much reliance on borrowing songs from abroad.<sup>77</sup>

A recent example is Nicholis Louw's 2008 hit "Vergeet en Vergewe" (Forget and Forgive).<sup>78</sup> The music of another of his hits – "Rock daai lyfie" (Rock that body, 2005) – was a ringtone of one of the secretaries at his record company. The album sold in excess of 100 000 copies.<sup>79</sup> Kosie van Niekerk of Select Music record company and co-writer of many Afrikaans pop hits openly admits that they are not afraid to take songs from overseas, since music is universal.<sup>80</sup> In a curious reversal, Kurt Darren has sold a number of his songs to Flemish and German artists.<sup>81</sup>

72 An example is Carike Keuzenkamp's 1987 hit, "Dis 'n Land", with lyrics by Johan Stemmet. The music is taken from the German singer Nicole's 1986 hit, *Laß mich nicht allein*. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWONEFvebY>, accessed 10 August 2012.

73 Pretorius, *Musieksterre Van Gister En Vandag*, pp. 271-275.

74 <http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/heine-toerien-71-afrikaans-broadcaster-and-author-entertainment-programs>, accessed 09 August 2013.

75 <http://www.vetseun.co.za/anarkans/bladsy/generockwell.html>, accessed 09 August 2013.

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

77 *Huisgenoot Tempo* 1 (2012), p. 21, translated from original.

78 Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 203.

79 *Ibid.*

80 *Ibid.*, p. 157.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 159.

## Culture politics

Returning to the centrality of the word *volk*, the creation of an Afrikaner ‘nation’ – the basis of Afrikaner nationalism – had a major effect on the cultural lives of Afrikaans speakers. The Afrikaans language movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries helped differentiate Afrikaans (specifically a white version of the language) from Dutch, and the language became a crucial element in the emerging self-identification of people calling themselves “Afrikaners”. During the 1930s especially, language, race and religion were the cornerstones on which Afrikaner cultural entrepreneurs laboured to construct a new form of Afrikaner nationalist mythology that became the power base of D.F. Malan’s *Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party* (Purified National Party). Central to this process was the construct of the self as opposed to the “other”: white South Africans (English speakers), but, crucially, also other races. Cultural identities depended on Afrikaner cultural constructions, and music was used to establish cultural authenticity based on the *volkseie vs volksvreemde* (‘true to the nation’ vs ‘foreign to the nation’) opposition.<sup>82</sup> This has some bearing on the process of legitimisation *boeremusiek* went through during the 1940s and 1950s (discussed in chapter three). These fault lines have more often manifested in popular Afrikaans music throughout the twentieth century (and into the twenty-first) than has been suggested in the literature up to the present. The link between music and identity is strong. Martin explains that the social frames of music are formed by the same building blocks – “history, space and culture” – that form people’s identities. This means that “musical differences are interpreted as social differences”.<sup>83</sup>

There certainly is no shortage of examples of how divisive opinions on mainstream Afrikaans music have been over the years. Generally, among scholars and artists alike, it is considered to have contributed little to South Africa’s musical heritage. Afrikaans songs that push artistic boundaries rarely sell. In a newspaper article in 2009, Anton Goosen, one of the most influential Afrikaans songwriters of the last four decades, voiced his dismay over what he termed “sewerage” quality Afrikaans pop that has steadily invaded the commercial Afrikaans music market.<sup>84</sup> He made three assertions: firstly, that before *Musiek-en-Liriek*, Afrikaans music was dominated by translated European “oempa” (dance) music that was “gobbled up” by an unsophisticated audience; secondly, that artists in the 1980s were severely limited by the regime through the censorship board and that the regime tried to hijack the new music movements which resulted in superficialisation of Afrikaans music by the late 1980s; and thirdly, that after 1994, this superficialisation has continued through sentimental nostalgia and commercialism to the point where Afrikaans popular music has now taken up permanent residence in the gutter. One of the strongest criticisms against the mainstream Afrikaans music market came from Deon Maas, writer, former record company executive and documentary film-maker in 2012:

For the last decade, the Afrikaans music market has been a waste bin for talentless people who have the audacity to call themselves musicians.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Laubscher, “Afrikaner identity and the music of Johannes Kerkorrel”, p. 313.

<sup>83</sup> Martin, *Sounding the Cape*, p. 21.

<sup>84</sup> “Afrikaanse musiek stamp-stamp tot in die rioolsloot”, *Rapport*, 13 Junie 2009.

<sup>85</sup> Roggeband, *Huisgenoot Tempo* 1 (2012), p. 18, translated from original.

Derogatory remarks aimed at Afrikaans pop singers have at times come to symbolise not only differences in artistic values and merit, but also political affiliations. The classic example of this happened in Pretoria on 31 May 1990. On that day, the first *Houtstok* (literally translated as “Wooden stick”, but an overt reference to “Woodstock”) concert was held on a farm outside the city, while the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge* (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Organisations, or FAK for short), celebrated Republic Day at the Voortrekker Monument.<sup>86</sup> At *Houtstok*, ‘alternative’ Afrikaans musicians – a loosely defined selection of anti-establishment Afrikaans rock and punk groups<sup>87</sup> – played to a crowd of mostly young Afrikaners who (generally) did not prescribe to the ideologies of the state. This contrasted sharply with the mainstream Afrikaans pop artists performing at the FAK concert who not only used backtracks, but mimed, and entertained a more conservative group of Afrikaners in celebration of Afrikaner nationalism. This positioned Afrikaans pop as politically compliant, while ‘alternative’ Afrikaans artists were not only artistically superior, but politically opposed to apartheid. Of course, this division is a crude one. There is some merit in regarding Afrikaans pop as a compliant part of the dominant language of apartheid ideology,<sup>88</sup> but it fails to address instances of tension between Afrikaans pop singers and apartheid ideologues. Furthermore, accusations that Afrikaans pop, due to its non-confrontational nature, upheld racist Afrikaner hegemony during apartheid seem to miss the point that, due to censorship and the restrictions placed on the record industry, local pop in other languages often did the same. A more profitable avenue of inquiry would be to consider the wider contours of South African society and how this shaped the local music industry as a whole.

Initially, the focus of this book was only supposed to be on the post-apartheid era (neatly coinciding with my own career) which, if one were pedantic, would have had to exclude the Voëlvry movement, since it happened in 1989. However, no book on popular Afrikaans music worth its salt could afford to make such an omission. But then if one decided to include Voëlvry, mention had to be made of the tumultuous political years leading up to it, perhaps even starting with *Musiek-en-Liriek* in 1979. Other questions followed. What about the Afrikaans music produced at the height of apartheid in the 1960s and 1970s? Or how the segregationist laws of the 1950s affected music performance and production? One could also not omit the 1930s, an especially important decade for Afrikaans music and for South African radio with the establishment of the SABC in 1936. Thus began a process of backdating that, following the logic that such a wide-angled perspective could just as well start at the very beginning, soon became a search for the oldest Afrikaans records.

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

87 There were also English speaking artists on the line-up, like Jennifer Ferguson and No Friends of Harry.

88 *Ibid.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## Gramophones, “warm patriots” and radio wars

### The first sound recording of Afrikaans<sup>1</sup>

Before he found his calling as a photographer of life and architecture in and around the Cape in 1900, Arthur Elliott spent a decade drifting around South Africa doing odd jobs, mostly in theatre as backdrop painter and manager. Having involved himself in the entertainment industry, he introduced the first phonograph to the Transvaal and was commissioned to entertain a crowd of celebrities, among them Paul Kruger, in Pretoria one night in the 1890s.<sup>2</sup> Although Lighton, in his biography of Elliott, never explicitly mentioned that he made any recordings at the event (the phonograph was mainly used to play music, but could record sound as well), Eric Rosenthal referred to an occasion where he *did* record Kruger’s voice onto “a crude cylindrical device,” which was subsequently lost and with it probably the first sound recording

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1 A condensed version of this chapter was first published by the author in article form as “Kruger’s lost voice: Nation and race in pre-World War1 Afrikaans music records”, *Historia* 6:1 (2015), pp. 110-128.

2 C. Lighton, *Arthur Elliott: A memoir of the man and the story of his photographic collection*, (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1956), pp. 34-35. Lighton puts the year as 1891, which is too early, since commercial phonographs were only rolled out later. Furthermore, Lady Greene (who happens to have a rose named after her), in whose honour the event was organised, was the wife of the British diplomat, Sir William Conyngham Greene, who was only posted to Pretoria in 1896. The event must therefore have taken place between 1896 and most probably before the start of the War in 1899.



of the Afrikaans language.<sup>3</sup> It is, however, doubtful whether it was a music recording seeing that Kruger was not known for his singing.

The phonograph was invented by Thomas Edison in 1877, but became outdated by the development of gramophone records thanks mostly to the work of German inventor, Emile Berliner.<sup>4</sup> From the late 1890s onwards, recording engineers, or “experts”, and their mobile gramophone recording units travelled the globe to capture not just music, but many forms of folk culture. One of the best known early recording pioneers was the American Fred Gaisberg, who worked as Berliner’s recording supervisor before moving to London to join the newly formed Gramophone Record Company in 1898. Gaisberg was as much talent scout as recording engineer and made numerous recordings all over Europe (even as far east as Nizhny Novgorod in Russia) between 1898 and 1902.<sup>5</sup> In September 1902, accompanied by George Walter Dilnutt, he departed to the East where they made various recordings that have now become valuable collector’s items. Gaisberg’s diary noted detailed recordings made in Calcutta, Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangkok and Rangoon.<sup>6</sup> Dilnutt is of interest since after his many travels to other exotic locations, he eventually found his way to South Africa in 1912 to make the first gramophone recordings here. Elliott moved to Cape Town in 1900 and started his photographic career for which he became famous. He did, however, make the odd recording on his phonograph (Lighton mentions one recording in 1921 of a solo bassoon performance by William J. Pickerill who later became a well-known conductor), but more for private than commercial ends.<sup>7</sup> In 1926, he even became an agent for Edison Amberola Phonographs – an improved version the old prototype – but it was not very successful.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from travelling recording engineers, more stationary studios in Europe and the US made numerous recordings of orchestral music and operas, but also lighter, popular compositions and dialogues. On the choice of material, the renowned discographer Allen Kelly is of the opinion that the majority of records from this time were simply aimed at providing listening pleasure to buyers and to make a little money for the record company. Some records, however, were more serious, including recordings of historic events.<sup>9</sup> The earliest years of the gramophone recording industry happen to date back to a time of great flux for the people who spoke Afrikaans, mostly due to the effects of the second Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902). The war seems to have been a source of inspiration for a number of continental Europeans.<sup>10</sup> Pro-Boer sentiments led to the composition of popular songs from more obvious locales like Holland and Belgium (due to linguistic and cultural links to Afrikaans), to less obvious ones like Hungary and Czechoslovakia.<sup>11</sup> Trehwela mentions that the French were particularly inspired by the Boers,

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

4 E.W. Gaisberg, *Music on Record* (London: Robert Hale, 1948).

5 *The Fred Gaisberg Diaries, Part 1: USA & Europe*, available at [http://www.recordingpioneers.com/docs/GAISBERG\\_DIARIES\\_1.pdf](http://www.recordingpioneers.com/docs/GAISBERG_DIARIES_1.pdf), accessed 16 September 2016.

6 *Ibid.*

7 Lighton, *Arthur Elliott*, p. 36.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

9 *Ibid.*

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

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

to which songs like “Marche Héroïque des Boers”, “Le Patriotisme des Boers”, “Boers, Je Vous Salue!” and “Hommage aux Armées Héroïques des Républiques du Transvaal et d’Orange” attest.<sup>12</sup> Whether these were the result of the historical links with the French Huguenots in South Africa or just a mutual contempt for the British is unclear. Lüdemann has written specifically on the “Buren-Marsch”, a German composition by August Bernhard Ueberwasser between 1901 and 1904, an apparent homage to the citizens of the two Boer republics that contains a whole section of the Transvaal anthem.<sup>13</sup> Swanepoel has compiled a list of 350 pro-Afrikaner compositions that were inspired by the two wars between the Boers and the British (1880 – 1881 and 1899 – 1902 respectively).<sup>14</sup> These compositions originated from all over the Western world, including the US and even Russia. It was therefore highly likely that early gramophone recordings would include some that had to do with the historic events unfolding in South Africa at the time.

As mentioned in the introduction, this book was not initially supposed to involve a search for the oldest Afrikaans recordings. However, it slowly became one of the more rewarding, if somewhat forensic, avenues explored here. An authoritative source is the *Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie* (hereafter SAME),<sup>15</sup> which is the most comprehensive and provides a detailed discography of early Africana and Afrikaans records between 1901 and 1938. The compilation of the SAME in the 1980s was itself a major undertaking. Under the auspices of the Human Sciences Research Council and the direction of the musicologist Jacques Philip Malan, it could rely on the input of numerous scholars. Venter devoted a part of her MA thesis to Malan, and depicted him as the personification of puristic, Calvinist norms who regarded lapses (in his view) in liturgical music standards as a litmus test for the moral standards of the Afrikaner nation. He observed that “... Reformation as well as Counter-reformation is always accompanied by musical reformation on both sides”<sup>16</sup>, which bore some resemblance to Socrates’s view of music and social change mentioned earlier. Despite prescribing to a conservative version of Afrikaner nationalist ideology, which some might argue taints the SAME itself (with regard to what was included and what was omitted<sup>17</sup>), the encyclopaedia remains a solid discographic source. The earliest Africana gramophone recordings listed – both of the Transvaal anthem – date back to 1901, one by the soprano Betsy Schot in Berlin, and the other by the baritone Thomas Denijs in Amsterdam.<sup>18</sup> A main source of that specific section of the SAME is Roberto Bauer’s *The new catalogue of historical records, 1898–1908/09*,<sup>19</sup> which, published in 1947, was an early attempt at providing a comprehensive catalogue of the hundreds of thousands of gramophone recordings

12 Trewhela, *Song Safari*, p. 26.

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

14 A. Swanepoel, Music inspired by the Afrikaner cause (1852–1902), with special reference to the Transvaal Volkslied, Unpublished M. Thesis (University of South Africa, 1979).

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

16 C. Venter, Tesis, p. 100.

17 V. Erlmann, *South African Music Encyclopaedia. Volume II, E to I*, Review, *African Music*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1983), pp. 118-120.

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

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

made in the industry's first decade. However, new information surfaces regularly as dedicated discographers sift through material and amend existing catalogues which means that older catalogues, especially when published back in 1947, become outdated.<sup>20</sup> Thanks to the internet, researchers can now browse newly updated catalogues online – a resource that even the SAME did not have.

Kelly's research on the Gramophone Concert Company has provided invaluable information of the earliest years of the global recording industry.<sup>21</sup> Since this company, along with its subsidiary labels HMV and Zonophone, was responsible for most of the earliest Afrikaans recordings, Kelly's catalogues are of major significance. It can be found online at the AHRC Research Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music (CHARM) in the UK, established in 2004.<sup>22</sup> The Truesound Online Discography Project<sup>23</sup> is another online archive with almost 400 000 matrix listings of early recordings. Here, the Zonopoint catalogue (again thanks to Kelly and updated in 2003) yielded matrix listings of a number of Afrikaner national anthems, never documented before, that pre-date Denijs and Schot's recordings of 1901. Unfortunately, such catalogues are not organised according to language or title, which forces the researcher to go through hundreds of thousands of matrix listings with potentially very low yields.<sup>24</sup> It is important to note that discographies, although mostly a reliable source of statistical information, do not include the social context of album releases, or actual sound clips, a fact that limits understanding of the music. Furthermore, if one were perfectly honest, these references have little practical value if one cannot find the actual records. It is not certain whether they were even released in South Africa, and if copies still exist, they are probably gathering dust on shelves somewhere in Europe. Apart then from curiosity and a motivation to add a date to the earliest recordings, they are included here because they were a vague representation of European sympathy towards Afrikaners at the time. On the other hand, the discovery of recordings that were older than those listed in the SAME was very satisfying on a personal level. A more useful source, especially for information on the 1912 South African recordings and later, is the South African Audio Archive, which features photographs and sound clips of old records sourced from private collectors.<sup>25</sup> Through having consulted these various updated catalogues for information regarding previously unknown recordings and combining it with the existing information listed in the SAME, a more complete picture has emerged on early Africana and Afrikaans records. Early newspaper reports, magazine articles and advertisements have also provided vital source material.

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20 Electronic communication with Alan Kelly, 29 October 2014.

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

22 Available at <http://charm.rhul.ac.uk/index.html>.

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

24 For example, the author's search took almost the whole winter of 2014 and yielded just 15.

25 Available at [http://www.flatinternational.org/template\\_volume.php?volume\\_id=280](http://www.flatinternational.org/template_volume.php?volume_id=280), accessed 12 June 2014.

## So who were really the first?

Of the tens of thousands of recordings made across the globe before 1905, only 15<sup>26</sup> have an Afrikaans connection, and most of them make reference to the Transvaal, sung mostly by Dutch singers. As mentioned on page one, the first were recorded in The Hague and Berlin in January 1900. In The Hague, “Transvaalsch Volkslied” was recorded by J.C. van den Berg, while E. Spieksma (bass) recorded “Transvaal en Nederland” and “Volkslied van den Oranje Vrijstaat”.<sup>27</sup> In Berlin, both Ewald Brückner (tenor) and H. Cornelli made recordings of the “Transvaalsch Volkslied”.<sup>28</sup> As far as can be determined, these recordings by Van den Berg, Spieksma, Brückner and Cornelli are the oldest Africana gramophone recordings and pre-date the fall of the Transvaal in September 1900. More recordings followed after the fall. The Municipal Military Band recorded “Boeren Nationale Hymne” on 6 December 1900 in London.<sup>29</sup> On 10 September 1901, the Kapel van het 7e Regiment Infanterie from Amsterdam recorded “Het Transvaalsch volkslied” and “Transvaalsch vlaggenlied”.<sup>30</sup> Thomas Denijs also made his recordings, of “Het Transvaalsch volkslied” and “Transvaalsche Vierkleur” (the latter was not mentioned in the SAME), in Amsterdam in the same month, although the exact day is unknown.<sup>31</sup> According to *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Denijs was a classically trained opera singer, one of Holland’s finest, and joined the Amsterdam Opera in 1901.<sup>32</sup> Most of the singers who recorded Africana songs in this period, however, did not feature in this publication. Another version of the anthem was recorded in Brussels by Jan Teirlynck on 12 September 1902.<sup>33</sup>

The official anthem of the Transvaal was, as mentioned before, “Kent gij dat Volk”. It was written in 1875 by the Dutch noblewoman Catharina van Rees (it apparently took her only six hours) upon request by her friend and President of the Transvaal, Thomas Burgers, when he was touring Europe on state business.<sup>34</sup> The two had met more than 20 years earlier when Burgers was a student in Utrecht and had remained in contact throughout.<sup>35</sup> “Kent gij dat Volk” remained a popular anthem linked to Afrikaner nationalism throughout the twentieth century. Apart from this one anthem, other songs about the Transvaal were recorded in this early period. The comic singer Jan Willekens recorded “Vredelielid over Transvaal” on the same day, possibly in the same studio where Teirlynck recorded the Transvaal Anthem.<sup>36</sup> A possible earlier recording, “Wat zien we in Transvaal”, was made in Brussels by the baritone and comic, Louis Verstraeten,

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

27 Discographical data collected by Alan Kelly, available from The CHARM Discography, <[http://www.charm.kcl.ac.uk/discography/search/disco\\_search](http://www.charm.kcl.ac.uk/discography/search/disco_search)>, accessed May–October 2014. See also Robert Johannesson’s catalogue at [http://78opera.com/files/ARTIST\\_Se-Sz.pdf](http://78opera.com/files/ARTIST_Se-Sz.pdf), accessed 17 March 2017.

28 *Alan Kelly Catalogue*, <http://charm.rhul.ac.uk/index.html>, accessed May–October 2014.

29 *Ibid.*

30 *Ibid.*

31 *Ibid.*

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

33 <http://www.truesoundtransfers.de/disco.html>, accessed 18 July 2014.

34 A.M. Swanepoel, “Music inspired by the Afrikaner cause (1852–1902), with special reference to the Transvaal Volkslied, Volume 1” (MA Thesis, University of South Africa, 1979), p. 218.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 212.

36 <http://www.truesoundtransfers.de/disco.html>, accessed 18 July 2014.

in either 1901 or 1902.<sup>37</sup> The Dutch baritone, Arnold Spoel, recorded his own composition, “Vereenigd Afrika”, in Brussels in 1904.<sup>38</sup> Spoel dedicated it “Aan de helden der Transvaal”<sup>39</sup> (to the heroes of the Transvaal) in 1899, and presented it to Paul Kruger on his arrival in The Hague in 1901 during his exile.<sup>40</sup>

Although these songs were recorded mostly by classically trained European singers and not actually sung by Afrikaners, their relation to the politics and people of the Boer republics showed a level of support for Afrikaner independence. They are also ideologically linked to South African compositions that subtextually highlight tension between white Afrikaans speakers precipitated by geographic and class differences. At the dawn of the twentieth century, many Afrikaners still felt that Dutch was their first language. Afrikaans was seen as the language of the lower classes of society, popular in Pretoria and surrounds, but not fitting for cultured Afrikaners. However, when it came to communicating with, and mobilising, the white Afrikaans-speaking working class, the language was of utmost importance.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the term “Afrikaner” was, for a time, not necessarily a linguistic reference (there were Dutch-oriented Afrikaners, for instance), although for others it was central to the language itself and their sense of identity.

Most early Afrikaner anthems (except for the one by Van Rees) can be traced to a small group of Afrikaans language activists based in Paarl in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One in particular which held special significance was “n Ieder Nasie”, also known by a number of other names including “Die Afrikaanse Volkslied”, “Transvaal Volkslied” and “Zuid-Afrikaanse Volkslied”.<sup>42</sup> Its lyrics were based on a poem by the Dutch-born teacher, Arnoldus Pannevis, who was instrumental in early efforts to have Afrikaans recognised as an official language. In 1872 he published a plea to have the Bible translated into Afrikaans, which served as the inspiration for the founding of the *Genootskap vir Regte Afrikaners* (Fellowship of real Afrikaners, hereafter GRA) in 1875 which became known as the *Eerste Taalbeweging* (First Language Movement).<sup>43</sup> The GRA also published *Die Afrikaanse Patriot* – the first Afrikaans newspaper – in Paarl and appealed to Afrikaner nationhood and the acceptance of Afrikaans as a written language.<sup>44</sup> Swanepoel mentions that there were at least three other composers also credited with the words for “n Ieder Nasie” – S.J. du Toit, his brother D.F. du Toit, and Pannevis’s confidant, C.P. Hoogenhout. All three were founding members of the GRA.<sup>45</sup> These early language pioneers stood opposed to the Dutch-speaking elites, who looked down on the Boers and resisted the acceptance of Afrikaans as written language.<sup>46</sup> The annexation of the Transvaal by the British

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37 *Ibid.*

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

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

40 *Neerlandia* 25. (Dordrecht: Geuze & Co, 1921), available at [http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/\\_nee](http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_nee), accessed 16 July 2014.

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

42 A.M. Swanepoel, “Music inspired by the Afrikaner cause (1852–1902)”, p. 66. Note that the original spelling of these titles are different. These are Afrikaans versions.

43 *Ibid.*

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

45 A.M. Swanepoel, “Music inspired by the Afrikaner cause (1852–1902)”, p. 66.

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

in 1877 elicited a strong reaction from the GRA. After the Transvaal regained its independence in 1880, *Die Patriot* organised a competition in search of a new anthem, seemingly unsatisfied with the fact that “Kent gij dat Volk” was commissioned and written in Europe by someone who wasn’t an Afrikaner.<sup>47</sup> Despite geographic distance, the members of the GRA identified themselves as part of the same *volk* as the people of the two Boer republics whose independence was threatened by Britain.

An important collaborator was Reverend J.S. de Villiers, who was responsible for setting to music texts by S.J. du Toit, and composed many early Afrikaans psalms and hymns. He is credited with one of the seven different melodies written to the lyrics of “’n Ieder Nasie”,<sup>48</sup> as well as *volksliedere* like “Vlaggeried”.<sup>49</sup> Another collaboration by De Villiers and Du Toit was the “Transvaalse Vrijheidslied” of 1881, which was more popular among Transvalers than van Rees’s official anthem.<sup>50</sup> Van Rees’s version was also sometimes known as the “Volkslied van de Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek”, but is different from the “Zuid-Afrikaansche Volkslied”.<sup>51</sup> Rautenbach mentions another “Transvaalsch Volkslied” that is not “Kent gij dat Volk” (or “’n Ieder Nasie”), and which originated with the *Eerste Taalbeweging*.<sup>52</sup> The lyrics display openly anti-British sentiments, with lines like “In vry Transvaal, bevry van Britse dwingelandy” (In free Transvaal, freed from British oppression), “Britse verraad” (British treason), “Haal ons die Britse roofvlag neer” (We lower the British pirate flag).<sup>53</sup> These lyrics were an obvious reference to the first Anglo-Boer War (1880 – 1881). De Villiers composed “Die Vierkleur van die Transvaal” (also known as the “Transvaalse Volkslied”) in 1881, which is also not the same composition.<sup>54</sup> In fact, Swanepoel differentiates between 27 compositions that vied to become the anthem of the Transvaal.<sup>55</sup> Although the different titles cause a fair amount of confusion, the fact that these anthems were penned by people closely connected with the GRA underscores their political significance.<sup>56</sup> A number of these anthems were later invoked during a new wave of Afrikaner nationalism when they were published in the first FAK Songbook in 1937.

Returning to the “Transvaalsch Volkslied” that was captured onto disc in The Hague and Berlin in 1900 (and in the following few years), it is impossible in the absence of the actual recordings to establish definitively which version (or versions) it was (or were). However, Van Rees’s version was the most probable, since it was initially published in Europe and so many different versions of the anthem have appeared over the years. These early records were also not, in a strict sense, popular music recordings and it is doubtful whether they were ever on sale in South Africa. Furthermore, the political mindset of these early, mostly unknown European singers is difficult to define exactly. Some of them also recorded songs unrelated to South Africa and there is no

47 A.M. Swanepoel, “Music inspired by the Afrikaner cause (1852–1902)”, p. 27.

48 *Ibid.*

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

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

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

52 Rautenbach, “Die Kerk sang as Agtergrond van die Poësie Uit die Eerste Tydperk”, pp. 87.

53 *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87; see also N. H. Theunissen, *Die Brandwag*, 7 October 1938, p. 17.

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

55 Swanepoel, pp. 101-140.

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

proof, beyond the circumstantial, that their recordings of the Boer anthems were anything more than arbitrary. The same cannot be said for the earliest recorded music in Afrikaans.

### The first recordings in actual Afrikaans

The SAME states that the first recorded Afrikaans songs were made by Paul Roos's Springbok rugby team in London on their historic first tour in 1906. However, Kelly's catalogue in the CHARM discography mentions other Afrikaans recordings in London that are older.<sup>57</sup> On 9 July 1906 (more than two months before the Springboks arrived in Britain), a J.F. Smith recorded "Transvaal Dialogue", "Transvaal Volkslied", "The Vine: Transvaal recitation", "Boer melodies", "Transvaal Volks: Paraphrase". J.F. Smith was likely actually J.J. Smith – as initials were often noted down incorrectly either by studio engineers or later discographers who had to decipher handwritten documents. We know that J.J. Smith recorded Afrikaans monologues in London in 1910<sup>58</sup> and that his initials have on occasion been mistakenly written down as "J.D." on record listings.<sup>59</sup> Unlike the Springboks', his 1906 recordings were not commercially available in South Africa (or actively marketed at least), but in a way, accrediting him as the first to make gramophone recordings of Afrikaans is perhaps more significant in the wider history of the language's development.

J.J. Smith was a talented linguist and an early authority on the Afrikaans language. Born in the Tulbagh district in 1883 and schooled in Paarl and Stellenbosch, he received a bursary for postgraduate studies in London.<sup>60</sup> He arrived there in 1906 and soon became connected with other young Afrikaners, including C. Louis Leipoldt, who became a close friend. Judging by his personal letters to his mother, he did not share the same anti-imperialist political notions of many Afrikaners of his time. He actually preferred the English over the Dutch, and was at first a strong supporter of Louis Botha. This changed in the aftermath of Union, when his allegiance switched to Hertzog.<sup>61</sup> Smith recorded several Afrikaans dialogues in London after 1906 (that were commercially available in South Africa and under the correct initials) and corresponded with the Gramophone Record Company on copyright issues regarding Afrikaans recordings of English hymns.<sup>62</sup> Upon returning to South Africa, he became editor of *Die Huisgenoot* in 1916 and also the first ever professor in Afrikaans, at Stellenbosch University in 1919, where he happened to lecture a young Hendrik Verwoerd. He was also the first editor of the *Woordeboek vir die Afrikaanse Taal* (Dictionary of the Afrikaans Language, or *WAT*)<sup>63</sup> and an important figure in the Second Language Movement, just like his friend Leipoldt. He made a number of later recordings in South Africa (around 1930) that were educational tools on Afrikaans diction and grammar, and consulted on the language purity of other Afrikaans recordings of the time.

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

58 *Die Burger*, 4 May 1974.

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

60 *Die Burger*, 4 May 1974.

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

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

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

It is a fascinating exercise to listen to his recordings from 1910 as the accent, language and grammar do not sound outdated at all.

A few months after Smith's initial recordings, the Springboks recorded *Springbok Chorus and War Cry* in London, which was released on the Gramophone Concert Record series.<sup>64</sup> They also recorded "Springboks Conversing in the Taal", "Boer Recitation" and "Boer Dialogue".<sup>65</sup> Recordings of spoken Afrikaans and references to the *Taal*, would become popular themes in later recordings, suggesting that Afrikaans was still something of a curiosity at the time. On *Springbok Chorus and War Cry* the rugby players sing "My matras en jou kombers", "Die een kant op die ander kant af", "Al slaan my ma my neer" and "We are marching to Pretoria".<sup>66</sup> The matrix listings date these recordings to 11 November 1906,<sup>67</sup> which was the day after the Springboks beat Cambridge University 29-0. The team arrived back in London on the evening of the 11<sup>th</sup> and still had to pack before they departed for Scotland very early the next morning.<sup>68</sup> If the dates are actually correct, it would mean that the recordings were probably a rushed affair late at night. At least the studio was located at 31 Maiden Lane, which was within walking distance from the hotel. Unfortunately, for a relatively well-documented tour, no mention is made of any studio recordings, probably because it was not an official part of the tour schedule and therefore not regarded as a significant event. The songs appeared four years later in what was likely the first advertisement for Afrikaans records, by the Mackay Brothers Company<sup>69</sup> in November 1910:<sup>70</sup>



A young J.J. Smith (J.J. Smith Collection, Stellenbosch University Archive Special Collections)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Nieuwe Gramafoon Platen in „AFRIKAANS.”

10" TEGEN 4/- ELK.

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

### LIEDEREN, Mej. Annie Visser.

GC 3843 Afrikaans Volkslied.	GC 3854 Overtuiging.
GC 3844 Grietje.	GC 3855 Zuid Afrikaans Volkslied.
GC 3845 Afrikaans Bruiloftslied.	GC 3856 Die Afrikaanse Pop.
GC 3846 Gertjie.	GC 3857 Mamma, 'k wil 'n man hê.
GC 3847 Die Veldpartijtjie.	GC 3858 Ou Tante Koos.

### GEZANGEN EN PSALMEN, Mej. Annie Visser.

GC 3848 Gezang 68—Zalig, zalig niets te wezen.  
GC 3849 Gezang 21—Diepe wijsheid zijn uw paden.  
GC 3850 Gezang 96—Halleluja, eeuwig dank en eere.  
GC 3851 Gezang 83—Heer, waar dan heen.  
GC 3852 Psalm 68—De Heer zal opstaan tot den strijd.  
GC 3853 Gezang 62—Heilige Jezus mij ten leven.

### KOMIES LIED, de heer G. L. Hutchinson.

GC 1431 Toe sê di Magistraat.

### HUMORISTIESE GESPREKKEN, de hr. C. V. Becker.

GC 1429 The Gun License. GC 1430 In Self Defence.

### GESPREKKEN IN AFRIKAANS.

GC 1330 Springboks conversing in South African Dutch.  
GC 4608 Springbok chorus and war cry.  
GC 1320 Boer recitation.  
GC 1319 Boer Dialogue.



### De Wonderlike „Cinch” Zonofoon

is het wonder van het jaar, is de duidelijkste van alle Spreek Machines en de zuiverheid van toon en de klank is juist dezelfde als op Hoorn Machines.

Deze kan als een gewoon pakje worden rondgedragen. De meest handige van alle Spreek Machines en de goedkoopste van alle goede soorten. Dit is inderdaad de wonderbaarlijkste waarde welke verkrijgbaar is en zal enige verlangde Plaat bespelen.

**Prijs £4.0.0**

## MACKAY BROS.,

MUZIEK HANDEL,

JOHANNESBURG, PRETORIA & POTCHEFSTROOM.

Enig Agent voor de Wereldberoemde Piano's van Bechstein, Steinway en Bluthner.

An early advertisement for Afrikaans gramophone records, *Die Brandwag*, 15 November 1910.

This advertisement was for a collection of recordings done in London at the studios of the Gramophone Company between 1906 and 1910, of which those by the Springboks are the oldest. Two things are of note here: it is uncertain whether the recordings were made only by the Afrikaans-speaking players or by the entire team, considering the possible tension between English and Afrikaans players so soon after the Anglo-Boer War. The other is the preference of Afrikaans over English songs, perhaps explained by the fact that Afrikaans was seen as an oddity worthy of recording. Of course, being British and situated in London, the company

would already have had more than enough English material, sung by singers more qualified than the Springboks. Furthermore, the caption of the advertisement is revealing:

Indien gij een Spreek Machine hebt, behoeft gij niet langer Engelse Platen te kopen, indien gij waarlik goede Muziek wenst te horen. Deze nieuwe Platen stellen u in staat de fraaiste Lieder en van deze tijd te horen en de prachtigste Gezangen in de eigen taal, welke zo na aan het hart van de Boer ligt.<sup>71</sup>

The tension between English and Afrikaans underscored here is indicative of wider political tension between these groups six months after the Union had been established. The term “Boer” is also significant. The wording used in this advertisement (by an English company) is not coincidental. The influential linguist and Afrikaans language campaigner of the Second Language Movement, Gustav Preller, said that practical businessmen should place ads in “Boer-language” to gain greater access to the buying public.<sup>72</sup>

*Die Brandwag* was launched in 1910 by the *Afrikaanse Taalgenootskap* (Afrikaans Language Society), as an important vehicle for language mobilisation in the wake of Union.<sup>73</sup> Isabel Hofmeyr’s perceptive analysis of the development of Afrikaans literary culture and its role in elaborating Afrikaner nationalist ideology brings into focus the way in which publications like *Die Brandwag* and *Huisgenoot* repackaged all manner of everyday things as “Afrikaans”.<sup>74</sup> Advertisements like the one above, as well as the records advertised, formed part of this process of defining Afrikaner identity and “building a nation from words”.<sup>75</sup> Of the 23 songs and dialogues, six are hymns and psalms, two are Afrikaner national anthems (which versions is uncertain), eight popular folk songs, three humorous songs/dialogues (two of which have English titles), and four are recordings of the Springboks conversing and/or singing in “South African Dutch”.<sup>76</sup> The *Gezangen* were Afrikaans versions of English hymns, and not original. The two English-titled dialogues by Clarence Vivian Becker are labelled as “Afrikaans talking” and appear on the flipside of two Afrikaans dialogues recorded by J.J. Smith.<sup>77</sup> According to Trehela, Becker started recording in 1908,<sup>78</sup> although the SAME’s earliest entry dates to 1910, which corresponds with Kelly’s catalogue.<sup>79</sup> Becker was one of the Springbok selectors of the 1906 tour, although it is uncertain whether or not he accompanied them to Britain, since he does not appear in the team photos of the tour.<sup>80</sup> If he was indeed part of the touring party, he might even have been present at their 1906 recording session.

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

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

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

74 *Ibid.*

75 *Ibid.*

76 *Die Brandwag*, 15 November 1910.

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

78 Trehela, *Song Safari*, p. 35.

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

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



Early Afrikaans records recorded in London, 1910 (from the J.J. Smith Collection).

The soprano Annie Visser features prominently in these recordings. A photo of Visser appeared in *De Goede Hoop* in June 1914 with the caption “Een bekwame vrijstaatse zangeres en een warm patriot” (One competent Free State singer and one warm patriot). Almost half a century later her patriotism again solicited interest in *Die Burger*<sup>81</sup> and the *Huisgenoot*.<sup>82</sup> Both articles depicted Visser as a true Afrikaner patriot, which is not surprising considering the particular political slants of these publications. Born on the farm Lokshoek in the Jagersfontein district of the Free State Republic in 1876, she was the youngest daughter of Gert Petrus Visser, who chaired the *Volksraad* (House of Assembly) for 19 years. Before the Anglo-Boer War, she studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London, but moved to Amsterdam because she “could not be a guest in a country against which her brothers were fighting”.<sup>83</sup> In an interview with the *Natal Mercury* she stated that she aimed at “... making the Dutchman proud of his language by singing

81 F. Stegmann, “Annie Visser Het Eerste in Londen Opgetree”, *Die Burger*, 07 September 1961.

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

83 F. Stegmann, “Baanbreker van die Afrikaanse Lied”, *Die Huisgenoot*, 15 March 1963, p. 61.

about it and in it ... the Dutch people need stirring up in this way.”<sup>84</sup> The articles also mentioned that she recorded the “Zuid Afrikaans Volkslied” on the very same day of the formation of the Union of South Africa, 31 May 1910, likely as a form of protest. Answering a public call for information on her life, State President C.R. Swart himself responded with a letter in which he revealed a number of facts attesting to her close connection to the Afrikaner political elite of the early twentieth century. According to him, Visser apparently enjoyed a close relationship with the Hertzogs and often spent time at their home. She also sang at the inaugural congress of Hertzog’s National Party in 1915, and was given the honour of choosing the colours of the new party (orange and white).<sup>85</sup> Although Stegmann’s accounts of Visser’s patriotism date to the height of Afrikaner nationalist optimism, her proximity to Afrikaner nationalism of the early decades of the twentieth century is important. Visser is even listed in the *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* (South African Biographical Dictionary), which confirms that she had at least some prominence.<sup>86</sup>

A more comprehensive source on her life is *Bridging the Divide: The story of a Boer-British family*, a book by Angela Read Lloyd, granddaughter of Lily Visser, Annie’s sister.<sup>87</sup> Lloyd’s well-researched account of over a century of two families’ histories (the Vissers and the Lloyds) provides in-depth information on Visser. Apart from interesting trivialities, like her brother Tom treating Winston Churchill’s hand after he was wounded and captured by the Boers, Lloyd’s account paints a compelling picture of Annie’s career. She made her debut in a concert at the Royal Albert Hall in May 1903,<sup>88</sup> while her solo debut was at the Aeolian Hall in London in 1904. At this performance, she sang different arias, but also included *African Romances*, by Samuel Coleridge Taylor, the renowned composer of West-Indian descent who was also her accompanist and whom she regarded as a personal friend.<sup>89</sup> Read Lloyd also gives some context to Visser’s relationship with Afrikaner politics. Touring South Africa with the well-known pianist Bosman di Ravelli in 1909 and again in 1912, she started to include more and more Afrikaans folk songs in her repertoire. The above quote about “...making the Dutchman proud of his language” was actually made in response to the upheaval that Hertzog caused in 1912 with his bilingual education bill for the Orange Free State and was preceded by “I am certain ... that I can do a great deal more than Mr Hertzog – and I am going to tell him so, too.”<sup>90</sup> She became involved in the movement to promote Afrikaans and became friends with the deposed president of the Free State, Marthinus Steyn, as well as the writer C.J. Langenhoven. At Hertzog’s speech at De Wildt on 7 December 1912, Visser climbed an ant heap and sang the Transvaal Anthem (the “Kent gij dat Volk” version) in a show of solidarity.<sup>91</sup> As her career waned in the following years, she became even more focused on her Boer heritage and became known as ‘Onse Vrystaatse

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

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

86 Vol. II, p. 838.

87 (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2002).

88 A feat very few Afrikaans singers have managed to date. One is singer/ artist Nataniël.

89 A. Read Lloyd: *Bridging the Divide: The story of a Boer-British family*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2002), p. 136

90 *Ibid.*, p. 151.

91 *Ibid.*, p. 152.

sangeres' (Our Free State songstress).<sup>92</sup> She remained fiercely political and involved herself in charity work among Afrikaner children until her death from breast cancer in August 1927.

Another seemingly patriotic Afrikaans singer was Joey Bosman who, like Visser, received classical vocal training in England, possibly during the Anglo-Boer War. According to a July 1903 article in *De Goede Hoop*, Bosman, during her three-year stay there, once responded to anti-Boer comments by calmly pinning a ribbon of the *Vierkleur* (the flag of the *Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek*) to her chest.<sup>93</sup> Apart from this one article, no other references to Bosman could be found and neither could any indication that she had recorded any music, since she returned to South Africa well before the first Afrikaans recordings. Since Bosman was her maiden name, she could well have made later recordings under a different surname. A certain Joey Marais recorded "Danie en Lenie" and "Nader mijn God bij U" in London in 1910,<sup>94</sup> while one Joey Stamrood recorded 14 songs, including "Zuid Afrika", in Cape Town in 1912.<sup>95</sup> This is of course speculation, but Bosman must have been a prominent enough singer to have been featured in a printed article. The branding of Bosman and Visser as patriots reminds one of the manner in which *Die Brandwag* and *Die Huisgenoot* glorified Afrikaans literary figures in articles and full-page photographs.<sup>96</sup>

Kate Opperman recorded "Het Volkslied van de Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek", "Het lied der Afrikaners" and "Volkslied van de Oranje-Vrystaat" in London c. 1912–1913.<sup>97</sup> Originally from Ladybrand in the Free State, she won a scholarship and left for London in 1911. Like Annie Visser, she performed at the Albert Hall, and also at the Queen's Hall and at Sunday League Concerts at the London Palladium during



Annie Visser – "Een bekwame vrijstaatse zangeres en een warm patriot", *De Goede Hoop*, June 1914.



Joey Bosman – Patriotic Afrikaans singer, *De Goede Hoop*, July 1903

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>93</sup> *De Goede Hoop*, July 1903, p. 146.

<sup>94</sup> Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol. 1, p. 374.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 380.

<sup>96</sup> Hofmeyr, "Building a nation from words: Afrikaans language, literature and ethnic identity", p. 109.

<sup>97</sup> Malan (ed.), *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Musiek Ensiklopedie*, Vol. 1, p. 376.

this time.<sup>98</sup> Returning to South Africa in 1914, she sang in aid of war funds and to entertain troops. Jan Smuts even mentioned her in a letter to his wife regarding possible singing tutelage for one of his daughters in 1921.<sup>99</sup> She returned to London in 1923 where she taught singing, performed operas and also sang on movie soundtracks (though probably never in Afrikaans).<sup>100</sup> The SAME has a detailed list of several other female singers who made pre-1912 recordings, including Ada Forrest's early recording of "Hondt (sic) het fort", c. 1907.<sup>101</sup> She also recorded "Die stor (sic) van Bethlehem" in 1908. The majority of Forrest's recordings were in English and it is doubtful that she had any overt political leanings. Between 1909 and 1913, she performed regularly at the Promenade concerts held at the Queen's Hall, although never in Afrikaans.<sup>102</sup> A singer who did, however, perform and record in Afrikaans was Floriel Florean. She recorded "Hul sal dit tog nie kry nie", "Overtuiging", "Ou tante Koos", "Grietjie", "Mamma, 'k wil 'n man hê" and "Toe sê de magistraat"<sup>103</sup> with orchestra, all dated to c. 1911.<sup>104</sup> A report in the *British Journal of Nursing* advertised an upcoming concert by Florean at the prestigious Bechstein Hall in 1913 and mentioned that she was known in London as the "Taal singer" who performed recitals of exclusively Afrikaans folk songs.<sup>105</sup> Intriguing as this is, no other information on her could be found, perhaps because she did not have the same social status as someone like Annie Visser. Notably, she donated half of the earnings to the Suffragettes.<sup>106</sup>



Kate Opperman.

Of all these female singers, Visser stands out for her political views, of which we are fortunate to have accounts. None of the other singers feature in collections of notable Afrikaans singers. Most seem to have been educated abroad, where they had access to recording studios. This makes them relatively privileged in terms of class as opposed to others who did not have the same opportunities. Apart from Visser, Floriel Florean is an interesting figure since she was known in London as someone who sang Afrikaans folk songs. This might also have had the manifestation of a political identity, or simply something that would have made her unique in the musical circles of London. We just don't know. The accompanists to these early female Afrikaans singers were seldom South African, let alone Afrikaners. Groups of foreigners also recorded Afrikaans music. An early example shows a Mackay Brothers advertisement for

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

99 J. van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts papers*, Vol. V, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 99.

100 J. van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts papers*, Vol. Vii, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) p. 428.

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

102 [www.Bbc.co.uk/proms/archive/performers/search/ada-forrest/1](http://www.Bbc.co.uk/proms/archive/performers/search/ada-forrest/1), accessed 20 Oct 2014.

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

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

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

106 *Ibid.*

an Afrikaans record of a c.1910 London recording of the “Treurmarsch”, a funeral march for Paul Kruger to the music of the “Transvaalsche Volkslied” by the British group The Black Diamonds<sup>107</sup> (although their name does not appear on the advertisement).<sup>108</sup> It was priced at two shillings and a sixpence:

Swanepoel lists other early advertisements of works that were also dedicated to Afrikaner leaders, such as “Valse Afrika”, dedicated to General Hertzog<sup>109</sup>, and “De Wet Marsch”, dedicated to General De Wet that were published sheet music and not actual music records.<sup>110</sup>

The Peerless Orkes’s “Vat jou goed en trek Ferreira” and “Tikkiedraai – selections of popular Afrikaner songs and airs” of 1909–1910 were also among the earliest Afrikaans music recordings.<sup>111</sup> All these recordings feature a mixture of Afrikaner national anthems, hymns and spirituals, Afrikaans dialogues and popular, light songs. In South Africa, informal popular music performances, especially dance music, were often carried out by coloured musicians,<sup>112</sup> but were not recorded. Coloured musicians simply did not study abroad, and thus did not have any access to the early recording studios like the white Afrikaans singers had. Furthermore, if one considers the sensation the first gramophone records caused in South Africa, with people flocking to public record concerts held nationwide,<sup>113</sup> it had to be a profound experience for Afrikaners. Not only did this new technology amaze listeners, but to be able to listen to Afrikaans music – like the anthem of the old Transvaal Republic – sung by sympathetic European singers, or the Springboks’ singing in Afrikaans while the trauma of the war was still raw, must have stirred up strong emotions. Pretorius mentions that Boer commandos were occasionally entertained in the field by music boxes looted from the British or from abandoned farmsteads (in one instance they came across a music box that only played three German songs),<sup>114</sup> although it is unlikely that they ever listened to Africana records during the war.



Paul Kruger – The first recorded Afrikaans voice? *Die Brandwag*, 15 June 1912.

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

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

109 Swanepoel, p. 482.

110 Swanepoel, p. 495.

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

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

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

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

## Recordings in South Africa, 1912

The number of Afrikaans recordings increased exponentially after 1912, when the Gramophone Company sent George Walter Dillnutt and his mobile recording unit to South Africa to make local recordings. These were probably the first in Sub-Saharan Africa, and were released under the subsidiary label Zonophone.<sup>115</sup> Over two hundred and sixty recordings were made in Johannesburg and Cape Town during March and April that year and the SAME lists at least 126 Afrikaans tracks that were released as albums.<sup>116</sup> Quite a number of these were of religious songs. The Het Moeder Kerk Koor from Cape Town, conducted by C. Denholm Walker, recorded 28 spirituals mostly directly translated from English, with a smattering of *Psalms en Gezangen*.<sup>117</sup> Among these recordings were Afrikaans stories, notably poet Melt J. Brink's own works, like "Mijn land, mijn volk, en taal", and "Die vrome meid, deel 1/ Deel 2", as well as "Afrikaans talking".<sup>118</sup> Brink was a well-known *volksdigter* (folk poet), as well as a prolific playwright, known for his humorous pieces.<sup>119</sup> Singer P.J. du Toit recorded "N' dronkklidjie van 'n Mozambique" (A drunken song from a Mozambican) and "N' Jolly Hotnot" in Johannesburg in 1912.<sup>120</sup> This song has an overtly racial connotation: a "Mozambique" in such a context is a reference to an imported slave, and "Hotnot" a derogatory term referring to a coloured person. The comic Willem Versfeld featured prominently and made at least 26 recordings, including the humorous Bantu song "Sakobong Songki".<sup>121</sup> Although the themes varied substantially between Afrikaans folk songs, storytelling, humorous monologues, and other "bawdy and also racist tunes,"<sup>122</sup> they bear witness to the Afrikaner's *weltanschauung* at the time. Also noteworthy is that there are very few recordings of Afrikaner national anthems among these.

From 1 November 1912, Mackay Brothers also advertised these locally recorded "Zonophone Double Discs" at three shillings and sixpence per 10-inch record and five shillings per 12-inch.<sup>123</sup> Two other advertisements – one by Columbia-Rena Records (at a slightly more affordable three shillings) and another by its local representative, Polliack's, soon followed for South African records in the issue of 15 December 1912.<sup>124</sup> All these companies and their local agencies would be involved in the local record industry for a number of years, which makes them very influential during the early part of the Afrikaans record industry. These examples of cultural ephemera are important because they targeted a specific Afrikaner market. Furthermore, the issue of price is germane. At three shillings and sixpence per record, they were relatively expensive. A later, 1930 advertisement for Gallo's Singer label Afrikaans records shows that they were priced at four shillings and sixpence,<sup>125</sup> more than the daily wage of three shillings and sixpence for white

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

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

117 *Ibid.*, p. 375.

118 *Ibid.*, pp. 360-361.

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

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

121 [http://www.flatinternational.org/template\\_volume.php?volume\\_id=280](http://www.flatinternational.org/template_volume.php?volume_id=280), accessed 12 June 2014.

122 *Ibid.*

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

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

125 *Opskommel*, 1992, Vol. 1, p. 16.



unskilled labourers during this time.<sup>126</sup> Unfortunately, it is impossible to determine exactly how many Afrikaners owned gramophone players before the First World War, although the number of Afrikaans recordings and advertisements hints at some demand.

This 1916 advertisement for gramophone records (many of which were probably recorded in London before 1912) shows three main themes: nationalism, folk songs and spirituals. Various nationalist anthems were recorded, like “Vaderlands Liefde”, “Unie Volkslied”, “Zuid Afrikaanse Volkslied”, “Oranje Vrijstaat Volkslied”, “Transvaal Volkslied”, and “Afrikaner Volkslied”. Popular folk songs were “Mamma ik wil een man hê”, “ou Tante Koos” and “Grietjie”. These recordings were significant; on the one hand, they played on the nostalgia associated with the independence of the old Free State and Transvaal Republics, and on the other appealed to a separate political identity for Afrikaners inside the Union. They are also significant in the wake of the 1914 rebellion, when many Afrikaners sought independence for the Union from Britain. The advertisements for sheet music and records dedicated to Afrikaner leaders like Hertzog, De Wet and (by then deceased) Kruger also attest to their prominence as *volk* heroes. Apart from a sense of nationhood, this much larger sample of recordings (including those of the following decades) contain codes of racial dominance, language aspirations, anti-imperialism and religion – all themes that were later invoked during the 1930s and the rise of a more “virulent”<sup>127</sup> form of Afrikaner nationalism.

The development of the South African recording industry was interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, when it became too difficult to send the recordings back to England for pressing and then back again to South Africa as finished products. It only resumed in 1924 with the Edison-Bell Company sending a recording studio to Cape Town that recorded 50 double-sided albums using new acoustic technology. Of these recordings, only eleven were in Afrikaans, and most featured light operatic singers and church choirs.<sup>128</sup> The following year saw an increase in the number of local recordings – still mostly in English – with the introduction of electric recording technology. Most of these new recordings were made for the HMV Company.<sup>129</sup> The material differed somewhat from the earlier recordings in that national anthems and folk songs did not feature so prominently. By this time, of course, the Afrikaner

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

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

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

129 *Ibid.*

## GRAMOFOON PLATEN

Slechts

£5 10.

Geld met be-

stelling.

Verpakt en

vrachtvrij af-

geleverd op uw

naastbijgelegen Spoor-

weg Station.



GRA-  
TIS

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

**Wacht niet; en zend uw bestelling VAN JAAG  
GRAMOFOON PLATEN.**

Een paar speciaal uitgezochte melodien, alle tegen 3/6 per stuk. Komplete lijsten postvrij toegezonden.

- No. X100. Vaderlands Liefde. Unie Volkslied.
- No. X101. Zuid Afrikaans Volkslied. Ons Vaderland.
- No. X102. Nader Mijn God. De Goede Strieder.
- No. X103. Oranje Vrijstaat Volkslied. Transvaal Volkslied.
- No. X104. Danie en Lennie. Wat jou goed en trek Ferriera.
- No. X105. n Nationale Lied voor Afrikaners. Afrikaner Volkslied.
- No. X106. Die Meisies van di Kaap. Mamma ik wil een man hê
- No. X107. Om Jan n' Est-partij. Een Vlakte Meid.
- No. X108. O God van Bethel. Room in het Kruis
- No. X109. Gesang. Gesang 120: Verzen 1 en 2.
- No. X110. Danie en Lennie. Nader Mijn God bij U.
- No. X111. God is ons Hoop en Kruis. Loer Mij, O Heer.
- No. X112. Gesang 98 (Zalig, Zalig niste te vreesen.) Gesang 21 (Oop wysheid sijn uw paden.)
- No. X113. Gesang 96. Gesang 83.
- No. X114. Zijt gij Moede. De beste Vriend.
- No. X115. Rinne op mij Vingers. Alice. Waar zijt Gij?
- No. X116. Cool Marra. Het Lied der Afrikaners.
- No. X117. Ou Tante Koos. Grietjie.

Schrijf verdrag om uw u nodig hebt aan  
**THE HENDRY WILLIAMS CO.,**  
BUS 495. - - - - - KAAPSTAD.

Afrikaner national anthems, folk songs and hymns, *Die Huisgenoot*, September 1916.

political landscape had changed notably as Hertzog's National Party came to power in 1924, and it seems that the nationalist fervour of the previous decade had subsided somewhat, if only in the record industry. The local recordings were made onto wax discs and sent to London, where they were pressed onto regular shellac discs.<sup>130</sup> The quality of these mobile recordings was inferior, which led to record companies in the 1920s and 1930s often sending their artists to London to record at better studios. On the other hand, local recordings were cheaper and meant quicker releases.<sup>131</sup> Technological advances in the recoding process and the actual discs themselves would continue to have a substantial impact on the music industry. Another element crucial for the dissemination of popular music, was (and still is) radio.

## Radio

The history of radio broadcasting in South Africa has been documented more thoroughly than the history of popular Afrikaans music records (Eric Rosenthal,<sup>132</sup> Ruth and Keyan Tomaselli and Johan Muller,<sup>133</sup> and Peter Orlik<sup>134</sup> are all authoritative sources), although the two ran parallel. Radio broadcasting in South Africa has a history of proximity to political events, including conditions of war, which dominated its first two decades of development. In 1898, the Field Telegraph Section of the Transvaal State Artillery ordered a wireless apparatus from the Siemens company in Germany, but it arrived too late to be of use in the ensuing Anglo-Boer War. British forces also intercepted further equipment to Paul Kruger in Cape Town in November 1899.<sup>135</sup> Local broadcasting was almost off to a very early start in 1896, when a young Edward Jennings – employed by the Post Office in Port Elizabeth – successfully experimented with wireless signals based on his own independent research.<sup>136</sup> This made him one of the world's very first wireless broadcasters, but unfortunately for him, this “unique distinction for South Africa”<sup>137</sup> did not receive state support and was subsequently largely forgotten. The first legislation regarding the new technology of radio broadcasting was promulgated in 1902, when the Cape Parliament amended the Electric Telegraph Act of 1861 to include “Wireless Telegraphy” systems.<sup>138</sup> The following years would see the development of wireless technology mostly for military use, with specific restrictions on non-military use during the First World War.

By 1919, these restrictions on wartime wireless transmissions were lifted, which paved the way for amateur radio enthusiasts, or “hams”, to start experimenting with radio broadcasting. John Samuel Streeter was perhaps the best known of these as he was responsible for South Africa's

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130 *Ibid.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

137 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

138 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

first regular weekly broadcasts of selected gramophone recordings of musical concerts from Cape Town.<sup>139</sup> The first broadcast of a live music performance (a string quartet) was made by a G.D. Walker in 1922 from the dining-room of his home in Uitenhage.<sup>140</sup> Although these early broadcasters were not much more than hobbyists, radio became increasingly popular, which necessitated regulatory legislation by 1922 when it became a legal requirement for amateur radio transmitters to have a licence. Streeter was awarded the first: licence number 1 (A1A).<sup>141</sup> His broadcasts continued until September 1924 and could be picked up as far away as Pietersburg. He even made the first radio contact between South Africa and the US. Ultimately, these early “hams” operated outside the sphere of Afrikaans culture, as they were mostly middle-class English urbanites, but they were pioneers in what would become a more official technological platform for the mass distribution of Afrikaans culture.

The South African Railways made the first official radio broadcast on the evening of 18 December 1923, which led to the establishment of the first radio station on 29 December in Johannesburg. This station was taken over by the Scientific and Technical Club on 1 July 1924, and would subsequently be known as “JB”.<sup>142</sup> The Cape and Peninsula Broadcasting Association started a similar service in Cape Town on 15 September 1924, followed by the Durban Corporation on 10 December 1924. The income of these three radio stations came from licencing, which turned out to be unsustainable.<sup>143</sup> During the 1920s, local radio broadcasting was mostly in English – for various reasons – but also included some live broadcasts of Afrikaans music performances. It is unclear exactly when the first of these took place and by whom. The most probable candidate for this achievement is Chris Blignaut. Blignaut started his career during the First World War (when no overseas artists could visit South Africa) when he secured a three-week contract to perform English songs under the pseudonym “Harold Wise”.<sup>144</sup> Some sources date his first radio performance (in English) to 1923,<sup>145</sup> which is very early, seeing that official broadcasting only commenced on 18 December of that year. A JB radio programme from 22 January 1926 shows him singing in English, but under his own name.<sup>146</sup> It is not clear exactly when he started broadcasting in Afrikaans, but his first records were released in 1929, shortly after which he starred in Afrikaans short films, the first Afrikaans singer to do so.<sup>147</sup> Even though exact dates and information on the early days of his broadcasting career are not forthcoming, he was undoubtedly a major figure in early Afrikaans radio, film and music.<sup>148</sup>

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

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

141 *Ibid.*

142 *Ibid.*, p. 58.

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

144 Beyers, C. J. (ed.): *Suid-Afrikaanse Bibliografiese Woordeboek, Vol. V*, (Pretoria: Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing, 1987), pp. 60-61.

145 P. Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek* (Pretoria: Sigma Press, 1987), p. 78, see also Beyers, *Suid-Afrikaanse Bibliografiese Woordeboek, Vol. V*, p. 61.

146 Trehwela, *Song Safari*, p. 37.

147 Beyers, *Suid-Afrikaanse Bibliografiese Woordeboek, Vol. V*, p. 61.

148 More biographical detail on Blignaut follows in chapter two.

Language was an especially important issue in the broadcasting business. English dominated early broadcasts, which offended some Afrikaners. This was exacerbated by the fact that English speakers were concentrated in the cities (where they dominated the Afrikaner urban poor) and had good reception, while the power base of the Afrikaners remained in the rural areas where reception was limited.<sup>149</sup> Those Afrikaners in the cities were mostly too poor to afford radio receivers and licence fees.<sup>150</sup> On 1 April 1927, all three stations were combined into the African Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) by the Schlesinger Corporation, which obtained a five-year concession (later extended to ten)<sup>151</sup> from Hertzog's government to control all broadcasting in South Africa. The ABC followed a commercial American model of broadcasting,<sup>152</sup> which meant that its programming was primarily determined by popularity and by maximising audience numbers. This meant that by far the majority of listeners were English speakers in urban areas, leading to almost exclusively English programmes. The 1920s was also an important historical phase in Afrikaner politics and language struggles, especially after Afrikaans replaced Dutch as one of two official languages of the Union following the promulgation of the Official Languages of the Union Act on 8 May 1925. However, this official recognition of Afrikaans was not reflected in the broadcasts of the ABC. Considering the fact that the ABC relied on licence fees for its income, this made sense, but it also gives one an interesting indication of the geographic distribution of Afrikaners and English-speaking whites and hints at differences in social class. The black population at this time also did not constitute a viable source of income for the ABC. Both the record and radio industry would enter vital phases of development in the following decade.

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

150 *Ibid.*

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

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

## CHAPTER TWO

### “Local flavour”, tensions, and the rise of Afrikaner nationalism

#### Popular Afrikaans music during the 1930s

In early 1930 the Columbia Company in the US placed advertisements in local newspapers stating that they would be sending their own recording equipment to South Africa with the specific purpose of recording music with a local flavour.<sup>1</sup> What they meant by “local flavour” became clear shortly after when, on 20 March 1930, Columbia’s local agent, H. Polliack & Co., signed the first local recording contract with the undisputed star of popular Afrikaans music from this era, Chris Blynnaut.<sup>2</sup> Throughout, they imported music sung in English and recorded abroad to sell in the local market, but the fact that they bothered with the added expense of bringing a recording unit to South Africa with a focus on the Afrikaans market is telling. Also in the Columbia stable was their subsidiary label, Regal, which released cheap *boeremusiek* records.<sup>3</sup> Releasing these records constituted a successful strategy to counter the effect of the Great Depression. Columbia’s move prompted various responses in the local recording industry, leading to numerous valuable recordings of early popular Afrikaans music. The Gallo Record Company, the local agent for Brunswick-Balke-Collender, also from the US, had to borrow

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

2 DC Pretorius, p. 21

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

a significant sum for the production of cheaper records under their Singer label (which later changed to Gallotone), also specifically aimed at the poorer section of Afrikaners.

The 1930s were liminal years for Afrikaners who, as a group, showed deeply differentiated social and cultural networks, and the popularity of these Regal and Singer *boeremusiek* albums underscored heterogeneous elements of class and to an extent, political, affinity. While *boeremusiek* recordings by people like Faan Harris and Silver de Lange, or groups like Die Vyf Dagbrekers, Die Vier Transvalers, Die Vier Springbokke, and Die Ses Hartbrekers, had no explicit intent other than light-hearted entertainment, it formed part of the popular culture of the lower strata of Afrikaner society<sup>4</sup> that had by this time become a serious point of state concern. This is illustrated by the following statement, the only reference to musical activities among poor whites in the Carnegie Commission's report of 1932:

Immediately (after receiving payment) they start living in luxury; instead of saving, they buy a number of things they do not need, such as a gramophone or a piano.<sup>5</sup>

It showed that poor white families earned more in the towns or on “diggings” than on the farm, but since they lacked experience in dealing with money, they often squandered it. Musical instruments and gramophone players were associated with the “improvident care-free life” of poor whites: living lavishly when they had money, and depending on charity when not.<sup>6</sup> The more fortunate men found work as “(s)hepherds, foresters and woodmen, ‘bywoners’, railway labourers, labourers in general, unskilled industrial workers, ‘transport riders’, diggers.”<sup>7</sup> Along with other social ills like crime, unemployment and a lack of education, it testified to the maladjustment to the economic decline of alarmingly high numbers of poor whites. Several historical factors had led to the gradual decline in the fortunes of many Afrikaners by the early 1930s. The practice of bequeathing divided sections of farms to the surviving children (or at least the sons) had, by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, often resulted in the fragmentation of viable agricultural land into smaller, economically unsustainable units that quickly forced their new owners to sell and move to the cities, or to become *bywoners* on someone else's land. This was exacerbated by the Depression of the early 1930s, which caused a slump in commodity prices that affected rural Afrikaner producers, while small businesses, factories, mines and shops closed. Furthermore, a severe drought in 1932–1933 made it even more difficult for farmers to survive. The economic decline had political implications as well. By early 1933, the popularity of Prime Minister Hertzog's National Party had dwindled to such an extent that he was seriously considering fusing with his rival Jan Smuts's South African Party. This became a reality in 1934 and caused an uproar among more hard-line Afrikaner nationalists that led to the establishment of the breakaway *Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party* (Purified National Party) under D.F. Malan.

Officially called the Carnegie Commission into the Poor White problem in South Africa, it was the first large-scale scientific effort to analyse the situation of poor whites – a social ill that until 1932, when the findings were published, was generally believed to be the result of some

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4 Froneman, p. 29

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

6 *Ibid.*

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

innate moral deficiency. Shedding light on the effects of urbanisation, displacement, low levels of education and so forth, the report brought the issue of poor whiteism to the centre of political discussion. The reality of hundreds of thousands of poor whites living in squalor in the urban centres and intermixing freely with other races held significant political consequences and resulted in numerous efforts to uplift those in danger of slipping across the race line. For some, this also meant uplifting musical taste. An example can be found in a report by the chairman of the FAK, Dr N.J. van der Merwe, at the FAK *Kultuurkongres* (Culture congress) of 1931:

When the Columbia Company made public its plans to make Afrikaans recordings, the FAK felt that the taste of the developed Afrikaner should be tainted as little as possible by frivolity. We ensured the company of our support if they released records of outstanding quality. Yet business and sentiment mostly do not go hand in hand, and we later had to complain in a letter against the release of such songs as “Brandewyn laat my staan” and “Hou jou roksak toe.” Ladies and gentlemen, we can only counteract these inferior records by buying recordings with higher artistic content and to not give the performers of “Brandewyn – en roksak”-songs a personal stage to perform in front of us.<sup>8</sup>

“Hou jou roksak toe” was recorded for Columbia by Joe Snyman, with the B-side “Die Aap se Bruilof”.<sup>9</sup> Joe Snyman also recorded with Boy Solomon and the Voortrekker Danskwartet, which was one of the very first *boeremusiek* groups to record for Columbia, along with Die Vyf Vastrappers.<sup>10</sup> As the number of urban Afrikaners started to grow during the 1930s, “organisation Afrikaners”<sup>11</sup> like the FAK began to make slow inroads into the mobilisation of Afrikaners as a group under the auspices of Afrikaner ethnic nationalism. However, it is doubtful whether they had any real influence over record companies in 1931 since the organisation was then only two years old.

One of its initial tasks was the commissioning of an Afrikaans *Volksangbundel* (Folk songbook) in 1931. The first person who was approached to oversee this project was Stephen Eyssen. Eyssen was a classically trained musician who at one stage received tutelage under C. Denholm Walker, who conducted the Het Moederkerk choir for the 1912 local Afrikaans recordings in Cape Town (see chapter one). He remained an active figure in the FAK and later the SABC. After a few years of slow progress, he was joined by missionary/teacher/composer Hugo Gutsche (who became the chief editor of the *bundel*) and the well-known Afrikaans poet W.J. du P. Erlank (also known as Eitemal) in 1934. They managed to put together the first publication in 1937. Although not the first compilation of Afrikaans songs, this was the largest at the time (314 songs), and was a collection of Afrikaans folk and liturgical songs and national anthems that were considered *volksvriendelik* (nation friendly) and an acceptable part of the developing Afrikaner nationalist cultural heritage. It excluded songs that were judged *volksvreemd* (foreign to the nation) by the FAK. There is a level of irony in that a number of the songs included in the *Volksangbundel* were directly borrowed from existing songs from abroad and given Afrikaans lyrics, and were thus not as unique to Afrikaner culture as suggested. Apart from the *Volksangbundel* project, and

8 “Verslag van FAK Kultuurkongres”, *Handhaaf en Bou* 4 (21–23 Des 1931), p. 7, translated from original.

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

10 Froneman, p. 29.

11 Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp. 400–402.

in partnership with HMV, the FAK commissioned the recording of seven Afrikaans records in Johannesburg in either 1930 or 1931. These were more 'serious' records, and included numbers sung by classically trained singers like Nunez Holtzhausen, Anna Steyn, and Eysen himself. The orchestra of the ABC (African Broadcasting Company) backed the singers.<sup>12</sup>

Whereas the FAK responded to Columbia's announcement of their recording plans by letter, Gallo responded by hurriedly sending some of their artists to London to record at the studio of the Metropole Record Company.<sup>13</sup> Here, Lou Davidson, Tredoux Odendaal and Gerald Steyn recorded more than fifty Afrikaans masters with the help of recording engineer John Hecht. Hecht later moved to South Africa and in 1936 erected the first gramophone pressing plant in South Africa for Gallo, thereby unwittingly ensuring the survival and growth of the local recording music industry during the Second World War when it became impossible to ship masters overseas for pressing.<sup>14</sup> The music Davidson, Odendaal and Steyn recorded during these London sessions ranged from polkas, waltzes, *vastrap* and sentimental songs to a few gospel numbers. The instrumentation was also ground-breaking, in that for the first time, the concertina, violin, ukulele, banjo and mandolin could be heard on Afrikaans records.<sup>15</sup> These instruments, especially the concertina, became synonymous with popular Afrikaans music of the time. English hits were also translated into Afrikaans and re-recorded, like "Klein Maat", which was an authorised translation of Al Jolson's hit "Little Pal".<sup>16</sup> These three artists were under pressure to record as much material as possible in a short period (to ensure that Gallo released their music before Columbia). This explains the studio dynamics and essential borrowing of songs that did not originate in South Africa. When there was a shortage of songs and time pressure to release albums, record companies often followed a pragmatic approach to sourcing material. This strategy would become a regular feature of the South African record industry, including the Afrikaans sector, and would later result in many *Schlager* hits finding an extended shelf-life as reworked Afrikaans songs.

Gallo managed to release their records a mere four days before Columbia's recording unit arrived in Cape Town in May 1930.<sup>17</sup> They soon sent more musicians, including a group of black artists, to record in London.<sup>18</sup> Two of the Afrikaans musicians sent over in the second wave, known only by their surnames Coetzer and Meyer, seem to have backed the black singers in July 1930.<sup>19</sup> On another 1930 recording made at the same studio by Griffiths Motsieloa and Ignatius Monare, the Hawaiian guitars were most likely played by Pieter Burger and Jan van Dyl.<sup>20</sup> These two examples of inter-racial collaboration were exceptions to the rule. Despite the popularity of these early recordings, the commercial Afrikaans music market only gained

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

13 *Ibid.*

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

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

16 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

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

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

20 R. Allingham, cited in C. Ballantine, *Marabi Nights, Jazz, 'race' and society in early apartheid South Africa* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2012), p. 218.



effective momentum in Johannesburg in 1932,<sup>21</sup> when Gallo built the first recording studio in sub-Saharan Africa and started to produce its own local masters.<sup>22</sup> Due to traffic noise, the studio moved to a new address at 150 Market Street in 1933. In 1938, it moved to the sixth floor of a building on the corner of Troye and President Street, where it remained for the next three decades.<sup>23</sup>

## Prominent Afrikaans music artists of the 1930s

While Gallo was sending its artists to London in 1930, Chris Blignaut kicked off a highly successful recording career. In the first quarter of 1931 alone, he sold almost 55 000 albums for Columbia.<sup>24</sup> In his two-decade-long recording career (between 1930 and 1949), he recorded approximately 240 songs for a number of different record companies, and sold in excess of two million records.<sup>25</sup> He was also the first to reach the one million mark in record sales. The success of commercial Afrikaans music caused musicians to take a pragmatic approach regarding their stage names. Ironically, while Chris Blignaut started singing on the radio as Harold Wise,<sup>26</sup> by the 1930s a number of English musicians had to change their names to appear Afrikaans:

So he introduced me on the piano, Les Kelly on bass, Billy Wright on guitar and so on. Only three of us were Afrikaans: Susan, Sam Petzer and myself. So we changed the names of the others so the listeners wouldn't say, "Oh, this is just a lot of Rooinekke playing." Les Kelly, for instance, became Les Meintjies, and so on. Chris Lessing was the vocalist. Sam Petzer was on piano accordion. He used to waggle the concertina as well, so as to satisfy the traditionalists.<sup>27</sup>

Blignaut also acted as a talent scout. Many of the *boeorekeste* (*boeremusiek* bands) from the Johannesburg area that recorded some of the earliest albums did so after being approached by Blignaut. Unfamiliar with the local *boeremusiek* scene, he asked a young musician, Gerrie Snyman, to help him source different groups for recording sessions. Among these were Die Vier Springbokke,<sup>28</sup> Die Vier Transvalers,<sup>29</sup> and Die Vyf Dagbrekers.<sup>30</sup> Blignaut was also responsible for naming many of them since most did not have names.<sup>31</sup> Gerrie Snyman had started his own

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

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

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

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

25 *Ibid.*

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

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

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

29 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

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

performing career at the Labour Party Club in Johannesburg.<sup>32</sup> Whether or not this was the result of political motives, though, is unclear. Many of the musicians were miners who came from the East Rand's mining towns, or transport riders who did not have any formal musical training. The fact that Blignaut was removed from the *boeoreorkeste* in his native Johannesburg hints at class distinction. As a successful insurance salesman throughout his music career,<sup>33</sup> he was a middle-class Afrikaner.

Blignaut's politics, like many other top-selling Afrikaans artists, were probably more pragmatic than ideological. He could satirise political tension between Afrikaner factions at the expense of both sides, as can be heard on his song "NAT en SAP".<sup>34</sup> Such satire was acceptable when presented in a certain non-partisan way, even at times of high political tension. He would also adapt his repertoire, depending on how conservative the audience was:

He had one or two mildly naughty songs and, if he spotted too many stern faces  
before him, he'd give me the cue and out they'd go.<sup>35</sup>

Trewhela's account of his tours with Blignaut is an important source. He mentions that concert tickets in the *platteland* were priced at two shillings and a sixpence and that, while this seems low, audiences would not have been able to afford more.<sup>36</sup> Despite his success, none of his hits were included in the first FAK *Volksangbundel* of 1937. Other popular Afrikaans recording artists faced stiffer opposition from the cultural elites, most notably David de Lange.

David de Lange was a singing miner who was extremely popular among the growing Afrikaner working class.<sup>37</sup> Much of his music was released on the cheaper Singer label and later on Gallotone. He was the first artist to record vocals over traditional *boeremusiek* – apparently an old practice that was common at dances where this genre of music was played.<sup>38</sup> His musical style was not limited to this genre. According to Froneman, some of his music also bore a strong resemblance to American vaudeville and many of his songs were direct translations of popular American tunes.<sup>39</sup> During the Second World War he also translated many popular English wartime hits into Afrikaans.<sup>40</sup> Considering this, de Lange was a versatile entertainer and not limited to *boeremusiek*. De Lange is portrayed as an enigmatic figure today, despite the fact that he had faded into relative obscurity even before his death in 1947. Apart from sporadic re-releases of his music, he was later remembered in a reference to him in one of singer Randall Wicomb's hit songs from the 1980s, "Duitswes Wals", also known as "Dans met die rooi rok"

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32 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

33 Trewhela, *Song Safari*, p. 38.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

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

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

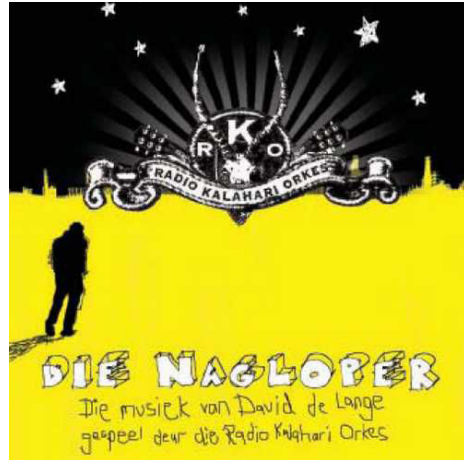
39 W. Froneman, "Seks, Ras en Boeremusiek: agter die retoriek van gebrekkige sanglus by die 1938-Voortrekkereuefees", *Litnet Akademies* 11:2 (2014), p. 428.

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

(Dance with the red dress).<sup>41</sup> More recently, he served as the inspiration behind the musical *Die Naglopers*, written by Rian Malan and performed by the Radio Kalahari Orkes, who also released a CD of his music in 2007. This added greatly to the mythology behind the man. Romanticised by Malan as an outsider, a hard drinker, fornicator and anti-hero, he epitomised rebellion long before the Afrikaans rock of Anton Goosen and Koos Kombuis.<sup>42</sup>



Gallo's Singer label, with David de Lange's "Die Verneuk Setties" (G.E. 218).



David de Lange's music revisited by the Radio Kalahari Orkes on the album *Die Nagloper*, in 2007, 60 years after his death (Sony BMG Terrac01).

During this revival and revisiting of his work, some debate emerged on the online Afrikaans site, *Litnet*, on the spelling of his name and place of birth (and death).<sup>43</sup> Among the correspondence, Rob Allingham referred to a letter that was written by the FAK executive to the newly formed SABC – probably in 1937 or 1938 – asking them not to broadcast his music since it was of too low a standard and an embarrassment to the culture of the Afrikaner. Regardless of whether or not this letter was the main motivation (or even if it still exists), other sources do confirm that the SABC never broadcast his music. This was despite the fact that he sold hundreds of thousands of records.<sup>44</sup> In 1936, the same year the SABC was established, he released the first recording of "Suikerbossie", one of the biggest hits of the 1930s and to this day one of the most famous Afrikaans songs.<sup>45</sup> An English translation of "Suikerbossie" – "Sugar Bush" – was released by Doris Day and Frankie Lane in 1952 in the US, and apparently reached the top ten on the American hit parade.<sup>46</sup>

At least De Lange's music was not totally lost for South African radio listeners, since LM Radio (Radio Lourenço Marques) in Mozambique broadcasted a daily programme, hosted by Arthur

41 *Ibid.*

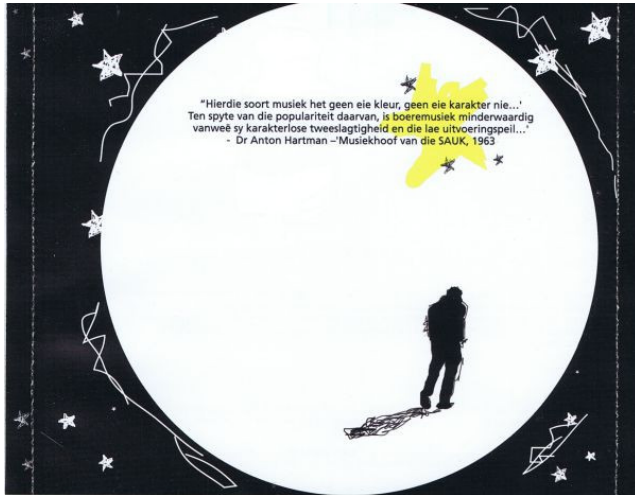
42 3 July 2006, <http://www.oulitnet.co.za/senet/senet.asp?id=48859>, accessed 23 August 2012; see also T. Engelbrecht, "Die Souties wat 'n seties laat swing", *Rapport*, 28 November 2009.

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

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

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

46 Pretorius, p. 26.



"This type of music has no own colour; no own character ... Despite the popularity thereof, boeremusiek remains inferior due to its characterless ambivalence and its low level of performance ..." – Dr Anton Hartman, Music head of the SABC, 1963! – The inside sleeve of *Die Nagloper*.

Swemmer (later a well-known actor), of exclusively David de Lange songs.<sup>47</sup> Founded in 1935, LM Radio provided decades' worth of music to South African listeners that was deemed unfavourable by the SABC. One could even pick up LM Radio broadcasts as far away as Cape Town. Many of the programmes were specifically intended for South African audiences and South Africans could even advertise services and products on LM Radio.<sup>48</sup>

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

"...Sewe jaar het ek na haar gevry, en die agste jaar toe verneuk sy vir my..." ("Seven years I courted her, the eighth year she betrayed me") "...Eers was ek 'n dronklap..." ("Once I was a drunkard") "...Ver van Christiana het Pop-eye San gebly, Sy was ook glad nie mooi, maar maggies sy kon vry..." ("Far from Christiana lived Pop-eye San, she really wasn't pretty, but goodness, could she smooch") "...Babbelaas se ouma woon in Boomstraat..." ("Hangover's grandma lived in Boom Street") "...Hartebeespoortdam is 'n lekker plek. Dis waar die nooiens van brandsiek vrek..." ("Hartebeespoortdam is a nice place. That's where the girls die of scabs").<sup>49</sup>

This ambivalence had no real effect on the record companies. In fact, De Lange's success was critical for the financial survival of Gallo during this period. In 1938, with the Centenary Trek capturing the imagination of so many Afrikaners, Singer used the opportunity to release a special album commemorating the event with a mixture of Afrikaans music genres, from the

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

48 <http://lmradio.org/History.html>, accessed 30 April 2013.

49 *Opskommel* 4, 1990, p. 2.

“Transvaalse Volkslied” and hymns (with the instruction that they should be sung at Christmas and New Year’s celebrations), to songs by David de Lange.<sup>50</sup> Such a mixture would have been very unlikely if the FAK had any say in the matter. Despite the price, the records were selling well. Even though his working-class references displeased the Afrikaner cultural elites of the FAK, they were a small minority. Giliomee puts the total Afrikaner population during the mid-1930s at just over a million,<sup>51</sup> which means that probably one in every two Afrikaners owned a David de Lange record. It is, admittedly, impossible to pinpoint his exact audience. With the number of records he was selling, he must have had a wide fan base in the cities and the *platteland*.

The song-writing couple Cissie and Willie Cooper wrote many popular songs during the 1930s, among them Chris Blignaut’s greatest commercial hit, “Die Donkie” (The Donkey).<sup>52</sup> Their career, however, was severely affected by the outbreak of the Second World War due to the disruption caused by German submarines, as well as the fact that only essentials had clearance for shipping.<sup>53</sup> Music masters, which up until then had to be shipped from Cape Town to Britain for pressing there, were not essential in times of war. Even large amounts of already pressed singles of “Voortrekker Dans” destined for Cape Town had to be unloaded in Southampton in favour of more necessary goods.<sup>54</sup>

Notably, the couple also wrote songs that referred to political and social events of the 1930s, a rarity among Afrikaans songwriters of the time. Their song “Koalisie” (Coalition) was written after Smuts and Hertzog’s fusion in 1934, and they wrote “Voortrekker Nooi” and “Voortrekker Dans” (the ill-fated single waiting on the Southampton docks) for the 1938 Centenary Trek celebrations.<sup>55</sup> The Smuts-Hertzog fusion split the loyalties among Afrikaners – with the opposition Afrikaner group playing a central role in the organising of the Centenary Trek. As with Chris Blignaut, who could make jokes at the expense of both the *Natte* and the *Sappe*,<sup>56</sup> the Coopers seemed to have had a pragmatic approach when it came to politics.

With the establishment of a dedicated Afrikaans service of the SABC in 1937 came a demand for more Afrikaans music content and musicians – especially professional ones – adapted to the changing scene. None did so more than the band leader Hendrik Susan.<sup>57</sup> Susan started his music career in the 1920s in Lourenço Marques and then Salisbury, before returning to South Africa and playing at hotels and dance halls in and around Johannesburg. He swapped his music career for a farming one between 1929 and 1932 when the Depression made it even more difficult to survive on music than agriculture. He returned to music in 1933 when he made his

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

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

52 *Ibid.*, p. 40.

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

54 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

56 Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*, p. 78. *Natte* referred initially to the supporters of Hertzog’s National Party, and later included the nationalists who supported Malan, while *Sappe* referred to the supporters Smuts’ South African Party.

57 For a more detailed analytical account of Susan’s career, see Froneman’s *Pleasure Beyond the Call of Duty*, pp. 126-135.

first recordings for Columbia. In 1937, Gideon Roos and Pieter de Waal – who was one of the early Afrikaans broadcasters on the JB service of the ABC<sup>58</sup> – approached Susan to form a band that would perform live Afrikaans music on the air for the SABC.<sup>59</sup> De Waal, especially, was influential in organising very popular *koffiehuiskonserte* (coffee-house concerts) which were often broadcast live. De Waal and Susan created a more modern sound to fit the changing times and departed from the normal *vastrap boeremusiek* which was so popular up to then. Susan came from a different musical background and introduced more modern instrumentation to the genre like the piano, saxophone and electric guitar, instead of the normal banjo, concertina and violin. The development of this style was the result of plain innovation. Since there was a great shortage of popular Afrikaans songs, they quickly exhausted the FAK's *Volksangbundel* – the most comprehensive collection of notated Afrikaans music at the time – and reworked many of the numbers. Perhaps performing live on the radio every day put them in different class from more ordinary groups that only played the odd dance party and who could get away with a more limited repertoire. There must have been some form of status as well in being part of Susan's band. He surrounded himself with the best musicians he could find (many of whom were not Afrikaners), and for many years his outfit served as a springboard for successful solo careers, most notably that of Nico Carstens, who joined his group in 1945. The players were paid well, some also composed original material to be performed and broadcasted, and from the late 1940s, they appeared in movies. This was a commercial realm far removed from the *boeereoorkeste* consisting of miners, transport riders, *bywoners* and the like that recorded during the 1930s. This new genre became known as *ligte Afrikaanse musiek* (light Afrikaans music).<sup>60</sup> As Flippie Luyt, one of his band members recalled:

Pieter suggested that he form a group or duo to do Afrikaans music over the air. Susan was enthusiastic but, being a proper musician himself – he had played violin and sax with the Jazz Maniacs at the Orange Grove – he wanted something more than the old Boere-Orkes... That was the start of this sort of music, and it was left to Susan and myself to arrange songs out of the FAK Sangbundel for our programmes.<sup>61</sup>

Luyt's reference to the Jazz Maniacs is very compelling. There were two groups by that name in Johannesburg during the 1930s and 40s, one white and one black, with the latter Jazz Maniacs (Solomon "Zuluboy" Cele and Wilson Silgee's band) being the most renowned for their *marabi* jazz.<sup>62</sup> *Marabi* was a black musical style that developed in the slums of Johannesburg and formed a vibrant underground (and unfortunately mostly unrecorded) music culture that was associated with an array of vices such as illegal liquor dens and prostitution.<sup>63</sup> *Marabi* shared some characteristics with *boeremusiek*. Both were regarded as sinful, controversial, low-brow,

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

59 D.C. Pretorius, p. 224.

60 Freddie Luyt coined the term in 1942.

61 Freddie Luyt, interview in Trewhela, *Song Safari*, p. 50.

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

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

and associated with the working class.<sup>64</sup> The success of some of the *marabi* artists invited a measure of jealousy from white musicians, who used the law to obstruct their performances. There must have been a level of respect though, since Cele and Silgee's group apparently did enjoy "the guidance of a European friend once in a while".<sup>65</sup> It is sorely tempting (and perhaps a bit deliberate) to explore the possibility that Susan had played *marabi* jazz with black musicians and was at least partially influenced by the experience (which would mean that subsequent light Afrikaans music's roots spread across the racial line, etc.). In all fairness, there really is no proof, and he was much more likely to have played with the white Jazz Maniacs – who challenged the other group's claim to the name. It did not go well for them, though. In what must have been one of the more curious music events of the 1930s in Johannesburg, a judge ordered the two bands to participate in a play-off (perhaps the first 'battle of the bands' in South African history?) to determine which of the groups had the most acumen. Cele and Silgee's group won.<sup>66</sup>

Having already achieved a modicum of renown with some of his early live Afrikaans music broadcasts, Susan was perfectly positioned to capitalise on the 1938 Centenary Trek and the new wave of Afrikaner nostalgia. His band travelled with the *ossewaens* (ox wagons), broadcasting regular performances of Afrikaans music along the way. Susan's affiliation with the Trek earned him country-wide fame and his subsequent tours – including South West Africa – were very successful. This made him a firm Afrikaner favourite, and for many years afterwards he was considered a crusader for the National Party, a position with which he seems to have been comfortable as long as it was profitable.<sup>67</sup> He did, however, on occasion demand payment from local NP heads in rural towns if their politics kept the rival *Sappe* from attending his shows.<sup>68</sup>

In an interesting move, from a political perspective, a request was sent to the FAK to officially affiliate Susan's group with the organisation, which they declined in July 1939. The explanation was that only cooperative ventures could affiliate with the FAK and Susan's band was a private enterprise.<sup>69</sup> In the 1939 annual report of the SABC, however, Susan is praised for his contribution to the revival of old folk songs.<sup>70</sup> Considering that during the late 1930s and early 1940s, the FAK and SABC had strained relations, this is somewhat curious, but not necessarily strange. Susan's earliest broadcasts for the SABC were heavily dependent on the limited notated Afrikaans music available at the time, of which the newly published FAK *Volksangbundel* was the most important. The picture that emerges suggests that he and his colleagues at the SABC played jazzy versions of the folk songs notated in the *Volksangbundel*. At one point – probably sometime during the Second World War – just before a live broadcast, the news came that the SABC would not continue to broadcast songs from the *Volksangbundel*.<sup>71</sup> Although this was a reflection of the tension between the SABC and the FAK at the time, musicians often adapted to shifting policies without getting directly involved:

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

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

66 C. Ballentine, *Marabi Nights*, pp. 98-99.

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

68 *Ibid.*, p. 51.

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

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

71 *Ibid.*, p. 132.

Both De Waal and Susan's financial inclinations support the argument that the relationship between politics and popular culture in white Afrikaans twentieth-century South Africa was more complex than merely one of co-optation by the political. Under the influence of De Waal – who, as mentioned earlier, had a keen eye for commercial opportunities – *ligte Afrikaanse musiek* exploited nationalist sentiments.<sup>72</sup>

During the Second World War, he opened shows with “God save the King”, which was compulsory, and immediately followed it up with “Kent gij dat volk” – the old national anthem of the Transvaal Republic. This brought him briefly to the attention of the government of the day, which could have resulted in internment, although nothing came of it.<sup>73</sup> Notably, he also turned down offers to stand as a member of the *Volksraad* and to lead the military's band (which would have earned him the rank of colonel).<sup>74</sup>

Susan was euphemistically known for his ‘generosity’, which Froneman explains as references to his gambling addiction.<sup>75</sup> Susan did, however, often donate money to Afrikaner causes. One was the *Reddingsdaadbond* for which he was criticised by conservatives because the money was raised by dancing.<sup>76</sup> The other was for the building of an Afrikaans theatre in Johannesburg. Froneman rightly doubts whether or not most of the popular *boeereorkeste* of the late 1930s and 1940s were actively political,<sup>77</sup> and it is doubtful whether Susan was politically affiliated with Afrikaner nationalism, although throughout his career he would perform at nationalist events.

Some other Afrikaans artists were more partisan supporters of the nationalist cause. One such an example was the Stellenbosch Boere-orke, founded in 1933 by “Oom Pietie” le Roux. The motto of the *orkes* was “Ons eie” (Our Own), and members were drafted from Stellenbosch University and townsfolk. Members had to speak Afrikaans at all times and adhere to an “erkende Afrikaanse gedragkode” (recognised Afrikaans code of conduct), which forbade things like smoking and wearing nail polish. The group was very popular and toured South Africa and South West Africa numerous times.<sup>78</sup> Not primarily profit driven, the Stellenbosch Boere-orke donated substantial amounts of money to specifically Afrikaner causes, such as the Voortrekker Monument (£6 240) and the *Reddingsdaadbond* (£17 508).<sup>79</sup> It also donated money to the FAK, the *Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging* (ATKV – the Afrikaans Language and Culture Association) and the *Afrikaanse Christelike Vrouevereniging* (ACVV – the Afrikaans Christian Women's Association). Bester mentions that in total, an amount exceeding the equivalent of R100 000 – a very significant sum at the time – was eventually raised by the Stellenbosch Boeereorke.<sup>80</sup> This close affiliation meant that they only performed to specific audiences, and

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

73 *Ibid.*

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

75 Froneman, “Pleasure beyond the call of duty”, p. 130.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

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

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

79 *Ibid.*

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



that their performances were dictated by specific cultural requirements that differed from other popular groups of the time.

Danie Bosman was another popular songwriter who produced some of the most loved Afrikaans songs of the 1930s and 40s. In 1932, he started writing English songs with Anton de Waal (who would have an extremely successful partnership with Nico Carstens that will be discussed later), but their efforts were mostly unsuccessful. On his own, however, he switched to writing Afrikaans material and produced a mixture of popular dance songs, of which “Kaapse Draai” is a good example, and more serious compositions like “Boereseun”. Hendrik Susan also recorded some of his material. His music stood apart from many of the other songwriters of his time and he is regarded as one of the most gifted popular music writers of his generation.<sup>81</sup> A later film of his life appeared in the 1960s, with Frans Marx playing the role of Bosman, and concerts of his music are still performed today. He died from cancer in 1946 at the age of 39.

By pure coincidence, or perhaps not, technological advancements in recording and record pressing, as well as radio broadcasting, made it possible for Afrikaans artists like Chris Blignaut, David de Lange, the Coopers, Danie Bosman, and Hendrik Susan to achieve countrywide fame just as the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism was gaining momentum. On the other side of the racial spectrum was *marabi*. However, whereas David de Lange sold hundreds of thousands of records, early *marabi* artists did not get to record their music. Recordings of black African music during this time focused mainly on choral music and the music of the mining compounds around Johannesburg, which did not have much in common with the Afrikaans music styles of the time. Others have commented on the mutual influence of *boeremusiek*, *marabi* and *ghoemaliedjies* (which developed among the coloured population of Cape Town).<sup>82</sup> *Marabi* developed into *mbaqanga* and *kwela*, and would have a significant influence on *boeremusiek* of the 1950s onwards, as would *ghoemaliedjies*. What the desperately poor urban areas – black and white – of the first half of the twentieth century lacked in jobs and income, it made up for in the most vital and vibrant spaces for the development of local music styles, often with multi-racial influences.

## Radio

Compared to the recording industry, the history of radio broadcasting in South Africa has more direct links to the political developments of the twentieth century. Since television arrived very late in South Africa (1976), radio was the only broadcasting medium for more than five decades. During this time, it constituted a continuous ideological battlefield, not only between the two white language groups, but also within the groups, to determine the societal role that this “constant companion of man”<sup>83</sup> would play. The very nature of broadcasting makes it extremely susceptible to political power struggles and in the context of early South African radio, this was

81 Pretorius, pp. 25-26.

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

83 To quote C. Hamm, “‘The constant companion of man’: Separate Development, Radio Bantu and music”, *Popular Music* 10:2, (1991), pp. 147-173.

defined by tension around language.<sup>84</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, English broadcasts dominated the earlier phases of South African radio. This marginalisation of Afrikaans by the ABC led to a campaign in 1931 by the *Broederbond*<sup>85</sup> for more Afrikaans programming.<sup>86</sup> Eventually, the ABC would broadcast 90 minutes of Afrikaans per day which, for the Afrikaans lobbyists, was not enough.<sup>87</sup> Although the ABC had exclusive broadcasting rights in South Africa, the number of licences remained low, causing further financial difficulties in the corporation's early years, prompting Isidor Schlesinger, the company's founder and president, to request the government to buy the organisation from him – a request which was refused.<sup>88</sup>

By 1933, Hertzog's government, cognisant of the potential power of broadcasting and of the problems regarding the disparity between English and Afrikaans, commissioned Sir John Reith, Director-General of the BBC at the time, to investigate the possibility of a government takeover of the radio service. Reith spent 39 days interviewing more than 250 representatives from around South Africa.<sup>89</sup> His report stated that radio was of vital importance to South Africa, but that technical challenges made it impossible for a private organisation to provide comprehensive programming. He recommended legislation that would allow for the formation of a public broadcaster owned, yet not necessarily dictated, by the government.<sup>90</sup>

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

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

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84 This tension was based on the assumption that Afrikaans as a language and a culture was under threat. This is a topic that, on a formal level still persists today in debates (and court cases) around the use of the language at tertiary educational institutions. On a more informal level, it is also a ubiquitous theme in popular Afrikaans music performances (see chapter seven).

85 The *Broederbond* (Society of brothers) was a secret organisation of prominent Afrikaners that often involved itself in politics. The organisation was formed in 1918.

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

87 *Ibid.*

88 *Ibid.*

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

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

With regard to the African Broadcasting Company, I want to say that after a very long and hard struggle, the Afrikaans language has come partly into its rights. I trust that, so far as this is concerned, we shall have no more complaints when the new Corporation is established... There always was throughout subtle imperialistic propaganda to which many people in South Africa strongly objected. I hope that when we have our own service in South Africa, as regards the broadcasting of news, it will be done in an objective manner...<sup>91</sup>

He also raised the issue of class by motioning that rural (mostly Afrikaner) listeners, who generally had much worse reception, should pay lower licensing fees.<sup>92</sup> Radio licences in South Africa were the most expensive in the world at the time, which made it difficult for many Afrikaners to afford. If they could get discounted licensing fees, more Afrikaners would listen to the radio. Furthermore, the purified nationalists favoured a Radio board consisting of only bilingual representatives. This would have been favourable for the Afrikaans-speaking population, since many Afrikaners were bilingual, while many English speakers were not. This way, recent English-speaking immigrants could not serve on the Radio board until they had learned to speak Afrikaans.

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

... (W)hat the country desires and looks for is that this utility corporation, when established, shall have no political bias of any sort, kind or description: that it shall represent the people as a whole, and not get into the hands of anybody, the Government included, who can use it for probably propaganda purposes, or as a teaching organisation for teaching what the listeners do not want to be taught. There are plenty of cultural organisations that can do that. I have yet to learn that cultural organisations are best qualified to speak from the public point of view.<sup>93</sup>

My information is that the existing broadcasting corporation throughout its career has been deluged with protests and applications from these cultural societies.<sup>94</sup>

Although Stallard never indicated exactly which ‘cultural societies’ he was referring to, Hayman and Tomaselli’s reference to the 1931 campaign by the *Broederbond* serves as an example.<sup>95</sup> The impact of this campaign was probably limited, since there was no marked increase in Afrikaans programming before the establishment of the SABC’s dedicated Afrikaans service. The essential problem was that, other than in the UK with a high level of cultural and linguistic homogeneity, white South Africa had deep divisions between the Afrikaans- and English-speaking groups and fears of cultural domination by the other dominated debates on the topic. The basic position of nationalists was one that saw Afrikaans as a threatened language that needed to be kept separate

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

92 *Ibid.*, pp. 2732-2733.

93 *Ibid.*, p. 3829.

94 *Ibid.*, p. 3838.

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

to achieve parity with English. Afrikaans culture was seen as under-commoditised, with too few resources from which to draw material for broadcasting. This was contrary to Smuts and Hertzog's two-stream policy promoting a shared South African identity between white English and Afrikaans speakers on equal terms.<sup>96</sup> Despite this, all parties were in agreement that a national broadcaster should be established in the place of the ABC, something which actually suited the Afrikaans contingent. By this time however, Schlesinger had managed to turn the corporation's financial situation around and was less enthusiastic about letting it go, but he was legally powerless following the promulgation of Act no 22 of 1936, which created the SABC and effectively forced him to sell.<sup>97</sup>

Part of the Act was to make provision for a separate Afrikaans service. This led to the establishment of the first exclusively Afrikaans radio broadcasts – a goal of Afrikaner lobbying groups for more than a decade<sup>98</sup> – on 27 October 1937, known as the “B” service of the SABC. Because of its powerful potential as propaganda machine, the various interest groups in parliament had to be satisfied that it would be kept neutral before the bill could be passed. As a result, the Act stipulated that the broadcaster would not take any political view. This agreement suited the Afrikaner nationalists who constituted a political minority at the time. The £150 000 used to buy out the ABC was fronted by the insurance company Sanlam,<sup>99</sup> which had a strong Afrikaner nationalist corporate identity. Despite Sanlam's involvement, the relationship between the SABC and Afrikaner nationalists during the 1930s was ambivalent. Even though the SABC occasionally acceded to FAK requests – as they apparently did in the case of David de Lange – it was reluctant to get involved in politics during the 1938 Centenary Trek. This neutrality would prove to be a difficult position to maintain. Regardless, the establishment of an exclusively Afrikaans radio broadcasting service was a vital new element in the distribution of popular Afrikaans music to the Afrikaans public.

## The 1938 Centenary Trek

The highly fragmentary nature of Afrikaner society during the 1930s was also clearly visible in the ways in which different Afrikaans newspapers supported the two main rival Afrikaner political parties. *Die Vaderland*, *Die Suidster* and *Die Volkstem* supported the United Party of Hertzog and Smuts, while *Die Burger*, *Die Volksblad* and *Die Transvaler* were pro-Purified National Party of Malan.<sup>100</sup> One of the central points of contention was the FAK's efforts to politicise Afrikaner culture:

In fact, the paper took issue with the Christian National definition of culture; cultural advance came through creative individuals, said an editorial, not through class or ethnic organization (*Die Vaderland*, July 6, 1937). More than that, it declared, The FAK had become the political dummy of the purified National Party. If there

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

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

98 *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

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

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

were a genuine cultural organization, it would have to bridge political divisions and not simply represent one section of the Afrikaner people (Die Vaderland, May 27, 1938).<sup>101</sup>

Less than three months after the latter editorial, an unprecedented cultural event took place that significantly boosted the cultural capital of the FAK, but also bridged political divisions among Afrikaners. In a master stroke, Afrikaner cultural entrepreneurs organised a centenary celebration of the 1838 Great Trek, which saw ox wagons following the route to the North, re-enacting an historical event that for many marked the birth of Afrikaner independence and nationhood. It commenced in Cape Town on 8 August 1938 and was effectively an effort to spread a specific Afrikaner identity, densely coded with cultural tropes – ox wagons, Voortrekker dress, beards, *volkspele* (traditional dances) – across South Africa, culminating in its memorialisation at *Monumentkoppie* outside Pretoria and at the site of the Battle of Blood River in Natal. It connected the urban Afrikaner working classes with rural agrarian Afrikaners under the banner of a shared history and drew tremendous support. It was also the first real victory for the emerging new *kultuurpolitiek* (culture politics) of the Afrikaner nationalists in their efforts to unite the *Volk*.

Piet Meyer – an influential arch-nationalist and one of the founding members of the *Afrikaans-Nasionale Studentebond* (Afrikaans National Student League), which was involved in the publication of the FAK's *Volksangbundel* – was instrumental in formalising *kultuurpolitiek* by forming the FAK's *Nasionale Kultuuraad* (National Culture Council) in July 1936.<sup>102</sup> He identified two main threats to Afrikaner unity: the United Party's conciliatory policies and "communist-inspired class conflicts".<sup>103</sup> The United Party represented not only government, but also capital, whereas "communist-inspired" class conflicts were tied to the opposing ideology of Afrikaner socialism. Commenting on the Centenary Trek and the rise of this particular version of Afrikaner Nationalism, Grundlingh and Sapire came to roughly the same conclusion regarding other contending ideologies available to Afrikaners at the time: socialism, as manifested in the Garment Workers Union, and South Africanism, favoured by government and capital, although both lacked a "historical mythology to mould and manipulate".<sup>104</sup> The efforts by the FAK to address these issues were initially ineffective – especially at the polls in the 1938 election – but saw a remarkable turnaround during the Centenary Trek.<sup>105</sup>

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

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

103 Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, pp. 169-170. See also D. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: Class Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934 – 1948* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983), p. 77.

104 *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27. See also O'Meara's opinion on these developments in the Introduction.

105 *Ibid.*

Although the FAK was part of the constellation of organisations – political, religious and cultural – that were closely linked to the ideology behind the Trek, it was officially organised by the *Afrikaanse Taalen Kultuurvereniging* (ATKV – the Afrikaans Language and Culture Association), headed by Henning Klopper. The ATKV was founded in 1930 and had a strong link to the working-class Afrikaners employed in the lower levels of the South African Railways, where they faced severe language discrimination.<sup>107</sup> This entrenched discrimination, despite the post-war government's two-stream policy on language, played a significant role in forging nationalist politics. Like the FAK, the ATKV functioned as a public front for the *Broederbond*, of which Klopper was a founding member.



The first shift of the Centenary Trek: Ox wagons in Adderley Street, Cape Town.<sup>106</sup>

The Trek itself attracted unprecedented support from Afrikaners all the way from the Cape to Pretoria. Every stopover made by the *ossewaens* became a festival of Afrikaner culture. These were solemn events that included sermons, the singing of the unofficial Afrikaner national anthem *Die Stem*, choir performances and various civil ceremonies.<sup>108</sup> The evenings were spent *braaiing* (barbecuing), and singing *pieknieklidjies* (picnic songs), with *orkeste* (bands) providing entertainment. Men grew beards to resemble the Voortrekkers from a century before, while women dressed in *kappies* (bonnets) and *voortrekkerrokke* (Voortrekker dresses). These fashions were part of the creation of a new imagined *volksgeskiedenis* (ethnic history), along with other cultural activities like *volkspele* (folk dances). *Volkspele* specifically did not represent the traditional dances of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but followed rules and structures based on Swedish folk dances. This ensured uniformity at big occasions such as Centenary celebrations.<sup>109</sup> Crowds regularly numbering 4 000 or more would show up in small towns, while in Port Elizabeth a crowd exceeding 25 000 was recorded. By 16 December, the Day of the Covenant, a total of 200 000 Afrikaners had congregated at *Monumentkoppie* and at Blood River.<sup>110</sup> It elicited highly

<sup>106</sup> *Gedenkboek: Voortrekker-Eeufees, 1838–1938*, (Johannesburg: Sentrale Volksfeestekomitee, 1938), p. 33.

<sup>107</sup> A. Grundlingh and H. Sapire, "From Feverish Festival to Repetitive Ritual? The Changing Fortunes of Great Trek Mythology in an Industrializing South Africa, 1938–1988", *South African Historical Journal* 21 (1989), p. 20; see also Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 402.

<sup>108</sup> *Die Burger*, 10 September 1938.

<sup>109</sup> <http://ancestry24.com/history-of-music-in-south-africa/>, accessed 20 June 2012.

<sup>110</sup> *Die Burger*, 12-15, 17, 19-20 September, 1938.

emotional, and for some alarming, responses, as witnessed by W.H. Clarke, the British High Commissioner to South Africa:

The Voortrekker celebrations evoked a degree of emotion throughout Afrikanerdom which was almost alarming in its intensity. It penetrated all classes and in certain of its manifestations resembled something akin to mass hysteria.<sup>111</sup>

Although the Centenary Trek was not strictly speaking a party political manoeuvre, Malan's National Party was the clear beneficiary of the event, since its cultural purchase was stronger than that of the other ideologies available to Afrikaners. Grundlingh and Sappire suggest that the high level of buy-in represented an important populist phase in the development of Afrikaner nationalism. It was conspicuously removed from the centres of economic and political power and drew from more socio-cultural kinds of capital characterised by de-classed, anti-intellectual idealisations of the past. It also led to the establishment co-operative ventures like the *Reddingsdaadbond*, aimed specifically at the economic rehabilitation of poor Afrikaners.<sup>112</sup>

Dan O'Meara's interpretation of Gramsci's work on ideology puts the efforts by the Afrikaner cultural entrepreneurs during this time into perspective:

... (T)he general term 'ideology' encompasses at least two levels: the 'scholarly' or 'literary' on the one hand, and the 'practical' or 'popular' on the other. At the 'literary' level, ideology appears as the product of intellectuals – as a systemised and apparently non-contradictory set of ideas making up a coherent world-view. The 'popular' level of ideology refers to the often contradictory forms of popular consciousness in and through which bodies of people act.<sup>113</sup>

The ethnic nationalist Afrikaner ideology that emerged in the 1930s manifested in its literary form as the intellectual efforts of a section of the Afrikaner petit bourgeoisie – newspaper editors, members of the FAK, the *Broederbond* – to unite behind the Purified National Party. Its manifestations in popular form varied, but essentially culminated in the large-scale cultural support from many Afrikaners for the Centenary Trek. The importance of Afrikaner culture in political debates leading up to the May 1938 election and then the Trek indirectly elevated the sphere of popular Afrikaans music to the political arena. Even though the cultural tropes invoked by the organisers of the Centenary Trek had succeeded in gathering a high level of support for the cause, and were far more successful than other competing ideologies, some forms of popular Afrikaner culture, especially music, resisted these efforts. Froneman explores the concern of the FAK during the Trek with the Afrikaner's "axiomatic inability to sing", and suggests that the most likely explanation for this reluctance was the fact that the FAK songs were unfamiliar to most Afrikaners.<sup>114</sup> Although they were enthusiastic in their attendance of festival celebrations, most preferred popular songs that were anathema to the cultural standards

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

112 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

113 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

114 As mentioned before, the most popular songs of the decade, most notably by artists like Chris Blignaut and David de Lange, were omitted from the FAK *Volksangbundel*.

required by the Trek's organisers.<sup>115</sup> The image that emerges is that, for many Afrikaners, the events, or at least the peripheral activities that followed the more solemn speeches and prayers, provided entertainment and a chance to interact socially. Young men grew beards to look like Voortrekkers, but did not necessarily wholly buy into the strict Calvinist mores often associated with their forebears. For the more serious nationalists then, some by-products of the emerging *kultuurpolitiek* were not that welcome, especially the popular music danced and drunk to. This differentiation of cultural representation would remain a salient feature in popular Afrikaans music throughout the apartheid era and beyond. Afrikaner popular culture would retain much of its "unauthorised" nature, even after nationalism would envelop the culture industry through the control of the SABC, censorship and a heavily subsidised formal arts sector.

Adhering to the principles of providing objective news independent from politics (the BBC model), the SABC at this time was deliberately apolitical and uncomfortable with associating itself with the new wave of Afrikaner nationalist sentiment. During the Centenary Trek, speeches containing overtly political content were deliberately not broadcasted. M.C. Botha, chairman of the SABC, reacted to protests by Afrikaner nationalists by stating that anything that could have conceivable political importance should be kept off the air, regardless.<sup>116</sup> A prime example of this was a speech by E.C. Pienaar, which was judged unsuitable for broadcasting during the Trek's stopover in Willowmore on Saturday, 10 September 1938.<sup>117</sup> The Centenary Trek did play a vital role in mobilising Afrikaners as a significant radio audience, however. Although broadcasts of the event were initially only planned for the departure of the wagons in Cape Town and selective points along the route, the sudden demand – following the success of the celebrations – led to daily broadcasts.<sup>118</sup> These broadcasts were made over landlines and exposed the bad reception in the rural areas that were Afrikaner strongholds – which underscored the disparity between the English and Afrikaans services. Importantly, the popularity of the daily broadcasts played an integral role, not only in converting rural Afrikaners to radio, but also in broadcasting a particular brand of Afrikaner cultural identity.<sup>119</sup> The impact of the Centenary Trek would be overshadowed by another event less than a year after its conclusion – the start of the Second World War.

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

116 *Die Burger*, 12 September, 1938.

117 *Ibid.*

118 Hayman and Tomaselli, "Ideology and Technology in the Growth of South African Broadcasting, 1924–1971", p. 34.

119 *Ibid.*



# CHAPTER THREE

## WWII, the SABC, FAK and Boeremusiek?

The outbreak of the Second World War had far-reaching political consequences for South Africa. Smuts and Hertzog's coalition split over South Africa's declaration of war against Germany. Many Afrikaners felt sympathetic to Germany and harboured a tinge of anti-British sentiment. Hertzog's breakaway *Volksparty* merged with the Purified National Party in January 1940 to form the *Herenigde Nasionale Party* (Reunited National Party, or HNP).<sup>1</sup> At least nominally, this merger united Afrikaner rural capital with the petty bourgeoisie, but in reality, the party was deeply divided between *smelters* (previous supporters of the United Party) and *gesuiwerdes* (supporters of the National Party).<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the ultra-nationalist *Ossewabrandwag* (OB), founded as a cultural movement in the spirit of the Centenary Trek in February 1939, was growing rapidly (with an estimated membership of between 300 000 and 400 000 Afrikaners at its peak) thanks to Afrikaner opposition to the war with Germany.<sup>3</sup> The OB's broad alignment with *kultuurpolitiek* combined elements of Afrikaner nationalist ideology and culture into a semi-militarised identity. This would have some influence on the workings of the SABC.

With the start of the war, the policy of political neutrality at the SABC was suspended – a common practice among other state broadcasters abroad. The fact that the SABC openly

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

2 *Ibid.*, p. 122–125.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 127.

supported Smuts's decision to declare war on Germany, despite many Afrikaners' pro-German sentiment, led to tension between Afrikaans- and English-speaking listeners. An interesting manifestation of such tensions in various urban centres in South Africa (although not directly a result of SABC broadcasts) became known as "radio fights". One newspaper report spoke of residents in Cape Town that were (illegally) competing with neighbours to receive broadcasts from either Radio Zeesen in Germany, or Radio Daventry in the UK. By tuning their radio receiver sets to one of the above signals, residents could spoil the reception of that broadcast on their neighbours' radios by a technique called "oscillation".<sup>4</sup> These radio fights were symptomatic of the deep divide among white South Africans regarding the country's participation in the war. Mia Hartman, in her biography of her uncle Anton Hartman, who later became the head of music at the SABC, mentions how he and his family would listen to music broadcasts from Germany, while members of the family read Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and Herman Goering's biography.<sup>5</sup> Radio Zeesen also had an Afrikaans presenter, Erik Holm (affectionately known as 'Neef' Holm), who broadcasted under the name Lord Haw Haw. He often told stories of British war atrocities and how the Afrikaner working class had suffered under Jewish capitalists.<sup>6</sup> The German broadcaster also approached the FAK for suggestions for their Afrikaans programmes, which indicates that they specifically targeted Afrikaans listeners with their propaganda.<sup>7</sup> The growth of Nazism and fascism in Europe during the 1930s was front-page news in Afrikaans newspapers, and many Afrikaners were glad to see the rise of anti-British powers. Not many of them foresaw the horrors that resulted from this, and the realisation after the war was often met with disgust by former admirers of Hitler.<sup>8</sup>

In a direct reaction to the SABC's pro-war policy, the FAK's *Radiobond* was formed in September 1940:<sup>9</sup>

The Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Organisations have some time ago, especially in the current circumstances surrounding the foregrounding of the broadcasting service for political use and propaganda against an outspoken Afrikaans spirit in the service, decided to organise its radio section more forcefully than was previously necessary.<sup>10</sup>

Formally, the task of the *Radiobond* of the FAK was to assist the *Radiatoraad* of the SABC, founded in August 1936 to respond to requests by the Afrikaans listening public. Furthermore, the *Radiobond* would labour to bring more Afrikaners to the radio, thereby putting more pressure on the SABC, since up to then, the broadcaster had often resisted requests by the FAK for stronger Afrikaans transmitters and other matters regarding programme content.<sup>11</sup> The

4 *Die Burger*, 2 September 1939.

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

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

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

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

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

10 *Ibid* – translated from original.

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

*Radiobond* was headed by Advocate J.F. (Kowie) Marais, who was a former programmer of the Afrikaans service of the SABC (and responsible for giving a young Anton Hartman his first job at the SABC in 1939)<sup>12</sup>, and who was dismissed from the SABC in September 1940 amidst growing tension between Afrikaans- and English-speaking staff at the Corporation.<sup>13</sup> In that same year Marais joined the *Stormjaers*, the paramilitary wing of the *Ossewabrandwag*, and was interned in 1941, only to escape and be recaptured in 1942, after which he was interned at Koffiefontein along with a young B.J. Vorster and the FAK's Stephen Eyssen.<sup>14</sup> Marais's fortunes were reversed after the War, and he later became Director-General of the SABC.<sup>15</sup> The treatment of Afrikaans staff at the SABC at the start of the War provided ample ammunition for the FAK. In a circulated letter dated 30 September 1940, an emotional account of Marais's dismissal was provided, and reference made to an incident at the SABC in the first week of the War during which a violent attempt was made at removing Afrikaans staff from the station and to end all Afrikaans broadcasts.<sup>16</sup> Another FAK circular dated 26 November 1940, refers to a December 1939 incident where Afrikaans staff were charged with contravening the Corporation's new pro-War policy, despite the fact that they were not notified of any policy changes.<sup>17</sup> The ideological stance of Marais as head of the FAK's *Radiobond*, while he was simultaneously a member of the *Stormjaers* and effectively an anti-government saboteur, leaves no doubt that this was a statement emanating from the extreme right. Sources from the opposite side of the political spectrum at least confirm the tensions between staff:

Although no one liked to admit or talk about it, there was very close to the surface an antagonism between Afrikaans and English and a definite belligerence on the part of an Afrikaans speaking group, engendered by a so-called inferiority complex. The English speaking section – rather stupidly condescending at times – blandly ignored the situation but gradually key administrative posts were filled by Afrikaans speaking and/or sympathetic individuals. It should be remembered that the Smuts Government during the war contained many Afrikaners and that there was a strong dedicated anti-British group... So that while almost all English-speaking people innocently stood by, the ground was thoroughly prepared for an Afrikaner take-over in Broadcasting.<sup>18</sup>

A further, rather ironic, outcome of the War was that an increasing number of anti-war Afrikaans employees would take the places of English-speaking staff who had volunteered for military service.<sup>19</sup> In a sense, the SABC was a microcosm that represented a wider South African society. Piet Meyer, who would become a powerful role-player in South African broadcasting history, was as FAK secretary, always indirectly involved in the early war-time correspondence

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12 Hartman, *Anton Hartman*, p. 21.

13 *Ibid.*

14 Harrison, *The White Tribe of Africa*, pp. 131-132.

15 Hartman, *Anton Hartman*, p. 21.

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

17 *Ibid.*

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

19 *Ibid.*

from the FAK. During the War, Meyer's involvement with the *Ossewabrandwag* and the public expressions of his extreme political views, compromised his position on the executive boards of a number of Afrikaner cultural organisations. He was forced to resign from the boards of the FAK and the *Broederbond* (of which he became a member as early as 1932) in 1943.<sup>20</sup> The *Radiobond* of the FAK had become ineffective by this time.

## After the War

Before 1939, almost all locally recorded music was pressed abroad, but war-time shortages of shellac and restricted shipping led to an increase in locally pressed records, albeit of inferior quality.<sup>21</sup> The post-war years – especially after 1948, when overseas masters were used to print albums locally – ushered in a period of substantial growth for the local record industry.<sup>22</sup> With regard to Afrikaans music, the SABC gradually became more influential in the local music industry. Up to 1948, some artists would get exposure on the radio – either by performing live or having their records played – but the impact of Afrikaans radio broadcasts was still limited. In 1946, due to financial difficulties related to inefficient strategies of licensing, the Schoch Commission was appointed to investigate the possibility of introducing a commercial station in addition to the “A” (English) and “B” (Afrikaans) services. The intention was to use the funds generated by this third station to increase the capacity of the Afrikaans transmitters that had not yet reached parity with the output of the English service. Until the 1950s, radio signals were not sufficient in the rural areas where most Afrikaners lived. The power of radio was thus limited to the cities, where the poorest Afrikaners lived who could not afford radio receivers or pay licences. Thus, Afrikaans radio had limited ability to promote new Afrikaans music releases. In 1948, when the National Party unexpectedly won the election, a new board was appointed by the new government, which meant that key positions in the SABC were now occupied by nationalists. Smuts's government was partly responsible for this state of affairs, since it had not expected to lose the elections and no provisions were made to extend the appointments of the previous board members – who were mostly opposed to the nationalists.<sup>23</sup> Despite this, the new director-general, Gideon Roos, firmly believed in the type of relative objectivity employed by the BBC.<sup>24</sup> As a result, the policies of the SABC were slow to change after 1948, and it was only in 1959, with Piet Meyer's appointment as chairman of the board, that the broadcaster lost all semblance of political neutrality. This political take-over of the SABC ushered in an era of compliance with state ideology.

## The SABC, FAK and Boeremusiek

With time, Afrikaner intellectuals became more articulate in defining an ethnic, racial and cultural identity. The FAK established commissions that dealt with a substantial array of social and

20 Harrison, *The White Tribe of Africa*, p. 40.

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

22 *Ibid.*

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

24 *Ibid.*

cultural issues including education, welfare (through organisations like the *Reddingsdaadbond*), racial policies, music, radio, film, theatre, economics, leisure activities and *volksfeeste* (cultural festivals).<sup>25</sup> In 1941, the FAK formed the *Musiekkomitee* (Music Committee): "...because the FAK management considered it necessary that more should be done regarding the introduction of Afrikaans music."<sup>26</sup> This was part of a wider strategy to establish cultural self-sufficiency<sup>27</sup> that brought about a complex set of initiatives summed up by E.C. Pienaar in his *Triomf van die Afrikaanse Taal* in 1943:

Not only our language should be purified from foreign elements, and our literature expanded and improved, our desire to read and our appreciation stimulated, and our own song and music created and practiced... But the houses in which we live, the furniture we use, our place names – in short, our whole outlook and our thoughts and spirituality should portray an indigenous Afrikaans spirit, so that the stranger that comes here would have no doubt that he has to do with an Afrikaner. Our nationhood must be our highest national pride.<sup>28</sup>

This shows a strong desire to achieve “personal worth” as a people.<sup>29</sup> Linked to this cultural self-sufficiency was the sphere of Afrikaans music and the members of the Music Committee regularly expressed concern over low-quality Afrikaans music as they laboured to stimulate the composition of Afrikaans music of high artistic merit. This policy was summed up by G.G. Cillié during his inaugural speech after he joined the FAK’s executive in 1946:

I do not preach any form of nationalism in the field of music, but it is simply true that no composer, from Palestrina and Bach to Sibelius, has given his best unless he stayed close to his nation and regularly made use of his own nation’s culture.<sup>30</sup>

Ironically, the efforts by the FAK to promote Afrikaans compositions of such high merit were in fact attempts to establish a western classical, but also foreign, aesthetic in the cultural sphere of Afrikaans music. This reflected the essential contradiction of “authorising” Afrikaner nationalist culture as a whole: the conflict between establishing a locally developed version of “high European” culture and ignoring, or undermining, more organic locally developed culture.

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

26 “omdat die FAK- bestuur dit noodsaaklik ag dat daar meer gedoen moet word vir die bekendstelling van Afrikaanse musiek”, Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge, *FAK Silwerjubileum 1929–1954*, (Johannesburg: FAK, 1954), p. 49.

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

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

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

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



FAK Music Committee in 1956. From left to right: Dirkie de Villiers, Stephen Eyssen, Tommy Meyer (assistant secretary), G.G. Cillie, J. Heynecke (minute taker), I.M. Lombard, Anton Hartman and Hartman van Niekerk (general secretary).<sup>31</sup>

Ideologically, they were guided by Christian nationalist ideals that were shared by other organisations like the Dutch Reformed Church and Malan's National Party. Activities anathema to their paternalistic position towards the *volk* were discouraged (dog racing,<sup>32</sup> *boeremusiek*), while at *volkskongresse* (congresses of the people) elites delivered speeches on a variety of topics, often including cultural "threats" from abroad that were eroding the Afrikaner's identity. These threats could come in popular musical forms like jazz and even evangelical church songs. Another extract from G.G. Cillie's speech from the FAK's 1946 *Volkskongres* in Stellenbosch serves as a useful example:

We must not allow our children to sing English hymns and American revival songs on Sundays and during religious studies in schools, and during the week whistle jazz-tunes that they heard over the radio and in the bioscope.<sup>33</sup>

This was one of the earlier objections to the cultural influence of imported music on the Afrikaner youth. A particularly sensitive issue was the difference between the tastes of working-class Afrikaners and the Afrikaner elite, as lamented by the FAK's Dirkie de Villiers:

Walk into a music shop: the shelves are full of superficial so-called "boeremusiek" songs; but can you walk in and, for argument's sake buy Hartman's "Kom vanaand in my drome" from the shelf? The same unbalanced relationship applies to South African produced gramophone records (although the Afrikaner is not solely to blame here, since the big record companies are in English hands). The companies

31 Available at [http://www.wikiwand.com/af/Gawie\\_Cilli%C3%A9](http://www.wikiwand.com/af/Gawie_Cilli%C3%A9), accessed 20 March 2017. I.M. Lombard was secretary of the *Broederbond* as well as the FAK, and served on the local advisory council of the SABC for Johannesburg.

32 *Die Burger*, 10 September 1938.

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

capitalise on the uncritical taste of a large section of the Afrikaans population by releasing an uninterrupted stream of recordings every month in the country – releases that from a music quality perspective, are very low to the ground.<sup>34</sup>

## The questions surrounding *boeremusiek* and class

The link between *boeremusiek* and class begs closer scrutiny, especially in the way it developed between the 1930s and the 1950s. The umbrella term *boeremusiek* constituted a number of different styles that represented both converging and diverging aspects of Afrikaner society. Froneman differentiates between three different types of *boeorekeste* during this era that employed “vastly different instrumental settings and performance practices”.<sup>35</sup> The first, of which the Stellenbosch Boeorekese was the most well-known, was large orchestras (exceeding 30 musicians with a variety of instruments) that were specifically formed as “propaganda vehicles” for the National Party in the lead-up to the 1938 Trek celebrations and after.<sup>36</sup> They normally performed variety concerts at which there was no dancing. The second type includes the professional music groups involved in live broadcasts and who toured the country playing dance parties. Their repertoires could include *boeremusiek*, but it took a back seat to more commercial jazzy sounds and dance music. Hendrik Susan’s band with their *ligte Afrikaanse musiek* falls into this category. The last type emerged slightly earlier than the others with the initial *vastrap boeremusiek* recordings of the 1930s by groups like Die Vyf Vastrappers, David de Lange’s Naglopers and Die Vier Transvalers. This group most closely resembled the traditional music of *boeredanse* and celebrations. Tellingly, they were often

...financially strapped, working-class musicians with bad habits and a plain disregard for the growing racial ideology of the day, they did not conform to establishment Afrikaner cultural ideals.<sup>37</sup>

Class elements of Afrikaner society during this time was a major obstacle for the formation of new nationalist identities. O’Meara’s evaluation of Afrikaner class dynamics between 1934 and 1948 has pointed out the shortcomings of ethnic dynamic explanations for the rise of Afrikaner nationalist mythology.<sup>38</sup> He makes the important observation that Afrikaner nationalism was highly differentiated and only one of a number of political and ideological forms of struggle and furthermore, that it emerged due to the contested development of capitalism in South Africa.<sup>39</sup> Specifically, the brand of Afrikaner nationalism that rose to prominence after 1934 was the result of petty-bourgeois groups’ ambitions to gain access to commercial and industrial capital by employing a mixture of organisational skill, ideology and political influence to mobilise cross-class support from Afrikaans speakers.<sup>40</sup> As Hyslop later points out, this approach provides

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

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

36 *Ibid.*

37 *Ibid.*, p. 97

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

39 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

40 *Ibid.*

a crucial understanding of Afrikaner nationalism because it is critical of the assumption that Afrikaners are an undifferentiated, monolithic ethnic group. The ethnic identification that emerged during the 1930s was a construct that had to withstand, and conceal, major fault lines of class, gender and interest.<sup>41</sup>

For Rob Allingham, there is no doubt that traditional *boeremusiek*'s audiences were agrarian and the urban working class, which differed from the European tastes of middle-class Afrikaner nationalists. The latter could, however, tolerate the more traditional songs as authentic *volk* culture if it was presented in an acceptably serious manner.<sup>42</sup> In other words, *ligte Afrikaanse musiek* was the cleaned up, sanctioned version of working-class folk music, catering for middle class Afrikaner nationalists. An interesting point, which is related to the class division of Afrikaans audiences, is made in Ralph Trehwela's *Song Safari*. In 1949, Susan was approached by producer Pierre de Wet to participate in the Afrikaans film, *Kom saam vanaand* (Come along tonight). Following the film's success, Susan's audiences started changing. Normally, he was only regarded as a *boeremusiek* musician, but after *Kom saam vanaand*, he had doctors, lawyers and professors in the audience.<sup>43</sup> It suggests that the prestige of appearing on film elevated Hendrik Susan's performance to include the middle class. Froneman, however, has suggested that the situation was far more complex.<sup>44</sup> In fact, it seems that the *ligte Afrikaanse musiek* of people like Susan faced regular criticism from cultural elites. On the one hand, it did appeal to Afrikaner nationalists' drive for European standards, but there was an overall lack of consensus about its cultural value. Generally, it was deemed an alien influence on real *boeremusiek*, while some called it '*hotnotsmusiek*', playing in on racial stereotyping. Ultimately, Froneman suggests that many Afrikaners just could not reconcile the use of "Hawaiian guitars, yodelling and the like" with "real" *boeremusiek*.<sup>45</sup> The new sounds emerged alongside the modern, jazzy *ligte Afrikaanse musiek* during a time when *boeremusiek* was commercialised, which adds another dimension to Allingham's "urban/ agrarian" and "politically innocent/politically conscious" oppositions. The influence of jazz on traditional *boeremusiek* became an important issue that concerned the Music Commission of the FAK, as well as the SABC, from the early 1940s to the late 1950s:

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

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

42 Allingham, "South Africa – Popular Music: Nation of Voice", p. 651, cited in Froneman, *Pleasure beyond the call of duty*, p. 122.

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

44 Froneman, "Pleasure beyond the call of duty", p. 122.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 123.



the remaining folk tunes with the idea of preserving them in unadulterated form, in the central library.<sup>46</sup>

This transition from shameful *lawwighede* (frivolities) to a part of Afrikaner folklore, meant that traditional *boeremusiek* was now considered part of a cultural heritage that had become ever more sanctified as Afrikaner history was re-written by cultural entrepreneurs during a time when the National Party's grip on power increased. This transition was not sudden. In 1947, the FAK's Music Committee was already planning to organise a gathering for *boeereorkes* enthusiasts and folk singing, which was to be held in Durban from 30 June to 11 July of that year.<sup>47</sup> Keen on promoting *boeremusiek*, the SABC sponsored up to 30 *boeereorkeste* to produce authentic Afrikaans music as opposed to jazz-influenced songs. Part of the SABC's "task of preserving this cultural heritage", was a campaign launched in 1950 to collect traditional Afrikaans *boeremusiek*,<sup>48</sup> the result of which was regularly broadcasted on programmes such as *Uit die jaar vroeg* (From the early years) performed, rather ironically, by the orchestras of Hendrik Susan and Hansie van Loggerenberg.<sup>49</sup> At this stage, the relationship between the FAK and the SABC was closer, with Anton Hartman influential in both organisations.<sup>50</sup> Hartman was the most prominent music ideologue among the Afrikaner cultural elites for many years. Having started at the SABC as a music compiler in 1939, his position made him very influential in choosing what was played and what was not. He received classical training in Europe as conductor, and in a way he stood apart from the commercial world of Afrikaans music. In this sense he shared the view that Afrikaans had to subscribe to a high Western European aesthetic. He was also the conductor of the SABC's orchestra and a long-serving member on the FAK's Music Committee, and presented numerous talks on the radio about Afrikaans folk songs and *boeremusiek* from 1946 onwards.

By 1953, there was still no certainty among FAK and SABC executive members about what was meant by *boeereorkes* and *boeremusiek*. The apparent problem was that the SABC had received requests for more *boeremusiek* by the Afrikaans radio listening audience.<sup>51</sup> Van der Walt states that there was constant uncertainty at the SABC over how to classify different forms of light music, and how to differentiate between "light" and "serious" music. Sometimes *boeremusiek* would also fall under "dance" music, and at other times it would be listed separately.<sup>52</sup> An analysis of the SABC's Afrikaans music programmes between 1951 and 1954 shows a preference for *boeremusiek* and other light Afrikaans music, while light organ and piano music and modern dance music from America and Britain were the most popular genres for the English listeners.<sup>53</sup> To add to the confusion, record companies used the header of *boeremusiek* to sell records, even

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

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

48 Fronemann, "Songcatcher of the Groot Maricho", p. 67.

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

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

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

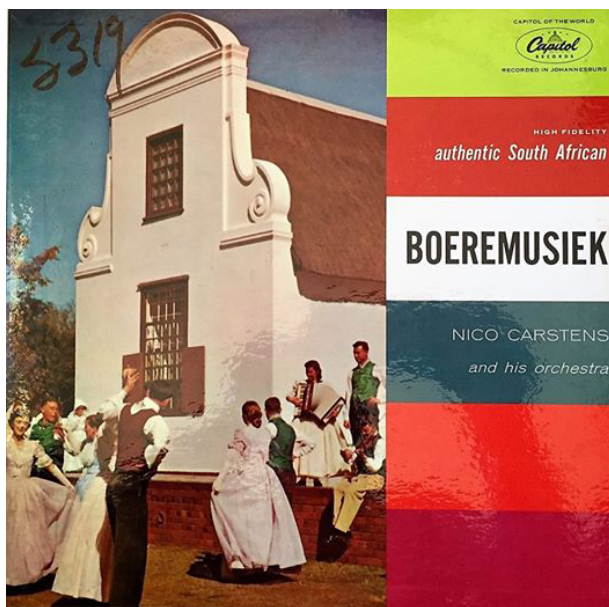
52 Van der Walt, "Die S.A.U.K., met spesiale verwysings na sy verhouding tot die staat", pp. 193-194.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 197.

if it wasn't technically *boeremusiek*. Throughout his career, Nico Carstens shied away from the *boeremusiek* label, although many of his best selling records were released as such.<sup>54</sup> One of his albums released in the US in 1957, calling it "Authentic South African Boeremusiek". It is obvious that it was only used here as a marketing ploy for American audiences curious about folk music from other parts of the world. The South African pressing had the title "Folk Songs".

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

In the same way the word "hotnotsmusiek" [Hottentot's music] originated amongst us. The term referred to almost every form of indigenous folk music. And the reason? It was discovered in the early days of white existence in S.A. that some slaves and Coloureds had an innate talent for music and soon the white man's music at dance parties was performed by these people. The white man left it to them, just like he left certain forms of labour to them and eventually people referred to the music as "hotnotsmusiek". ... The music was performed by people of colour for such a long time and on such a large scale that they too put their stamp on it. But in its essence it was Afrikaans folk music and as the walls of prejudice broke down, it resounded from our cities, towns and far-flung plains.<sup>56</sup>



An American release of Carstens's music (Capitol Records, T10075, 1957).<sup>55</sup>

54 S.H.R. Louw, "Nico Carstens as innoveerder van Suid-Afrikaanse Populêre Musiek", (MMus Thesis, University of the Free State, 2013), p. 51.

55 Courtesy of Tertius Louw.

56 A. Hartman, "Waarheen boeremusiek?" *Dagbreek en Sondagnuus*, February 13, 1955, cited in W. Froneman, *Pleasure Beyond the Call of Duty*, p. 49.

Although the reference to the “walls of prejudice” is ambiguous, and probably refers to the acceptance of *boeremusiek* as a legitimate part of the Afrikaner’s heritage, the importance of this statement lies in the acknowledgement of the mixed-race roots of what was constructed as a legitimate Afrikaans folk music. Also significant is Hartman’s assertion that, although the music was mostly played by “people of colour”, it was essentially Afrikaner folk music which belonged exclusively to whites. Coloured participation in this arena was accepted as long as it prescribed to the racial – and class – hierarchy dominated by whites. The fact that Hartman essentially places the performance of Afrikaans folk music among coloured labourers is also significant. A number of the most famous Afrikaans musicians of the mid-twentieth century – most notably Nico Carstens – had acknowledged the influence of coloured farm labourers on their own music.

Seen against this background, the FAK and SABC’s legitimisation of *boeremusiek* is somewhat idiosyncratic. It might have been a pragmatic response to audience requests to the SABC, or a protective strategy against the growing stylistic influence of jazz – initiated by artists like Hendrik Susan who adapted *boeremusiek* for radio broadcasting in the first place. As late as 1962, Hartman delivered a paper on foreign influences in Afrikaans music, essentially addressing the confusion over “traditional” *boeremusiek* and “light Afrikaans music”. He felt that *boeremusiek* should be considered true Afrikaans traditional music, and that modern, outside influences on this genre, specifically the influence of jazz, should be guarded against. This was possibly symptomatic of larger fears shared by many of the Afrikaner elite – Anglicisation and the influence of the outside world – things the *volksvaders* were keen to avoid.<sup>57</sup> By the 1970s, the authentication process seems to have been completed:

You know, a quarter of a century ago, ‘O Brandewyn laat my staan’ was an ugly song and we were not allowed to sing it. But such snobbery wears off, and with the years such a song develops into an ‘antique’ work. Out of sentimentality, or love for our heirlooms, it is finally considered good enough for our college and university choirs.<sup>58</sup>

This acceptance was a validation based on the re-invention of an “authentic” Afrikaner folk culture that fitted the racially exclusive requirements of the new nationalism. It therefore became part of the “literary” or “authorised” culture of Afrikaner nationalist ideology, whereas its consumption among working-class Afrikaners remained “popular” or “unauthorised”. Whilst it is tempting to see the FAK and SABC’s snobbery towards light Afrikaans music as proof that they regarded the genre as detrimental to the cultural well-being of the *volk*, it should not be forgotten that the difference in taste between radio listeners across a wide social spectrum is one of the main challenges of most radio networks across the globe. It was especially true for the BBC in Britain, whose model was followed by the SABC during its first two decades. In part, radio programmes featured what was popular among a broad base of listeners, but also played an educational role in developing the musical tastes of its listeners. The challenge was to balance

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

58 C. Rudolph, “Die Afrikaner se plek en taak in die beoefening van Ligte Musiek”, *Handhaaf*, August 1972, pp. 27-32, translated from original.

the two strategies. The following statement by the SABC's director-general Gideon Roos in 1957 bears testament to this:

When I started in the broadcasting service 24 years ago, the majority of requests were of a sad quality: "Die Boeliebeefblik", "Die Donkie is 'n wonderlike ding", "Die naglamp van Oom Piet", etc. Have a listen yourself today, and you'll realise how many of the requests come from the classical music repertoire. The radio has improved the average music taste in our country and the interest in music has grown immensely.<sup>59</sup>

The debates among members of the FAK's Music Commission and the SABC on *boeremusiek* were overshadowed by other developments in the local music scene. One vital such development was Gallo's construction of a local pressing plant in 1949, which meant that records could now be wholly produced in South Africa. In the first two months alone, they printed over 500 000 records. This led to a proliferation of local music recordings.<sup>60</sup> Things were also changing over at the SABC.

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

Following the Schoch Commission, the establishment of the SABC's commercial station, Springbok Radio, on 1 May 1950 had a significant influence on the way commercial music was broadcast to the South African public. Before then, the English and Afrikaans services had diverse programmes that included some commercial music (including *boeremusiek*), as well as classical music and other genres. However, with a dedicated commercial station, which sold advertising time and therefore had to ensure that programming remained in touch with the tastes of the listeners, the dynamics of radio changed. The dedicated English and Afrikaans shows still continued with their traditional programming, while the new commercial station catered for mass taste.

Springbok Radio played commercial pop and rock hits and hosted the official South African weekly charts. It often played local English, and to a lesser extent Afrikaans music, although 30 Afrikaans songs made it onto the charts between 1958 and 1979.<sup>61</sup> The station actively supported local music if it suited their requirements. Local releases (after being approved by the censors) automatically received at least three weeks of airplay on Springbok Radio.<sup>62</sup> Springbok Radio also broadcasted Afrikaans music programmes, as well as Afrikaans radio dramas, which were very popular. Some radio programmes pushed ideological content more overtly, mostly the news and actuality programmes, while the rest remained seemingly neutral by catering for conservative "white petit-bourgeois interests" – itself an act of subtly underwriting the dominant ideology.<sup>63</sup>

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

60 R. Trehwela, *Song Safari*, p. 45.

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

62 Boet Pretorius, interview with Author, 22 July 2013.

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

If 1950 marked a change in commercial radio it was, if anything, overshadowed by the changing political landscape. It is impossible to talk about popular culture in South Africa from 1950 onwards without due consideration of the sweeping socio-political changes introduced by the National Party. The hardening of apartheid during the 1950s and the consolidation of Afrikaner political power under the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism demarcated well-defined parameters for the construction of hegemonic Afrikaner identity. Furthermore, starting with the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950, an extended network of security legislation heralded an era of censorship and self-censorship. Exactly who was a communist – apart from those who openly claimed to be – was left to the government to decide.<sup>64</sup> Another early apartheid-era law, the Group Areas Act of 1950, laid the foundation for forced removals of non-whites (to use the racial classifications of the Act) from city centres and the legal separation of white and non-white residential areas. Under this Act, and numerous subsequent amendments, residents were removed from inner-city hubs like Sophiatown in Johannesburg – a vibrant cosmopolitan community of singular importance in the development of black urban cultural identities, including music styles such as *marabi*, *kwela* and *mbaqanga*. Some years later in 1966, in Cape Town, District Six was declared a white neighbourhood, which led to the controversial forced removals of ‘non-whites’ in 1968. At the same time, substantial limitations were imposed on the culture industry by the apartheid regime and its affiliated ideological allies the FAK, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and the SABC. Apart from a “culture of censorship,”<sup>65</sup> it also helped shape an Afrikaans music industry that in many ways echoed the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism and racial exclusivity.

As mentioned earlier, many of the commercial Afrikaans music releases of the apartheid era have solicited strong condemnation for their unoriginality and superficial and non-political lyrics. Arguments stating that such songs formed a compliant part of the dominant narrative of apartheid ideology are convincing.<sup>66</sup> David Kramer has even referred to such pop songs as “omo-Afrikaans, whiter than white,”<sup>67</sup> although this does not adequately explain the complexity of the Afrikaans music industry of that period. White Afrikaans pop was not the only music genre that did not resist the requirements of apartheid’s cultural entrepreneurs:

Musically, few artists managed to open up any creative space within the rigid, anodyne, formula-bound styles fostered by the SABC’s black radio stations. Those who remembered the previous era coined a derogatory term for the bouncy new popular music, mass-produced by the stations with the help of able but guileless musicians from the countryside: they called it *msakazo* (broadcast).<sup>68</sup>

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

65 Merritt, *A Culture of Censorship*, pp. 80-81.

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

67 J. Roup, *Boerejood* (Auckland Park: Jacana Media, 2004), p. 161. Omo is a brand of washing powder which at the time ran an advertisement campaign claiming that it made washing “whiter than white”.

68 C. Ballantine, *Marabi Nights*, p. 11.

It is important to state that apartheid placed black music under the patronage of a South African music industry dominated by whites (in terms of broadcasting and access to modes of production) who had their own political agendas. Set against such a socio-political background, inter-racial dynamics became more complex. Christopher Ballantine's interview with Edward Sililo, who played with Cele and Silgee's Jazz Maniacs, is especially revealing and shows how black musicians had to navigate complex racial politics and discriminatory laws by learning Afrikaans songs:

Well, you had to prove you were a musician, and if you were a plumber you had to prove you were a plumbing man. They took me to another place and I was told to play a piano. And, well, it's Afrikaner people: you play "Sarrie Marais" and they are very happy... 'Kom speel "Sarrie Marais", jong!' [hums] 'Nee man, jy ken! Kom!'... You just had to go do that, and when you come back, "ja, hy's 'n musikant, man!' And then they give it. [laughs] ... And many of us could get these passes, and we used to help the other guys and tell them, 'Oh no, you just tell them you're this, and you play what they [want] you to play.' Because they'll ask you to play. 'Jy moet speel! "Die hand vol vere", jong!' Now if you don't know "Die hand vol vere" – 'Jy's nie 'n musikant nie!' You must play an Afrikaner song. There you are, sign! Got my credentials: from there I was a musician.<sup>69</sup>

"Die hand vol vere" was a hit for Hendrik Susan's group and sung by the popular Jurie Ferreira.<sup>70</sup> Some white Afrikaans musicians were, however, less perturbed by racial politics. As a young man, the late Ollie Viljoen, accordionist and well-known *boeremusiek* artist, learned *kwela* from other black musicians in Johannesburg in the 1950s, and even performed with the pennywhistle virtuoso, Spokes Mashiyane.<sup>71</sup> Dorothy Masuka, legendary exiled jazz singer and co-composer of hits such as "Hamba nontsokolo" and "Pata Pata", fondly recalled the popularity of *tielikiedraai* – an Afrikaans music genre – among the black musicians of 1950s Johannesburg.<sup>72</sup> However, as a result of apartheid's restrictions, many of the top African artists (including Masuka) went into exile.

## Nico Carstens

The most successful of all the Afrikaans music artists of the 1950s and 60s (and who remained popular in the following decades), was the accordionist Nico Carstens.<sup>73</sup> He joined Hendrik Susan's band in 1945, aged 19. The following year he recorded his first album with Susan, and by 1951 he was making his own records. He had a particularly successful song-writing partnership with Anton de Waal (who previously worked with Danie Bosman, but with limited success). Together they composed more than 600 songs, quite a lot when compared to the 1937 edition of the *Volksangbundel* which contained only 314. In total, Carstens composed close to 2 000 songs.

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

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

71 Interview with author, Franschoek, 22 March 2014.

72 Personal communication with author, March 2013.

73 Again, for a more detailed analysis of Carstens's work and life, see Froneman's "Pleasure beyond the call of duty", pp. 136-146.

He was the first South African artist to sell more than a million LPs, a milestone he reached in 1959, a remarkable feat considering the first LPs were only released in 1955.<sup>74</sup> This put him in the same league of local popularity as international stars like Elvis and the country singer Jim Reeves. On a commercial level, Carstens was vastly successful and it is clear that he and De Waal focused on music recipes that resonated well with Afrikaans audiences of the 1950s and 1960s. This time frame is of course important for many reasons, not least of all the fact that it coincided almost perfectly with the first two decades of apartheid. Economically, this generation of Afrikaners was much better off than the previous one, and Carstens's public image, with his flashy suits and fancy Cadillacs, reflected this. His rise to fame thus overlapped with an era of Afrikaner nationalist optimism that would fade only decades later. Many of his album covers bore nationalist iconography such as ox wagons and the like, which has been interpreted as subtle underscoring of the main political narrative of the time. Froneman, however, interprets this as nothing more than pragmatic marketing during a time of economic growth. For a poster boy of Afrikaans music during the height of apartheid, Carstens cut a strange figure when measured against the strict Calvinist norms of polite Afrikaner society. He later even converted to the esoteric eastern spiritualism of Sant Mat, which was not a common thing among religiously conservative Afrikaners. Personally, he did not feel that he was co-opted into the cultural stable of the National Party and mentions his uneasy relationship with the SABC:

No, I don't feel that. I was, in any event, locked out of the SABC for 15 years, through envy. All the heads of the music department, with the exception of Don Lamprecht in the late 1950s early 1960s, could not take my success. I didn't get any transcription work. ... There's never been a Nico Carstens radio programme either, although with my success that would've happened anywhere else in the world. There was a TV documentary done three years ago by the then NNTV, but it's never been flighted for some reason.<sup>75</sup>

Carstens certainly had great international success – arguably more than any other Afrikaans musician to date. His greatest hit, “Zambezi” has been covered by a number of international artists, with Eddie Calvert's version reaching nr. 13 on the British hit parade. He even composed music for Jim Reeves, with his visits to South Africa in the early 1960s. His own music was released internationally, even as far as the US and New Zealand, and during his career he released music on almost every format available, from 78s and LPs to singles, cassette, DVD and CD – most probably the only South African artists to do so. As mentioned before, he often paid tribute to the coloured musicians of the Cape:

I like the beat, I grew up in the Cape with music. There's a form of music in the Western Cape called *Hotnot's Riel*, which is not meant to sound derogatory. I have played with a lot of Malay and coloured people. There's also *goema* there. These kinds of rhythms are exciting.<sup>76</sup>

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

75 G. O'Hara, “From Zambezi to Somma Ghoema”, *Mail & Guardian*, 20 December 1996.

76 *Ibid.*

And also:

I spent a lot of my youth on farms, and on every farm you'll find labourers who take out their guitars after work or on weekends. They taught me the basic chords and the strumming of that particular Cape Coloured beat, which I could never find in the Transvaal. The only people who could do it were people like Stan Murray who also grew up in Cape Town. That's why Stan and I fitted in so well in those old recordings like 'Outa in die langpad'. Eddie Wyngaard, also from the Cape, is another.<sup>77</sup>

Carstens also played with Stan Murray's Penny Serenaders, who released a number of songs on Columbia's Carnival Series which was specifically aimed at a coloured market. On "Tamatie vir die Partie", the catalogue number is followed by the letter "C" – to indicate that it was aimed at a coloured market. Record companies often classified their markets according to language and race – Troubadour, for instance, used the letter "A" to categorise it as an Afrikaans record, aimed at the Afrikaans market. Other, slightly earlier releases by the Penny Serenaders included "Volstruisrivier" and "Sussie se Samba" in 1958, but on these, the "C" is missing.



Music by Nico Carstens and Stan Murray on Columbia's Carnival Series, aimed specifically at a coloured market, (C.E.A. 2986-C). Also by the Penny Serenaders (C.E.A. 2877 & C.E.A. 2876).

## Kwela

In 1956, Strike Vilakazi composed "Meadowlands", a political song inspired by the forced removals of Sophiatown residents to what would become Soweto, and sung in English and *Tsotsitaal* – an Afrikaans-based urban vernacular spoken by black workers in Johannesburg.<sup>78</sup> The following year saw the first LP releases of *kwela* music for a specifically white audience in South Africa.<sup>79</sup> *Kwela* means 'get up', or 'climb on', referring to the police vans (sometimes called *kwela-kwela*) that picked up pass offenders and policed illegal gambling on street corners.<sup>80</sup> It was primarily played on a pennywhistle, a cheap instrument that made it popular all over South Africa among poor musicians. *Kwela* had earlier roots in areas like Sophiatown and was part

77 Pretorius, *Musieksterre Van Gister En Vandag*, p. 50.

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

79 These releases were in LP (long playing) format, favoured by white audiences.

80 Martin, *Sounding the Cape*, p. 139.



of a trajectory of music that developed out of a mixture of local styles, especially *marabi*, and imported jazz from the US.

*Kwela* became very popular among Afrikaners and numerous white Afrikaans music artists would release *kwela* albums, some with pennywhistles, others without. Lara Allen has suggested that cultural production and consumption in South Africa at this time was still fluid, despite it overlapping with the moment in which apartheid became consolidated.<sup>81</sup> *Kwela's* ability to cross the racial boundaries being written into law shows that "...the 1950s constituted a brief phase during which it was apparent that identities could be chosen, before separate, exclusive racial categorisation became hegemonic."<sup>82</sup> Certainly, the release of *kwela* music for a coloured audience by white Afrikaans musicians attests to this. Allen uses the example of the LP, *Something new from Africa*<sup>83</sup> to illustrate the cross-racial appeal of *kwela*. The LP featured a collection of six different, exclusively black, *kwela* groups. This commercial release of *kwela* music for a specifically white audience not only signifies a deliberate commodification of black urban popular culture for consumption by a white market, but also the establishment of white patronage over it at a time when apartheid politics focused squarely on intensifying racial segregation. The implication that racial identities were still flexible and not hegemonic at this time is very significant, but also begs the question whether or not it *did* become as hegemonic as is believed in the years that followed. In the Afrikaans music industry, several music releases seem to indicate that cultural hegemony was never fully achieved.

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

The inborn sense of rhythm, which is a heritage of the peoples of our land, has given us the irresistible lilt of the KWELA. No other pianist in South Africa is probably more qualified to interpret the fascinating charm of KWELA than Albie Louw. Albie was born in the Cape, and all his life he has been in contact with music of this type, listening to it, and absorbing it with appreciative interest. Albie's playing gives us the very essence and spirit of KWELA, which was spontaneously created by the Coons during Carnival time.<sup>84</sup>

Subsequently, many white Afrikaans musicians released *kwela* songs. Apart from the Penny Serenaders, Nico Carstens also released a number of *kwela* albums for a white market. *Kwela's* popularity spread beyond the borders of South Africa. In 1958, Elias and his Zigzag Jive Flutes scored a number 2 hit in the UK with their *kwela* tune "Tom Hark".<sup>85</sup> Although it is

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

82 *Ibid.*

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

84 Translated from the original.

85 [http://www.rock.co.za/files/vinyl\\_sa\\_index2.html](http://www.rock.co.za/files/vinyl_sa_index2.html), accessed 12 August 2013.

an instrumental song, the introduction has street conversations in *Tsotsitaal*, with a distinct Afrikaans flavour.

Some white Afrikaans music artists also released *kwela* music that was more associated with the pennywhistle style originating in Johannesburg. Fred Wooldridge, with his 1961 release “Penniefluitjie-kwela”<sup>86</sup> achieved a number 10 hit on the LM Radio charts in April 1962.<sup>87</sup> It became the theme song of the extremely popular morning radio programme *Flink uit die vere*, presented by Fanus Rautenbach and broadcasted on the SABC’s Afrikaans service. The first broadcast of *Flink uit die vere* was on 16 October 1961 and for the next 13 years “Penniefluitjie-kwela” was the morning alarm for thousands of Afrikaans radio listeners.<sup>88</sup> In many ways, this summarises the complexities of the Afrikaner culture industry during apartheid.



Referring to *kwela* from the Cape (JDLP 10008 HMV).

## Die Briels

While many white artists released *kwela* music, the other end of the scale was represented by the sentimental songs of Die Briels. Frans and Sannie Briel started their recording career in August 1954<sup>89</sup> with the album *My gryse ou moeder* (“My grey old mother”), and went on to record 482 songs in total.<sup>90</sup> Their songs were intentionally sentimental and were regarded by the FAK as an embarrassment. A SABC memo from 6 August 1957 shows that two of their songs, “Saans deur die tralies” (“Through the bars in the evening”) and “’n Engel in die hemel” (“An angel in heaven”), were banned from being used in radio programmes.<sup>91</sup>

The Briels were working-class Afrikaners – Frans Briel worked on the railways and later for Yskor, while Sannie became a forklift driver,<sup>92</sup> and their music often referred to the realities of working-class life. Along with other artists like Danie Pretorius, and Koos and Hester Nortje – with record company Troubadour – they deliberately scanned newspapers for news of disasters that could serve as themes for songs. Such heavy sentiments were popular and the albums sold well among older listeners, while the younger demographic tended not to listen to Afrikaans

86 Pêrel, p. 203, April 1961.

87 Tertius Louw, email communication with author, September 2013.

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

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

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

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

92 Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 39.

music.<sup>93</sup> Despite the sales, Die Briels remained poor, as artists did not receive royalties and were only paid a set fee for the recording.<sup>94</sup>

In 1961 they released “Die Myner’s lied” (“The miner’s song”), inspired by the Coalbrook mine disaster in January 1960 in which 435 mine workers perished, 429 of which were black migrant workers from Lesotho and Mozambique.<sup>95</sup> Songs like “Ter nagedagtenis aan 435 mynwerkers” (“In remembrance of 435 mine workers”) and “Die myner’s lied” were sombre reminders of the tragedy, but were nonetheless very popular songs in a time when other Afrikaans music was deliberately light-hearted. Another tragedy, the Sharpeville Massacre, occurred within a few months of the Coalbrook disaster. Perhaps not surprisingly this event did not find its way into any Afrikaans song. Sentimentality aside, Die Briels were part of a select group of Afrikaans music artists of the 1950s and 1960s that made any direct reference to the hardships of South African life and thus stood in contrast with the upbeat optimism of the Euro-kitsch mainstream. Perhaps because of this, they experienced a brief revival in popularity among the wave of alternative Afrikaans artists of the late 1980s.<sup>96</sup>

The Troubadour record company was also responsible for releasing highly political singles by black singers such as Dorothy Masuka, whose song “Dr. Malan” contained the line “Dr. Malan has difficult laws”.<sup>97</sup> It was banned by the authorities and elicited intensified attention from the security police, which resulted in Masuka going into exile. Such censorship and strongarm tactics by the authorities was indicative of the growing power of the apartheid government and its clampdown on political dissenters. In the following decades, this would increase as the regime responded to an array of security threats – imagined and real – which also influenced the local music industry.

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93 Boet Pretorius telephonic interview, 22 July 2013.

94 *Ibid.*

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

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

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

# CHAPTER FOUR

## The apartheid regime, rock 'n roll and Afrikaner youth<sup>1</sup>

### The National Party and Afrikaner power in the 1960s

During the 1960s, the power of the National Party and its affiliated cultural organisations reached its zenith. The establishment of the Republic of South Africa in 1961 and the country's exit from the Commonwealth, as well as the successful oppression of black political organisations like the ANC and PAC, confirmed Afrikaner nationalist domination. This power did not just translate into political control, but also into massive optimism among Afrikaners about their triumph over the harsh threats of poverty and cultural disintegration scarcely a generation before. One important factor was the economic prosperity and emergence of a large Afrikaner middle class at the height of apartheid, which heralded changing lifestyles and consumer patterns as Afrikaners became more affluent.<sup>2</sup> Extremely confident, determined and intellectually astute, the influence and power yielded by Verwoerd during his term as Prime Minister, which commenced in 1958, was substantial.<sup>3</sup> He did, however, have a vocal critic in Afrikaans poet N.P. van Wyk Louw,

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- 1 The main themes in this chapter have been addressed by the author in a previous article: "Radio Apartheid: Investigating a History of Compliance and Resistance in Popular Afrikaans Music, 1956–1979", *South African Historical Journal* 66:2, (2014), pp. 349-370.
  - 2 A. Grundlingh, "Are We Afrikaners Getting too Rich? Cornucopia and Change in Afrikanerdom in the 1960s", *Journal of Historical Sociology* 21:2/3 (2008), pp. 143-165; W. Beinart, *Twentieth Century South Africa*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 181-184.
  - 3 H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003), pp. 519-520.

whose *Nasionale Liberalisme*, published the same year Verwoerd came to power, embodied the principles of open dialogue and political criticism from within the Afrikaner laager. Van Wyk Louw argued for a moral struggle for the survival of Afrikanerdom, and inspired a few Afrikaans journalists to interrogate Verwoerd's policies in their publications.<sup>4</sup> The most prominent were Piet Cillie (editor of *Die Burger*) and Schalk Pienaar (the sub-editor who made a name for himself by covering the 1938 Centenary Trek). Pienaar also criticised Verwoerd for his stance on Afrikaner cultural morals: "As if it was the most natural thing in the world, Verwoerd considered himself the leader of the Afrikaners and the arbiter of what was good and bad for the Afrikaners."<sup>5</sup> Verwoerd was certainly influential enough to affect the cultural sphere as well. Van Wyk Louw publicly criticised the wisdom of having the "organisation men" (staunch nationalists) "channel Afrikaans cultural life into the streams the political and cultural leaders wanted it to go."<sup>6</sup> These "organisation men" were strong believers in apartheid ideology and were committed to ensuring that Afrikaner cultural life remained compliant with the (by now entrenched) ideas of separate development and the Afrikaner's dominant role within it. Van Wyk Louw's criticism, as well as Cillie's and Pienaar's, were subtle and situated within the Afrikaner fold, and still manifested a belief in the legitimacy of apartheid as a whole.

## The SABC

One of the apartheid government's greatest assets in its efforts to exercise control over the population was the national broadcaster. The SABC was a vital tool not only for broadcasting culture (as is also the case with other public broadcasters like the BBC), but in shaping it.<sup>7</sup> It functioned relatively independently from the state from its establishment in 1936 until 1959, when the ultra-nationalist Piet Meyer, previously chairman of the FAK's *Radiokomitee* in the 1940s, was appointed as chairman by Albert Hertzog, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications in Verwoerd's cabinet.<sup>8</sup> Subsequently, the national broadcaster became much more compliant with hard-line apartheid ideology, armed with a mandate to guard broadcasting content against subversive material, especially during the politically volatile early 1960s.

Not only did this affect how artists and record companies approached releases, but it also affected news reportage to the South African public. The power held by the SABC after major technological improvements in the 1960s – like switching to FM – made it possible for the corporation to extend its reach and also influence, or even suppress, news reportage. The under-reportage of international outcries after the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960 is a good example. Other important international events were interpreted in ways that echoed the government's policies, like the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., who was labelled a "negro civil rights agitator."<sup>9</sup> Ingrid Byerly has noted that there was a relation between higher degrees of state

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

5 Quoted in H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People*, p. 541.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 554.

7 R. Tomaselli, K. Tomaselli and J. Muller (eds), *Currents of Power: State Broadcasting in South Africa* (Cape Town: Anthropos, 1989), p. 10.

8 P. Meyer, *Nog nie ver genoeg nie: 'n Persoonlike rekenskap van vyftig jaar georganiseerde Afrikanerskap* (Johannesburg: Perskor, 1984), p. 103.

9 J. Daniel and P. Vale, "South Africa: Where were we looking in 1968?", p. 140, in P. Gassert and M. Klimke, eds, *1968 – Memories and Legacies of a Global Revolt* (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2009).

clamp-down on South African music artists in times of political upheaval, as is evident during 1960 with the Sharpeville Massacre and the banning of the ANC and the PAC.<sup>10</sup> In 1966 Radio RSA, the SABC's international service, was founded and broadcasted in a number of languages, including English, Afrikaans, Swahili, French, Portuguese, Dutch and German. It consisted of mostly opinion pieces and news that reflected the apartheid government's ideologies. Censorship became stricter after the Publications Act of 1974, which established the influential Directorate of Publications.<sup>11</sup> Also of extreme importance was the ban on television until 1976, which will be discussed in chapter five. This isolated white South Africa, especially Afrikaners, from the world to an extent. In a decade of significant liberal social and cultural movements across the globe, South African society went in the opposite direction. Afrikaner organisations were determined to protect their *volk* and youth from a dangerous world outside, and throughout the *lekkerliedjie* (nice song) was broadcast to convey a subtle message that everything was under control. Record companies such as Brigadiers played a vital role in establishing new Afrikaans artists as commercial success stories by looking to Europe (but not the Europe defined by the 1968 student protests) for inspiration, often taking *Schlager* melodies and writing Afrikaans lyrics to these tunes. This is perhaps most evident in the music of Gé Korsten, who studied opera in Vienna and Munich.<sup>12</sup> Korsten, along with Min Shaw, scored a massive hit with the soundtrack to the 1968 movie *Hoor my lied*, in which they both starred. The album sold 200 000 units in six months.<sup>13</sup>

Not only politically subversive songs were banned during this time. The songs of mainstream Afrikaans artists like Die Briels<sup>14</sup> were censored, as was Gé Korsten's 1966 tribute to Rhodesian independence, "Songs of Courage", a particularly strange decision since one would expect some form of solidarity with another white-minority ruled country in Africa at the time.<sup>15</sup> Songs with the word "god" in the title, even if these were gospel songs, could be censored, as happened with Charles Jacobie's "It's no secret (what God can do)".<sup>16</sup> Groep Twee, one of the most popular Afrikaans groups, had their gospel song, "U is ons Ster" (Thou art our Star),<sup>17</sup> banned in 1972, which showed that censorship was not limited to politically subversive artists. This, and the accompanying evidence, undermines the idea that the regime specifically favoured non-confrontational pop music. In this way, commercial Afrikaans music complied with the cultural requirements of Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid, even if artists themselves were not politically motivated.

Although censorship influenced radio broadcasts of the SABC, the South African public could still pick up independent radio broadcasts from outside South Africa. The most prominent was LM Radio in Mozambique, which was instrumental in exposing South African audiences to

10 I. Byerly, "Mirror, Mediator, and Prophet: The Music Indaba of Late-Apartheid South Africa", *Ethnomusicology* 42: 1 (1998), p. 44.

11 Publications Act no. 42, 9 October 1974.

12 I. Roggeband, *50 Stemme: Die grootste name in Afrikaanse musiek* (Cape Town: Delta, 2009), p. 97.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 98.

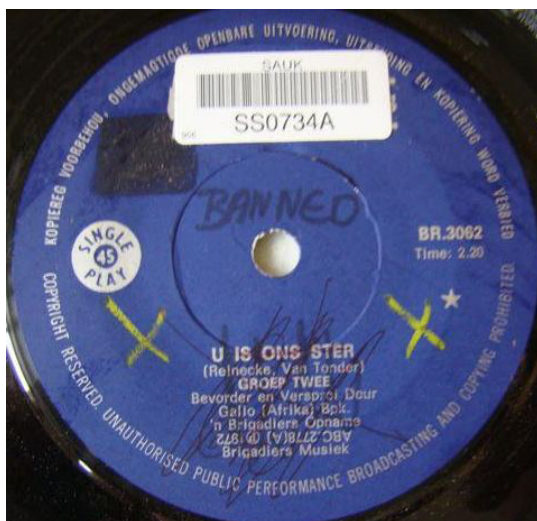
14 "Saans deur die Tralies", and "n Engel in die Hemel", SABC Memo, 6 August 1957, courtesy of Stephanus Muller, see chapter four.

15 PD. 9086.

16 CBS Exp 2126.

17 BR 3062.

music banned, or just not played, by the SABC.<sup>18</sup> When the SABC bought the majority shares in LM Radio in 1972, it meant the end of an era of independent broadcasting in Southern Africa.<sup>19</sup> Even so, censorship was never comprehensive. Even if the SABC banned particular songs, it did not mean the albums were not available in South Africa. Artists like Bob Dylan, for instance, whose 1963 hit, “Blowin in the Wind”, was banned, remained a big seller with a large following among South African youth.<sup>20</sup>



Groep Twee's "U is ons Ster" (Thou art our Star) was banned in 1972 (Brigadiers Musiek, BR 3062).<sup>23</sup>

In a meeting in January 1963, Douglas Fuchs, Director of Programmes and later Director-General of the SABC, stated that rock and *boeremusiek* were classified as specialised music genres with a marginal audience and should therefore be avoided in favour of light, pleasant and melodic music. Music that was too “esoteric, too rocky, or too rolly or too loud” should be avoided unless there were specific numbers that were making news.<sup>21</sup> The SABC was also under pressure from a conservative society – English and Afrikaans whites especially – that was easily offended. A few years later, Fuchs was forced to prohibit any further broadcasts of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s musical, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, after a once-off evening broadcast in March 1971 was immediately followed by a flood of complaints by “cultural organisations, churches and individual listeners”.<sup>22</sup> The fact that it was aired in the first place shows that the SABC was perhaps not as conservative as the cultural organisations and the church. The following extract from another meeting at the SABC illuminates that the organisation was nevertheless fully co-opted into the political and ideological views of the government:

We want to try to give the English-speaking conservative student a weekly late-night programme, like “Studentevaria”, on the Afrikaans transmission, a kind of student’s forum with the type of music students like with “hidden persuasion (sic)” in between. This must be broadcast under the Chairmanship of a live and vital – from Rhodes, Natal, Wits, Cape Town etc., and sandwiched in between the music the message of the conservative against Nusas should be put.<sup>24</sup>

18 <http://lmradio.org/History.html>, accessed 30 April 2013.

19 *Ibid.*

20 *Personality*, November 11, 1965.

21 Douglas Fuchs, SABC programme director, meeting of senior SABC programmers, 16 January 1963 (INCH), Douglas Fuchs Collection, PV 851.

22 INCH, Douglas Fuchs Collection, PV 851.

23 Courtesy of Tertius Louw.

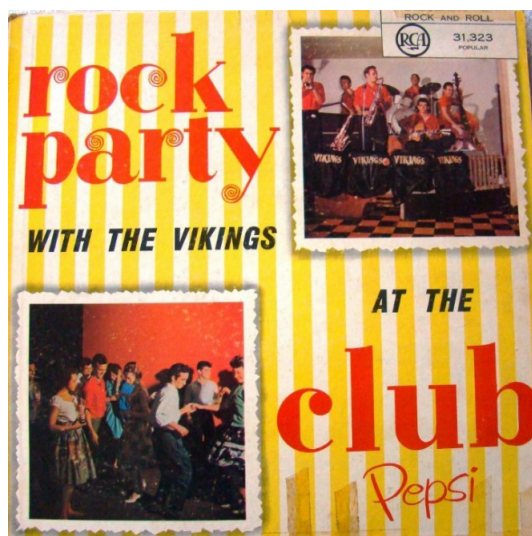
24 Fuchs, Special SABC meeting, 30 April 1964, INCH, Douglas Fuchs Collection, PV 851.

NUSAS was the liberal National Union of South African Students that by the 1970s had become one of the foremost white anti-apartheid bodies. Recording and broadcasting studios at the SABC were racially segregated,<sup>25</sup> which prohibited musicians of different races from recording together. Privately owned record companies could not afford to build segregated studios, which resulted in commercial recordings sometimes being made by multi-racial backing groups and furthermore, that the same studios got to record black and white music respectively.<sup>26</sup> Despite the restrictions imposed by the SABC it was of course not in such a powerful position that it could eradicate all music that went against the grain of the dominant apartheid narrative. Chris Smit's album cover represents this complexity.<sup>27</sup>

Released in the first quarter of 1962,<sup>30</sup> it is a loaded metaphor that symbolises, among other things, the "strange society" Charles Hamm referred to.<sup>31</sup> Even at a quick glance, the cover contains a number of interesting – and unusual – elements. Regarding the image of the artist, his tattoo signifies a break from the conservative norm of the time and is probably intended to provoke, as it is deliberately facing the camera. Chris Smit is quite obviously white, but he is playing an instrument associated with black musicians and his hairstyle resembles that of a "Ducktail" – a marginal group seen as undesirable by the majority



Chris Smit's *Pennie Fluitjie*, 1962 (Protea, PALP 1884).<sup>28</sup>



Rock Party with the Vikings at the Club Pepsi (RCA 31,323), 1959 – the first South African rock album?<sup>29</sup>

25 Ollie Viljoen, interview with author, Gordon's Bay, 18 September 2013.

26 Rob Allingham, electronic communication, 26 September 2013.

27 Protea, PALP1004, 1962, courtesy of <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Marq-Vass-Southern-African-Music-Collectibles>, accessed 15 April 2013.

28 Courtesy of Tertius Louw.

29 Courtesy of Tertius Louw.

30 Marq Vas, email communication with author, 16 April 2013.

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



of white South African society.<sup>32</sup> The ambiguities extend to the title of the album and the tracks listed on the cover. The title is in both Afrikaans (*Pennie Fluitjie*) and English (*Penny Whistle*), indicating that it is aimed at a cross-over audience; and most of the tracks are reworked Afrikaans favourites, like “Boegoeberg se dam” and “Haak Vrystaat”, while “Loskop Kwela” is a deliberate reference to *kwela*.

Chris Smit was also a member of one of South Africa’s first rock groups, The Vikings, whose first album, *Rock Party at the Pepsi Club with the Vikings*, was released in 1959.<sup>34</sup> On the sleeve note it states that Smit led his own group by age 16 (he was 20 in 1959) and that he concentrated on saxophone and pennywhistle in “Boere Music (sic) Cape-Malay and Kwela”. Interestingly, Allen makes reference to the similarities between *kwela* and rock ’n roll, especially when listened to as dance music. In this way, it functioned as a type of “localised rock ’n roll”.<sup>35</sup> Smit’s album was, however, not a commercial success. Protea was not one of the major record companies of the time and along with other smaller independent companies like Meteor, would have been more likely to release music that was not part of the mainstream in the hope that it would attract a younger, niche market.<sup>36</sup> Lack of commercial success aside, the true interest of this album cover lies in its position within a specific time and space, and the fact that it exists at all. The mixture of inter-racial musical influences, the provocative image of the artist, the bilingual album title and English caption, and especially the timing (1962) all add to its poignancy. This was at the height of apartheid and the National Party was in firm control while its cultural allies the DRC, the FAK and the SABC were all conspiring to uphold Afrikaner nationalist identity and to protect it from subversive elements, imagined or real. And yet the ambiguities of signification lodged in music managed to surface even in this restrictive environment. Another poignant release of the late 1950s was Duffy Ravenscroft’s



“Kwela” with Duffy (Gallo GALP 1012).



“Party” with Duffy (Gallo GALP 1012)<sup>33</sup>

32 K. Mooney, “Ducktails, flick-knives and pugnacity: subcultural and hegemonic masculinities in South Africa, 1948–1960”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24:4 (1998), pp. 753-774.

33 Both courtesy of Tertius Louw.

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

35 L. Allen, “Kwela’s White Audiences: The Politics of Pleasure and Identification in the Early Apartheid Period”, in G. Olwage (ed.), *Composing Apartheid: Music For and Against Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits university Press, 2008), p. 83.

36 Boet Pretorius, telephonic interview with author, 22 July 2013.

*Kwela with Duffy*, which was changed by the record company to *Party with Duffy*:

This change in title suggests that the *kwela* reference might have alienated the album's English audience, or that the record company at least thought so. Although its most prominent members were very opposed to foreign influences on Afrikaner culture, it is interesting to note that there is no direct evidence suggesting that the FAK was concerned about either country or *kwela* music's popularity among whites or its influence on Afrikaans music artists. The SABC, on the other hand, had no qualms about banning from the airwaves an Afrikaans song "Kom kwela vanaand met my" ("Come kwela with me tonight", artist unknown) and the album on which it featured, in December 1957.<sup>38</sup> There was obviously not a total ban of Afrikaans *kwela* songs if Fred Wooldridge's "Penniefluitjie kwela" was broadcast every day for thirteen years. Seen against such complex racial politics, the identification of white Afrikaners with the music of the "other" seems idiosyncratic, but it can also be read as opportunistic and pragmatic, since *kwela* was good business. Another album that seems idiosyncratic is Coetzee en Ceronio's *Die Ghitaar Pluk*.



Coetzee en Ceronio's *Die Ghitaar Pluk*, c. 1965 (Perel PLS 7065).<sup>37</sup>

The precise date of its release is unknown (it is somewhere between 1964 and 1966) and is a collection of instrumental guitar covers. Different versions of "Meadowlands" were banned,<sup>39</sup> but the tune was popular enough to include on the album, possibly due to The Meteors, who had a number 13 hit with it on LM Radio in 1963 (despite it also being banned by the SABC).<sup>40</sup> The songs "Ghitaar Boogie" and "Vyfhoek Blues" have mixed-language song titles, which is controversial for the time, and the references to "boogie", "blues" and "rock" clearly indicate that the album is aimed at a younger demographic. "Fanagalo" was also recorded by Nico Carstens, and refers to the pidgin Zulu vernacular spoken by migrant black mine workers.

## Rock and country

To add to the complex identity politics of this early apartheid era, 1956 also marks the year that Elvis Presley – and by extension rock music in general – was introduced to South African audiences. Elvis became immensely popular among English and Afrikaans white youth, selling nearly two million albums in just three years.<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, during the years 1957 to 1959,

<sup>37</sup> Courtesy of Tertius Louw.

<sup>38</sup> SABC internal memo to "C" compilers, 04 December 1957, courtesy of Stephanus Muller.

<sup>39</sup> Strike Vilakazi's original version, as well as a cover recorded by Nico Carstens in 1968.

<sup>40</sup> Tertius Louw, email communication with author, September 2013.

<sup>41</sup> Hamm, "Rock 'n Roll in a strange society", p. 159.

popular music dominated English broadcasts of the SABC. Almost no classical music was broadcast during this time, which is in stark contrast to the years before and since.<sup>42</sup>

Rock music was also used in the political arena. Visits by early rock singers from abroad caused an outcry among conservative Afrikaners on the one hand, but also curiosity on the other. The visit of Tommy Steele, a British singer, was reported with cautious fascination by Afrikaans newspapers.<sup>43</sup> The National Party used the dangers of rock music as a political tool against the mostly English-speaking United Party in the 1958 national elections, holding them responsible for Afrikaner youth turning their backs on Afrikaner culture.<sup>44</sup> This move to capitalise on rock music in the political arena was much more pragmatic than papers by various FAK executive members published in the organisation's magazine, *Handhaaf*, or presented at *Volkskongresse*, like the one in Stellenbosch in 1957. Here, Benedictus Kok, FAK executive member, delivered a paper on the influence of radio, the gramophone, composers of light music and publishers of Afrikaans music where he referred to pop music as "music pornography".<sup>45</sup> The pragmatic approach by the National Party continued for a number of years and allowed rock music its growing audience, while at the same time the Afrikaans press and the DRC (and cultural organisations like the FAK) relented in their denouncement thereof.<sup>46</sup> Pragmatism, however, had boundaries. During Steele's tour, 25 boys and girls were arrested in Springs for having a "rock-n-roll session" in the basement of a building, although no charges were made.<sup>47</sup> A few days after this incident, the British rock singer Terry Dene was deemed an "undesirable person" by the Department of Home Affairs and prohibited from touring South Africa.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, South Africans were only exposed to the mildest rock artists from abroad, ensuring that rock found a wider audience than just the youth:

In the next decade, dozens of British and American singers were persuaded to make the long journey to the tip of the African continent, among them Dickie Valentine, Cliff Richard, Connie Francis, Pat Boone, Billy Fury, Dusty Springfield, Adam Faith, Vera Lynn and Alma Cogan. This roster both reflected and helped to shape the musical taste of white South African youth: middle of the road rock; often more pop than rock; several stages removed from the rhythm and blues and country and western roots of the first wave of American rock 'n roll of the 1950s; more often British than American. South African "rock" musicians fell into these same patterns. Adults became more and more tolerant of this music as it became evident that no real harm was being done, and that much music labelled "rock 'n' roll" was not too different from the music they had enjoyed during their youth.<sup>49</sup>

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42 R.J. van den Berg, "Die Musiekaktiwiteite van die SAUK", (MA Dissertation: University of Potchefstroom, 1976), Diagram 2, p. 203.

43 *Die Burger*, 15, 25 March 1958.

44 Hamm, "Rock 'n Roll in a strange society", p. 162.

45 P. McClachlan, *Matieland*, 1, 3 December 1957, p. 21.

46 Hamm, "Rock 'n Roll in a strange society", p. 163; *Die Burger*, 07 January 1965.

47 *Die Burger*, 24 March 1958.

48 *Die Burger*, 27 March 1958.

49 Hamm, "Rock 'n Roll in a strange society", p. 162.

Many of these artists came under pressure for visiting apartheid South Africa. A prominent actor's union in the UK was Equity, which succeeded in convincing Billy Fury to cancel his trip. Equity insisted that their artists perform to unrestricted audiences, which was almost impossible under apartheid laws. After a detective removed three coloured teenagers at an Adam Faith concert in Wynberg in January 1965, Faith had to cancel remaining concerts due to pressure from Equity.<sup>50</sup> This led to a charge of breach of contract by the concert promoter, and Faith was arrested on the plane as he was about to leave Johannesburg.<sup>51</sup>

Rock musicians were not the only overseas artists to visit South Africa during this time. Probably the most popular artist to visit was American country singer Jim Reeves, who visited South Africa (along with pianist Floyd Cramer and guitarist Chet Atkins) in 1962 following staggering album sales in the country. American culture seems to have taken root in the South African imagination, with Westerns being popular at the cinemas and country music appealing to a wide, racially inclusive, audience.<sup>52</sup> Reeves was mobbed by fans at Johannesburg's Jan Smuts Airport and in front of his hotel.<sup>53</sup> He subsequently recorded two Afrikaans albums and starred in a local movie: *Kimberley Jim*, a musical with music written by local musicians such as Nico Carstens, Anton de Waal and Gilbert Gibson.<sup>54</sup> He was even eulogised in a song by sentimental singers Koos & Hester Nortje after his death in a plane crash in 1964.<sup>55</sup> Country music has remained very popular among Afrikaners.

It is difficult to know how popular Reeves was among a younger demographic. Elvis Presley had no less than eight hits on LM Radio (which had a large audience among the youth) in December 1961 (just before Reeves's visit), including the top five,<sup>56</sup> which indicates strong popularity of rock music in South Africa. This popularity was part of the global impact of mass-produced American and European popular culture.<sup>57</sup>



Sentimental Afrikaans music: Koos en Hester Nortje's *Vaarwel Jim Reeves* (Farewell Jim Reeves) (Troubadour TRS-A 836).

50 *Die Burger*, 7 January 1965.

51 *Die Burger*, 9 January 1965.

52 W. Beinart, *Twentieth Century South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 183.

53 M. Titlestad, "The South African Life and Afterlife of Jim Reeves", *The Journal of South African and American Studies* 15: 4 (2014), p. 499.

54 *Ibid.*, pp. 500-503.

55 "Vaarwel Jim Reeves" (Farewell Jim Reeves).

56 Tertius Louw, email communication September 2013.

57 [http://www.recording-history.org/HTML/impact\\_recorded\\_music12.php](http://www.recording-history.org/HTML/impact_recorded_music12.php), accessed 23 August 2012.

## Afrikaner youth

Afrikaans youth did not view Afrikaans music as legitimate pop music, especially after the introduction of rock 'n roll.<sup>58</sup> This was an important development that reflected the changing demographics of Afrikaans music audiences. Despite Koos Kombuis's later quip that the idea of making British and American styled pop music in Afrikaans during the 1960s was "as impossible as Monty Python style humour in the Third Reich,"<sup>59</sup> some local bands *did* try their hands at Afrikaans rock songs. Probably the earliest example of Afrikaans rock music was a live performance by Johnny Kongos and the G-men in the 1963 film *Waar is jy?* (Where are you?), where they played a song with the same name. It was, however, never released on record.<sup>60</sup> The most popular Afrikaans rock releases of the 1960s came from local English rock group The Bats, who had an Afrikaans hit with the rugby-themed single "Groen en Goud" (Green and Gold) on both LM Radio and Springbok Radio in 1968.<sup>61</sup> This was a very early form of Afrikaans rock and features a concertina solo that blends rock with *boeremusiek*. The references to popular Afrikaans rugby players and national heroes Dawie de Villiers, Frik du Preez and Tiny Naudé, along with the familiar concertina, made use of powerful Afrikaner

cultural icons, ensuring its popularity among Afrikaners. Following the success of "Groen en Goud", The Bats released the first full-length Afrikaans rock album, called *Weltevrede*.<sup>62</sup> Another of their songs, "Weltevrede Stasie", was also a hit on the Springbok charts.<sup>63</sup>

There were, however, earlier, lesser known groups that released Afrikaans rock before the Bats. Probably the first to do so were The Bravados, who released "Gogga" – a Beatles reference, with



The first full length Afrikaans rock album? The Bats' *Weltevrede* in 1968 (CBS ALD 8139).



One of the earliest Afrikaans rock releases: The Hobos with "Hasie" (Troubadour TRS-A 884).

58 J.E. Pieterse (ed.), *Jeug en vrye tyd III* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1967), pp. 102-103, in A. Grundlingh, "Are We Afrikaners Getting too Rich?" Cornucopia and Change in Afrikanerdom in the 1960s", *Journal of Historical Sociology* 21: 2/3 (June/September 2008), p. 154.

59 K.A. Kombuis, *Seks & Drugs & Boeremusiek: Die Memoires van 'n Volksverraaiër* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 2000), p. 191.

60 Courtesy of Tertius Louw.

61 *Ibid.*

62 [http://www.rock.co.za/files/vinyl\\_sa\\_index2.htm](http://www.rock.co.za/files/vinyl_sa_index2.htm), accessed 16 August 2013.

63 Louw, email communication, September 2013.

“Soek ’n Ander” on the B-side, in 1964. In reality an English-speaking band, with Scottish-born frontman Frank Lakie (who wrote both songs), an Afrikaans tribute to the Beatles seemed a logical enough thing to do at the time. In 1966 The Hobos released a rock version of Al Debbo’s hit “Hasië” (one of Carstens and De Waal’s earliest attempts at co-writing a song) on the Troubadour label.

These recordings were absolute exceptions to the rule. Afrikaans music mostly did not appeal to the youth at all. Certainly not the sentimental songs by Die Briels, nor the operatic pop of Gé Korsten and other Afrikaans singers. This concerned the ideologues of the DRC and the FAK considerably. Grundlingh refers to polls conducted in the mid-sixties by the University of Pretoria which showed that almost half of all Afrikaner youth (more than English youth) preferred to listen to LM Radio and that they preferred rock and pop over popular Afrikaans music.<sup>64</sup> A later poll conducted among Afrikaans students at Stellenbosch confirmed that the Afrikaner youth was “not interested in Afrikaans music”, that “all (Afrikaans pop songs) are too light or of too bad quality to be called pop”, and that “Afrikaans is not suited for pop music.”<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, some students felt quite strongly that Afrikaans pop should not be presented by singers such as Min Shaw, Gé Korsten, Gert “Pottie” Potgieter, or “Afrikaans ‘trash’ and Bubblegum.”<sup>66</sup>

Other polls by the *Nasionale Jeugraad* (National Youth Council) of the FAK in 1968 show that the Afrikaner youth was, however, still heavily influenced by the DRC (Dutch Reformed Church). A large majority attended church regularly (almost 60% attended church at least once a week, while a third went more than once). Only a negligible percentage had no religious affiliation, while by far the most were members of the DRC. Afrikaner youth had more conservative lifestyles than white English youth (who also participated in the polls and were less involved in religious activities), and were more directly influenced by church-related activities. A high percentage of Afrikaner youth also respected authority.<sup>67</sup> Read in conjunction with the results of the other polls mentioned above, the popularity of rock music among Afrikaner youth did not mean they were any less conservative.

Various social factors played a role in them gravitating towards new genres from abroad, much to the distress of cultural leaders. The introduction of rock music coincided with the emergence of a white middle-class youth culture that was part of a new consumer culture linked to a growing economy.<sup>68</sup> White middle-class suburbia replaced the *blikkiesdorpe* (shanty towns) and the far-off farms on the *platteland* (rural areas), which were the domiciles of the previous generation, as Afrikaners were becoming affluent. This meant that whatever class-based tensions existed between the small Afrikaner elite and the large working class in the first half of the twentieth century were greatly reduced by the late 1950s as Afrikaners began to benefit from apartheid. Politically, the National Party consolidated their power and influence as South Africa became an increasingly repressive state with a government intolerant of criticism. The FAK and the SABC

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64 *Ibid.*, 154.

65 FAK Music Commission meeting minutes, year unknown, but probably 1974. US Library Archive, G.G. Cilliers Collection, MS 210, 89a.

66 *Ibid.*

67 A.G.S. Gous, “Ons jeug vrees die toekoms”, *Huisgenoot*, 20 September 1968, pp. 14-15.

68 Grundlingh, “Are We Afrikaners Getting too Rich?”, p. 153.

were ideologically opposed to *volksvreemde* Anglo-Saxon influences and attempted to counter these foreign influences by sponsoring light Afrikaans music competitions and commissioning youth radio programmes.<sup>69</sup> In a paper dated December 1974, G.G. Cillié, by then deputy chairman of the FAK, had the following to say about pop music and the Afrikaner youth:

1. The words of some pop songs have a dubious scope, and some are even subversive,
2. For many of our Afrikaner teenagers pop music is their whole music experience. It displaces all other music among them, including serious music and their own folk music,
3. Almost all of our teenagers' pop songs come from England and America and thus leaves an Anglo-Saxon imprint on our young people during a very sensitive stage of their development. In the FAK we believe that this holds dangers for the cultural formation and stability of the involved people,
4. By singing only pop songs, our teenagers are singing almost exclusively in English, thus neglecting their mother tongue.<sup>70</sup>

The FAK also published a songbook of Afrikaans *lekkersingliedjies* aimed at the Afrikaner youth, but it had limited success:

In 1976 the first collection of *Lekkersingliedjies*, is released, because the FAK realised that the modern Afrikaans-speaking youth have a great need for light Afrikaans songs. These 30 songs, of which six are traditional folk tunes, were all reworked with a modern idiom by Dirkie de Villiers. The result was a booklet that succeeded in its original goal: entertainment for the widest audience, with favourites such as "Groen koringlande", "Die padda wou gaan opsit", "Ai meisie-meisie", "Liefste Madelein" and "Groen is die land van Natal".<sup>71</sup>

Groep Twee, the popular duo formed by Sias Reinecke and Gert van Tonder, released a single with "Die padda wou gaan opsit" as the B-side to "Oukraalliedjie" in 1966.<sup>72</sup> The single went gold and "Oukraalliedjie" reached number three on Springbok Radio's national charts. Somewhat ironically, "Die padda wou gaan opsit" was a translation of an old English folk tune called "Froggy went 'a-courtin'", which was covered by American protest singers Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger and later Bob Dylan.<sup>73</sup> Even Elvis did a cover of it in 1970, as did Bruce Springsteen in 2006.<sup>74</sup> It is, however, doubtful that the FAK had knowledge of the way it was used as a protest song in the US.

The SABC was more pragmatic and in 1969 approached the English local rock group, The Peanut Butter Conspiracy, to record instrumental versions of Afrikaans songs in a rock idiom

69 SABC Annual Report, 1968, p. 24, courtesy of Monica van Deventer, SABC Information Library, 18 November 2011.

70 G.G. Cilliers, "Die musiekkomitee van die FAK en Popmusiek", *Handhaaf*, December 1974, pp. 6-7, translated from original.

71 A. le Roux, *Handhaaf*, April/ May 1988, p. 6, trans.

72 Personal communication with Tertius Louw, 17 September 2014.

73 <http://www.bobdylan.com/de/node/26858>, accessed 20 May 2015.

74 <http://www.springsteenlyrics.com/lyrics/f/froggiwentacourtin.php>, accessed 20 May 2015.

for broadcast on teenage Afrikaans radio programmes.<sup>75</sup> The Dutch Reformed Church was also gravely concerned about losing touch with the youth. A typical warning against the subversive powers of rock music can be found in *Die Kerkbode*, the newsletter of the DRC. In his article “Psigedeliese Musiek en die Jeug”<sup>76</sup> (Psychedelic Music and the Youth), Dr. H.G. van der Hoven makes some very questionable observations about psychedelic (or rock) music. Firstly, he defines “psychedelic” as “soul destroying”, although its literal meaning is “soul manifesting”.<sup>77</sup> He also calls the Beatles satanic communists. The rest of his paper is a highly emotional call to protect Afrikaner children against the evil, satanic, communist hippies and their rock music. Criticisms like these were common, and made an emotional plea to the majority of Afrikaners involved with the DRC (including the youth). Statistics show, however, that in spite of this emotional pressure (and perhaps because of it), the Afrikaner youth embraced the music thus vilified.



Gé Korsten sing Erika, 1966 (Die FAK Plateklub/ Brigadiers, FAK 2).

The SABC was more practical than the DRC. Although numerous albums were scratched to ensure that radio DJ's could not play them, offending tracks were just as easily excluded from playlists. Print media followed this example, as can be seen in a letter to the *Huisgenoot* in 1966 by a group of boarding school pupils from Kimberley bemoaning the fact that there was not enough coverage of pop stars like Elvis Presley, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones.<sup>78</sup> Afrikaans pop artists had no such problems. Just three weeks prior to this letter, *Die Burger* published a report celebrating the release of Gé Korsten's new album, *Gé Korsten Sing Erika*, in conjunction with the FAK and Brigadiers record company:

Afrikaans also wants to stand its ground! “Where previously there was a language struggle, there is today a music and singing struggle!” writes Albie Venter in an enthusiastic note on the cover of *Gé Korsten Sing Erika*, a long-playing album recently released by the FAK and completed with the co-operation of Brigadiers Bpk. Although one would personally formulate it differently, you have to largely agree with what Mr.Venter is saying here. Afrikaans has too often in the past been seen as just suitable for “balke-toe” music.<sup>79</sup>

75 *Vir die Jong Klomp*, SAUK, LT 12530.

76 H.G. van der Hoven, “Psigedeliese Musiek en die Jeug”, *Die Kerkbode*, 26 January 1972, pp. 102-104.

77 From the Ancient Greek *psuchē* (soul), and *dēlōsē* (manifest) <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>, accessed 30 April 2013.

78 *Die Huisgenoot*, 23 September 1966, p. 11.

79 “Afrikaners wil ook in musiek sy man kan staan!”, *Die Burger*, 1 September 1966, translated from the original.



“Erika” is a marching song of the Waffen-SS from the 1930s, composed by Herms Niel who receives due credit on Korsten’s album. Singer Jurie Ferreira had also covered “Erika” – with Afrikaans lyrics – in the late 1950s, with accompaniment by Nico Carstens and his orchestra.<sup>80</sup> The fact that a German marching song from the Second World War could be repackaged as a successful commercial Afrikaans release in 1966, at the same time as The Beatles were banned following John Lennon’s controversial “Jesus statement”, is noteworthy. It also reaffirms the gap between the tastes of young and old Afrikaans listeners.

In an unusual response to Lennon’s statement, Dr. J.A. Heyns – a senior lecturer in theology at Stellenbosch University – published an article in *Huisgenoot* in which he posed the question of whether or not John Lennon was actually correct in asserting that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus.<sup>81</sup> He used this as a warning against “Beatle worship” and the decline of Christianity in modern times and also mentioned the failed attempts in South Africa to rally mass anti-Beatle support among the public and the DRC’s failure to comment on the matter. The SABC had reacted by banning all broadcasts of music by the Beatles between 1966 and 1971, although their albums were still available in South Africa. It is clear from this article that Lennon’s statement did not invite too much outcry from the South African public and that the music of the Beatles kept on selling regardless.

In 1970, EMI, through their subsidiary MFP, launched the popular series of Springbok Hit Parade albums, which sold extremely well among young South Africans and often featured South African artists.<sup>82</sup> These albums were cheap and consisted of mostly cover versions of overseas hits recorded by local musicians. Some local hits were also featured, of which the majority were in English, but a small number of Afrikaans songs managed to make it onto the albums, like Gé Kortsen and Ian and Dix’s collaboration, “Sonder Jou” (Without you), on the Springbok 30 album of 1976 (MFP 54763).<sup>83</sup> The albums were also famous for their cover photos of semi-naked white women, which Drewett interpreted as representations of patriarchal patriotism:

For the sexing of album covers followed distinctly racial and ethnic lines: white, never black, women accompanied reference to national symbols as the “springbok” in the belief that these symbols represented white aspirations.<sup>84</sup>

His portrayal of album covers as conveyors of nationalist codes is an important observation and remains relevant when applied to Afrikaans album covers (and other visual media) of the post-apartheid era.<sup>85</sup> Importantly, South Africa was not totally isolated from global cultural trends: many pop hits from abroad were hits in South Africa, and were put on the Springbok Hit Parade albums, along with local groups. The provocative covers also challenged the conservative norms,

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80 Columbia 11009 & DSA 3003.

81 *Die Huisgenoot*, 16 September 1966.

82 <http://springbokhits.blogspot.com/p/springbok-hit.html>, accessed 24 July 2013.

83 *Ibid.*

84 M. Drewett, “Packaging Desires: Album covers and the representation of apartheid” in G. Olwage (ed.), *Composing Apartheid: Music for and Against Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), p. 123.

85 See D. Pretorius, “The Visual Representations of Masculinities in *Huisgenoot* Tempo Magazine”, *COMMUNICATIO* 39: 2 (2013), pp. 210-232.

and often led to clashes with the Directorate of Publications.<sup>86</sup> In a circuitous way, however, even these provocations were part of the construct of white supremacy, and represented a dominant white male version of patriotism.

## Global movements

The 1960s was an era of significant change for the world far outside South Africa's guarded borders. The social movements that reached their peak mainly in the US and Europe have proven to be very useful case studies on the dynamics between music and social movements. Herbert Marcuse emphasised the "aesthetic dimension" of these liberal social movements in the 1960s, "(s)uggesting that it was primarily in art and music that social movements 're-membered' traditions of resistance and critique."<sup>87</sup> In South Africa, the authorities viewed these movements with suspicion. The main cultural threats to the *Volk* were communism, liberalism and humanism. The FAK's magazine *Handhaaf*, established in 1963, regularly published articles by leading Afrikaner cultural leaders that warned against the undermining effects these ideologies had on the Calvinistic spiritual foundation of Afrikaner nationalism. These threats were often linked to popular music.<sup>88</sup>

In South Africa, however, social dynamics differed substantially from those in Britain and the US. In a sense, rock music from abroad – the same artists who were so influential, like the Beatles and Bob Dylan – meant something different to Afrikaners. Although the music was popular and appealed to rebellious urges in a conservative South African society, the references in the music (place names, events, vernacular terms) but most notably also the politics, were unfamiliar. Initially, rock music of the 1960s had a strong political position as a voice of a leftist youth culture opposing the Tories in Britain and the Republicans in the US,<sup>89</sup> but there was no such political link in South Africa. Liberalism was not common among Afrikaners. Afrikaner intellectualism centred around in-party debates on reform, or "criticism from within", not anti-establishment and anti-apartheid debate.<sup>90</sup> Afrikaans university campuses served as academic nurseries for nationalist ideology, not for student activism that could manifest in violent intolerance among students. On 10 October 1970, a large group of Afrikaans students at the University of Pretoria kidnapped 30 concert goers (mostly long-haired English speakers) at the Milner Park Rock Festival, the first of its kind held in Johannesburg. They were taken to the public fountains in Pretoria where a large crowd of Afrikaans students had gathered, and were

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86 Drewett, "Packaging Desires", p. 122.

87 A. Jamison and J. Eyerman, *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 6.

88 P. McLachlan, "Die Afrikaner en die Kunste", *Handhaaf*, January 1974, p. 17.

89 S. Frith, "Rock and the Politics of Memory", *Social Text* 9:10 (1984), pp. 60-61.

90 A. du Toit, *Die Sondes van die Vaders* (Cape Town: Rubicon Press, 1983), p. 16.

beaten and had their long hair shaved off.<sup>91</sup> The concert hosted the top rock South African rock bands of the time<sup>92</sup> and was organised by producer and (mostly) country singer, Billy Forest.

Seen against the global background of the time, the middle-class Afrikaner youth shared at least some characteristics with its overseas counterparts. Following the promulgation of the Defence Amendment Act of 1967, all white males over the age of 17 were conscripted into the South African Defence Force (prior to this, conscription was determined through a ballot system.).<sup>93</sup> This was at least partially similar to what was happening to American men during the Vietnam War – a catalyst for strong anti-war protests among students. These social movements were intimately linked to protest music. Taking into account these similarities, it is interesting to note that Afrikaans music did not reflect any real form of protest until the 1980s.

In another ironic twist, the SADF (South African Defence Force) played a role in exposing Afrikaner youth to new subcultures that would otherwise be inaccessible to young white middle-class Afrikaner men. A good example is the American singer Rodriguez, whose anti-establishment folk music spread among troops in the army. The Oscar-winning documentary *Searching for Sugar Man*<sup>94</sup> underscores the resonance his music had among white South Africans from the early 1970s onwards while he was completely ignored in his native United States. The film was a worldwide hit, bringing the politics of music in apartheid South Africa to a global audience and attracting some academic scrutiny.<sup>95</sup> In the documentary, this popularity – despite the fact that Rodriguez’s music was censored in South Africa – is partly linked to a social undercurrent that was displeased with the apartheid establishment and had found in his music a subtle avenue of protest where other means were harshly silenced. This view has drawn harsh criticism from ex-troops who claim that Rodriguez’s music was popular among a much wider audience and that even the staunchest racists in the army listened to it.<sup>96</sup> While the ambiguous signification of Rodriguez’s music cautions against over-simplification, it is fair to say that rock music did give voice to unarticulated anti-establishment emotions among white South African youth. This is evident in the formation of English punk and rock groups in the East Rand during the 1970s, like the Radio Rats and Corporal Punishment.<sup>97</sup> However, it is important to note that being anti-establishment in South Africa during the 1960s and 1970s was different to being anti-establishment in Britain and the US. Geographical isolation – not to mention the cultural isolation brought about by the absence of television in South Africa until 1976 – and life under a

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91 *The Daily News*, 10 October 1970, pp. 1-2; *Die Burger*, 12 October 1970.

92 Suck, Hawk, Jacob Haye, Freedom’s Children, Hocus (which included Mutt Lange who later became a Grammy Award winning producer in the US), Conglomeration (later evolving into the very popular Rabbitt which included Trevor Rabin who was recently introduced into the Rock ‘n Roll Hall of Fame for his work with YES), the Otis Waygood Blues Band, Abstract Truth and a number folk singer like Mike Dickman, Brian Finch, Duccio Alessandri and David Marks. See <http://www.3rddear.com/hyarchive/hyarchive/milnerpark.html#millpark>, accessed 06 April 2017.

93 G. Callister, “Patriotic duty or resented imposition? Public reactions to military conscription in white South Africa, 1952 – 1972” *South African Journal of Military Studies*, 35: 1 (2007), p. 46.

94 DVD, directed by Malik Bendjelloul (Canfield Pictures: The Documentary Company, 2012).

95 See J. Hyslop, “‘Days of Miracle and Wonder’? Conformity and Revolt in *Searching for Sugar Man*”, *Safundi* 14:4 (2013), pp. 490-501.

96 A. Kannemyer, “Suiker-omhulde bog”, *Die Burger*, 13 March 2013.

97 P. Hopkins, *Voëlvry: The Movement That Rocked South Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2006), p. 92.

political (and class) system which differed markedly from that in the US and Britain, influenced the social lives of South African youth in ways unique to their contexts.

## Afrikaner liberals

Even though many countries in the West saw a rapid rise in intellectual leftist organisations during this time, no similar reaction is visible among the Afrikaner youth. Afrikaners were seemingly content with their newly acquired middle-class status, thanks to the economic benefits of apartheid. Perhaps the most radical Afrikaner of the time was the anti-apartheid activist and head of the banned SACP (South African Communist Party), Bram Fischer who, in a letter written in February 1965 to his defence council in a trial he was deliberately not attending, underscored the fact that the economic growth was making white South Africans complacent:

What is needed is for White South Africans to shake themselves out of their complacency, a complacency intensified by the present economic boom built upon racial discrimination. Unless this whole intolerable system is changed radically and rapidly, disaster must follow. Appalling bloodshed and civil war will become inevitable because, as long as there is oppression of a majority, such oppression will be fought with increasing hatred.<sup>98</sup>

The other leftist Afrikaner intellectuals consisted mostly of a group of gifted Afrikaans authors called the Sestigters, among whom the poet activist Breyten Breytenbach was the most radical. Similar to the censorship musicians would experience, these writers were subject to cat-and-mouse games regarding the banning and unbanning of their work, depending on the political climate:

On 29 January 1974, the first significant banning of an Afrikaans literary work, André Brink's *Kennis van die aand*, took place, intensifying opposition to censorship from the Afrikaner intelligentsia. The result was the formation of the Afrikaner Skrywersgilde. By way of contrast, the FAK supported the legislation. In the late 1970s the works of progressive white writers such as Brink, Gordimer and Etienne Leroux were unbanned, in spite of their refusal to participate in the process, because the government wished to project a more liberal façade.<sup>99</sup>

Outside this group, Afrikaner intellectualism was occupied not by anti-apartheid critique, but by in-party debates on reform (in line with Van Wyk Louw's idea of loyal protest mentioned earlier).<sup>100</sup> Author Etienne Leroux argued that the "unorthodoxy of the mind" that inspired creativity was subdued by the repressive state education system.<sup>101</sup> Perhaps one can argue that the "movement" in the US occurred during, and was fuelled by, a time of great socio-political change or flux. This was in stark contrast to white South Africa, which was in a relatively

98 Available at <http://www.sacp.org.za/docs/biography/2006/bramug.html>, accessed 13 March 2013.

99 C. Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship: Secrecy and Intellectual Repression in South Africa* (Cape Town, David Philip Publishers, 1994), p. 80.

100 Du Toit, *Die Sondes van die Vaders*, p. 16; Mouton, "Reform from within", pp. 149-176.

101 Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship*, p. 207; see also J. Cope, *The adversary within: dissident writers in Afrikaans* (Cape Town, Philip, 1982), p. 123.

static socio-political period in which Afrikaner nationalism consolidated its power through oppression. Things started to unravel gradually from the mid-1970s onwards, however, which ushered in a time of increasing political upheaval in which the power of the National Party was undermined on various local and international fronts.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## New voices, changing politics and growing subversion

### The age of television, Musiek-en-Liriek, cabarets, literature, the Border

The introduction of television to South Africa was stalled for many years by ultra-conservative nationalists (*verkramptes*) such as Minister of Posts and Telecommunications from 1958 to 1968, Albert Hertzog, who once made the dramatic statement that “inside the pill of TV there is the bitter poison which will ultimately mean the downfall of civilizations”<sup>1</sup> Nixon has called this “the most drastic act of cultural protectionism in the history of the medium”<sup>2</sup> This protectionism reflected deeper fault lines within Afrikanerdom. For the *verkramptes*, allowing television would further expose South Africa to the influence of American culture which, during the 1960s especially, embodied all sorts of things foreign and morally corrupt. The racial empowerment of the Civil Rights movement, student uprisings, hippies, anti-war protests, peace movements and the music associated with it – all triggered ‘end of civilisation’ emotions among the more conservative nationalists.<sup>3</sup> Verwoerd was himself also set against it, declaring that television

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1 R. Nixon, “Apollo 11, Apartheid, and TV: When the only way to watch was to line up in front of a purple velvet curtain”, *The Atlantic*, July 1999.

2 R. Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African Culture and the World Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 43.

3 R. Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood*, p. 45.

was a threat to “the racial struggle on a global scale.”<sup>4</sup> On the other side of the spectrum, more enlightened (*verligte*) politicians argued in favour of increased international outreach.<sup>5</sup>

For the government, the ban on television meant stricter social control, but it had its downsides as well. Even staunch conservatives were annoyed at not being able to watch Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walk on the moon in 1969.<sup>6</sup> This highlighted just how removed South Africa had become from the modern world, a fact that was unacceptable to many who wanted to see South Africa on par with Western society. In 1971, the ubiquitous Piet Meyer headed a Commission of Inquiry into the viability of introducing television. The outcomes were positive as long as it was strictly controlled. The first test signals started in May 1975, and a regular service was introduced in January 1976. For Afrikaans music, this heralded a whole new set of opportunities. Afrikaans poet and journalist Stephan Bouwer’s television programme *Fyn net van die Woord* (a reference to N.P. van Wyk Louw’s work *Raka*) from 1977 was instrumental in establishing a new consciousness in Afrikaans music.<sup>7</sup> Bouwer’s programme introduced Afrikaans poetry set to music. By artistic standards, Afrikaans authors had outperformed their popular music counterparts throughout the twentieth century, with highly respected movements such as the Dertigers (referring to the 1930s) and the more radical Sestigers (referring to the 1960s). This meant that almost by default, the new music had deeper lyrical content than the Euro-kitsch-styled Afrikaans pop by “opera singers who want to make a quick buck”<sup>8</sup>

This Afrikaans popular music mainstream was dominated by singers such as Gé Korsten, Groep Twee, Jurie Ferreira and Lance James, along with record company, Brigadiers. The arrival of television and the lack of local content made it possible for a group of relatively unknown Afrikaans singers to gain access to that medium. One of the most influential artists of this era was Koos du Plessis, a journalist by day, but also a gifted songwriter who already started writing songs in the 1960s (his hit and one of the all-time most loved Afrikaans songs, “Kinders van die wind” – Children of the wind – for instance, was written in 1967). In this sense, du Plessis can be seen as one of the earliest writers of poetic Afrikaans folk music and more a contemporary of the Sestigers. His lyrics especially, employed universal human themes and often focused on human fallibility, but avoided politics.<sup>9</sup> His music was often quite sombre, which contrasted with the light moods of the pop mainstream. His songs were some of the first to make it onto Afrikaans television when they were performed by his friend and producer Nick Taylor on *Fyn net van die Woord* and *Musikale Mallemeule*. By 1978 du Plessis made his television debut performing three of his own songs on *Perspektief*.<sup>10</sup> In 1979, singer Laurika Rauch recorded “Kinders van die wind” as the theme song for the popular programme *Phoenix en Kie*. Rauch also sang three other du Plessis compositions in the series, “Sprokie vir ’n stadskind”, “Skielik

4 R. Nixon, “Apollo 11, Apartheid, and TV: When the only way to watch was to line up in front of a purple velvet curtain”, *The Atlantic*, July 1999.

5 Nixon’s in-depth analysis of the politics of television in South Africa during this time is insightful and authoritative.

6 R. Nixon, “Apollo 11, Apartheid, and TV”.

7 Loots, “Die ewolusie van die Afrikaanse lied”, p. 7.

8 *Ibid.*

9 A. Bezuidenhout, “Skielik is jy vry: Die lewe en musiek van Koos du Plessis”, <http://www.oulitnet.co.za/roof/roof16.asp>, accessed 22 January 2015.

10 K. du Plessis & I. du Plessis: *Erfdeel*, (Stellenbosch: African Sun Media, 2004), pp. 15-16.

is jy vry” and “Die somer is verby”.<sup>11</sup> The same year, she released a single of “Kinders van die wind” which achieved gold status within seven weeks, reaching number one on Radio 5’s *Best sellers* programme by October.<sup>12</sup> Du Plessis also released a version of the song on his critically acclaimed debut album *Skadu’s teen die muur* (Shadows on the wall), in 1979.<sup>13</sup> By the time Rauch’s version reached number one, another programme had become a major hit, featuring a number of artists including Rauch, Anton Goosen (who was the music director), Clarabelle van Niekerk, Jannie du Toit, Louis van Rensburg, Des Lindbergh, Mynie Grové and one half of the popular duo Groep Twee – Sias Reinecke.<sup>14</sup> Directed by Merwede van der Merwe, it was called *Musiek-en-Liriek* (Music and Lyric) and first aired on 1 August 1979. Even prior to the first episode, a number of *Musiek-en-Liriek* concerts had already been held at the *Laager* in the Market Theatre in Johannesburg that featured this new generation of Afrikaans artists. The programme was a hit and made stars of its participants.

More concerts soon followed at the Market Theatre and at the Oude Libertas Theatre in Stellenbosch.<sup>15</sup> By this time, more artists had joined the line-up, among them were a young Anneli van Rooyen (who would become a top-selling pop artist), Jannie Hofmeyr, Coenie de Villiers, Jan de Wet, Amanda Strydom and Koos du Plessis himself (who remained somewhat outside the main group of *Musiek-en-Liriek* artists – he had respect for them, but they had no influence on his writing<sup>16</sup> – until his untimely death in a car accident in January 1984). David Kramer also performed at the second *Musiek-en-Liriek* concert at the Oude Libertas theatre.<sup>17</sup> Goosen had only shortly before these concerts made the shift from non-performing songwriter to singer, following the success of his debut album *Boy van die suburbs*.

Contemporary journalists responded enthusiastically to this break with the easy listening and non-confrontational *lekkerliedjies* of the Afrikaans pop mainstream and the introduction of the *luisterliedjie* – a Dutch term referring to songs with deeper lyrical meaning.<sup>18</sup> Another result of being on television was that it had a national impact. Prior to this, there was a greater sense of provinciality among Afrikaans singers, and what was happening in Cape Town did not necessarily reach Pretoria, and vice versa. With television, artists who might have been working independently of one another suddenly had a wider frame of reference with respect to what other Afrikaans songwriters and singers were doing.<sup>19</sup>

Although the artists did not seem to be explicitly involved in political battles with the establishment, subtle political content surfaced intermittently among the folkly ballads. Des Lindbergh commented that it was “neo-folk in Afrikaans! Seventeen years after it happened in

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11 *Ibid.*

12 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

13 *Ibid.*

14 M. Jamneck, “Jana se ‘sangstem’ is nie onder maatemmer”, *Die Vaderland*, 16 July 1979, p. 2.

15 Anton Goosen, interview with author, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013.

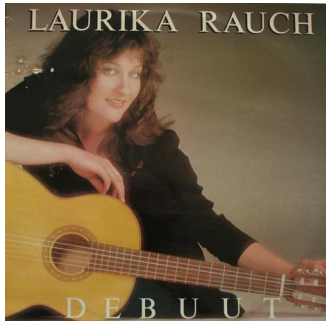
16 A. Bezuidenhout, “Skielik is jy vry: Die lewe en musiek van Koos du Plessis”.

17 Slabbert and De Villiers, *David Kramer*, p. 139.

18 R. Loots, “Die ewolusie van die Afrikaanse lied, of, tot siens aan ‘kom-bly-by-my... moenie weggaan’-musiek” *Die Transvaler en Oggendblad*, June 1979, p. 7; M. Jamneck, “Jana se ‘sangstem’ nie sonder maatemmer”, *Die Vaderland*, 26 July 1979, p. 2; J. Bruwer, “Sy skeur bittersoet uit mens se hart”, *Rapport Ateljee*, 9 September 1979, p. 1; S. Bouwer, “En hoor jy die magtige dreuning?”, *Rapport Ateljee*, 9 September 1979, p. 6.

19 Laurika Rauch, telephonic interview with author, 25 July 2013.





Three notable debut releases from 1979 – a monumental year for Afrikaans music: Laurika Rauch's *Debuut* (RPM 1137), Anton Goosen's *Boy van die Suburbs* (RPM 1130) and Koos du Plessis's *Skadu's teen die muur* (Warner Brothers WBC 9010).

English.<sup>20</sup> The writer, poet and lyricist Rosa Keet who organised the initial Musiek-en-Liriek concerts at the *Laager*, was very optimistic about the future of the new Afrikaans music:

Country-wide tours, also in rural areas, including coloured and black neighbourhoods, sponsors for new recordings, the publication of sheet music, a songfest open to all population groups to showcase new songs, the academic study of indigenous folk music and TV competitions for new music with the winners going to international competitions.<sup>21</sup>

Her ambitions of taking it to coloured and black audiences was a significant statement at the time, and reflects a liberal political attitude, although it is uncertain to what extent this was shared by other artists.

The initial momentum soon dissipated and the various artists went their own ways, but the canon of popular Afrikaans songs was suddenly much richer and less superficial. Du Plessis's work especially, has endured and has been covered by a wide range of later artists. Johannes Kerckorrel released a whole album of his songs, *Sing Koos du Plessis* in 1999, while Theuns Jordaan, as well as the industrial group, Battery 9, both covered "Koue vuur". The Afrikaans rock band, Van Coke Kartel, covered "Skadu's teen die muur" and released a video for the song in 2010.<sup>22</sup> Some of his work even ended up in a Dutch Reformed Church songbook.<sup>23</sup> By 1983, Rauch had moved on from the movement that made her a household name:

Today, *luisterliedjie* is a bit of a swearword. The records are still being made – and they are still not selling. The movement has burrowed underground in order to protect itself. ... When I started out I felt obliged to show the public how serious I was. I didn't want to waver, to diversify at all, only to refine my art. ... But I have had my say. It was a privilege to be on the crest of that wonderful wave, and I have three albums that stand as legacy should anyone be interested.<sup>24</sup>

20 S. Bouwer, "En hoor jy die magtige dreuning?", *Rapport Ateljee*, 9 September 1979, p. 6.

21 *Ibid.*, translated from original.

22 A. Bezuidenhout, "Van Coke bo die grond roep na Koos onder die grond", Versindaba blog, available at <http://versindaba.co.za/tag/skadus-teen-die-muur/>, accessed 21 March 2017.

23 *Ibid.*

24 R. Dean, "Rauch – a new direction", *The Star*, 1 November 1983, p. 6, translated from original.

This “wonderful wave” was symptomatic of fundamental changes in attitudes in South Africa.

### Wider changes on the political front

Before the late 1970s, Afrikaners rarely challenged the legitimacy of apartheid, but with time, a wider circle of critical voices started to emerge that posed serious questions about the moral basis of “criticism from within”, of which poet N.P. van Wyk Louw and journalists Piet Cillie and Schalk Pienaar were early exponents.<sup>25</sup> Such criticisms were more involved with strategies of reform than with undermining the legitimacy of the apartheid project as a whole. Du Toit argues that by the late 1970s this position had become unsustainable from a moral perspective, and by continuing to focus on the political survival of the Afrikaner, Afrikaans culture would pay the price.<sup>26</sup> A number of well-documented political events of the 1970s had precipitated a leadership crisis for the ruling National Party and the emergence of a new wave of critical Afrikaner voices. The 1976 Soweto Uprising, the 1977 arms embargo, Steve Biko’s death at the hands of security police in the same year,<sup>27</sup> as well as the information scandal of 1978 (which led to B.J. Vorster’s resignation as Prime Minister) delivered powerful blows to the regime. The subsequent influence of international pressure, the Border War and the rise of Black resistance movements from the mid-1970s onwards exacerbated this crisis. The fact that these events all happened in the new age of television helped inform Afrikaners about what was happening in the country and being perpetrated on their behalf.<sup>28</sup> This, coupled with the end of a three-decade-long period of high economic growth during the mid-1970s,<sup>29</sup> undermined the apartheid regime’s grip on power.

Succeeding Vorster in September 1978, P.W. Botha followed an “adapt or die” strategy based on limited reform, though not abandonment, of the apartheid system. Botha “hit South Africa like a storm.”<sup>30</sup> He offered the hope of reform, but employed a harsh strategy designed at ensuring the political survival of the NP at all costs.<sup>31</sup> Under Botha’s new strategy, the state was more intolerant of criticism and censorship intensified. A major perceived threat to the state was communism’s assault on South African society. This perception was rooted in the geo-political background of the Cold War, the strong socialist presence in independent African states, the SADF’s conflict with communist-backed forces in Angola, and the link between anti-apartheid movements and socialism. Exactly how realistic this threat was, is debatable, but at the time it was considered a ‘total onslaught’ which had to be neutralised by a ‘total strategy’ against subversive elements.<sup>32</sup> Whereas during the 1960s Afrikaners were living in a country where they were the masters – a position ordained by God and managed by patriotic ideologues – by the mid-1980s

25 André du Toit, *Die sondes van die vaders*, (Cape Town: Rubicon Press, 1983), pp. 16-17; Van der Westhuizen, *White Power & the Rise and Fall of the National Party*, p. 86.

26 Du Toit, *Die sondes van die vaders*, p. 9.

27 C. van der Westhuizen, *White Power & the Rise and Fall of the National Party* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2007), p. 296.

28 H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003), p. 580.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 597.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 587.

31 Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 54.

32 Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 588, referring to a 1977 White Paper issued by the Department of Defence when Botha was Minister of Defence.

it had become a personal fight for survival. Training white men to fight against communists thus became a direct part of the survival of white South Africa. In July 1985, Botha declared a state of emergency due to civil unrest and violence in townships – initially limited to parts of the Eastern Cape and the Witwatersrand, but later extended nationally – which lasted until 1990. White troops were deployed in the townships and South African society was becoming even more politicised and divided in the face of an intensifying international outcry against apartheid. Afrikaner support for the National Party decreased and even the Dutch Reformed Church – for decades a crucial pillar of Afrikaner nationalism and justifier of racial separation – broke with the doctrine of apartheid.<sup>33</sup> As this happened, many Afrikaners also migrated to the political right. A growing conservative faction in the National Party under Andries Treurnicht led to the formation of the breakaway Conservative Party in 1982, which “signalled the end of Afrikaner nationalist unity”.<sup>34</sup>

While the homogenising forces of the Afrikaner nationalist establishment had started to unravel, Afrikaans artists started to make critical comments about the political system, although outright condemnation of apartheid was still rare. New themes arose, like *grensliteratuur* (border literature), which played out against the backdrop of the Border War.<sup>35</sup> Seen against this background, *Musiek-en-Liriek* happened at a crucial juncture: just after Botha took power (with some hope of reform), but before the political violence of the mid to late 1980s. Some Afrikaans artists responded to these dramatic social changes, leading to the formation of loosely grouped “movements” in literature, theatre and music. In the case of Afrikaans musicians, this kind of mobilisation had been glaringly absent in the preceding decades.<sup>36</sup> These responses were initially subtle and tentative, since Afrikaner society was still very conservative and censors easily offended. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that, after the initial impact of *Musiek-en-Liriek* subsided, the commercial Afrikaans market was more diverse, with new voices and new genres. However, the biggest selling artists remained people like Bles Bridges and Gé Korsten.

Perhaps the primary protagonist of *Musiek-en-Liriek* was Anton Goosen. On a concert programme in early 1980, he is described as “the father of the Afrikaans chanson”, which was then translated as *luisterliedjie* in Afrikaans, and “our very own folk tunes” in English.<sup>37</sup> As Raeford Daniel explains:

Now as any South African knows, a folk song is not necessarily a “volkslied”. The Afrikaans term could be understood as meaning a “national song”; even, more specifically, a national anthem. It could also, in a more colloquial sense, signify a song of the “volkies”, a term once applied affectionately to black or coloured servants or tenant farmers. Equally, one recognises, the contemporary folk song, as exemplified by the Folk Revival of the Sixties, was held suspect by the conservative Afrikaner . . . The curiosity – and the miracle – is that, appealing (and appropriate) as the term, “luisterliedjies” may be, Goosen’s work could fit any of the above definitions of the term “Folk”. It is national in that it has its roots in the musical traditions of the

33 Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 620.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 603; see also Van der Westhuizen, *White Power & the Rise and Fall of the National Party*, p. 296.

35 A notable example is Alexander Strachan’s *’n Wêreld sonder grense* (A World without borders) of 1983.

36 Especially when considering the abundance of such movements in the West.

37 R. Daniel, “Folk’ – or a fine anomaly”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 22 January 1980.

Afrikaner (a fact which attains an ambivalent acknowledgement most particularly when he is sending them up). It is colloquially “folk” in that it draws its inspiration from the people – all shades of the people. And it is “contemporary folk” in that, in both idiom and content, it is very much geared to what is happening here and now.<sup>38</sup>

This description is an accurate one, but also highlights the fact that artists associated with *Musiek-en-Liriek* represented many new ideas in Afrikaans music: subversive politics, varying types of “folk” genres, Afrikaans rock, intellectualism, poetry, and counter-culture.

Goosen’s breakthrough in 1979 was not necessarily linked to the *Musiek-en-Liriek* programme. Although he was involved as the music director of the TV show, his debut album, *Boy van die suburbs*, was already selling by the time it aired and the first single, “Kruitjie roer my nie”, was charting. The album would sell between 80 000 and 90 000 copies before the end of that year.<sup>39</sup> Although most *Musiek-en-Liriek* artists shied away from politics, two of Goosen’s songs, “Mpanzaville” and “Atlantis”, were subtle, yet unmistakable, political criticisms of the regime at a time when P.W. Botha’s total strategy against such elements was gaining momentum.<sup>40</sup> Both songs were recorded by Laurika Rauch on her debut album, *Debuut*. In “Mpanzaville”, the lyrics refer to the evil “crocodile” (Botha’s nickname) who is eventually butchered by the inhabitants of Mpanzaville (a suburb of Soweto):<sup>41</sup>

Sweetheart go and fetch a rock, hit his head so that he chokes  
His eyes roll round and round, we butcher him and take his skin  
The dogs bark the people run, the kraal is silent with joy

In “Atlantis”, the narrator grieves the forced removals from what was most likely District Six and the dying children in the ghettos of Cape Town:<sup>42</sup>

Let those with words then write and those with notes then sing  
in the ghetto’s the new ghetto’s there die our children

Goosen confirms that political messages had to be subtle, as there was strict control over music releases:

Its true. It counts for the music too. Because there were rules. You couldn’t use commercial names on the radio, like Coca Cola. You couldn’t refer to sex. Religion was taboo and politics were taboo. And this was why things like Mpanzaville had to be hidden. The moment you moved outside of it ... they started tapping the telephone line.<sup>43</sup>

38 *Ibid.*

39 Interview with author, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013. Translated from the original.

40 Giliomee, *The Afrikaners* p. 588.

41 Gallo Music Publishers. Translated by author from the original: “Hartlam loop en gryp ’n klip, slaat sy kop dat hy wil stik, sy oë tol om en om, ons slag hom af en vat sy vel, die honde blaf, die mense draf, die kraal is van vreugde stom.”

42 Gallo Music Publishers. Translated by author from the original: “Laat die met woorde dan skryf, en die met note dan sing, in die ghetto’s die nuwe, nuwe ghetto’s, daar sterf onse kinders.”

43 Gansbaai, 29 April 2013, translated from the Afrikaans by the author.

Anton Goosen can be distinguished from the other artists associated with *Musiek-en-Liriek* because he represented a direction in Afrikaans music that more directly undermined white Afrikaner hegemony. He recalls how he antagonised the establishment in many ways:

In '79, '80 the ATKV banned me from their stages because I made jokes about the national flag. And the specific joke was because at these schools that you performed at, there was always a photo of the president on the one side and then the national flag on the other side. And I, at one or other stage – at Unisa or something – had uttered something and made jokes about it. In Reitz was an *oom* (older man) in the first row ... when I did “Begrafnis in Zeerust”, and the guy stands up in the front row and says: “The Afrikaner is not like that” and here he comes forward ... It throws you, it throws you. And it is just a song. It's something that someone who works in Zeerust told me.<sup>44</sup>

Mixed language in songs was frowned upon by the censorship board, even more so when it appeared in an album title, as it did in *Boy van die Suburbs*. The fact that this was a realistic colloquial Afrikaans reference was ignored by cultural custodians like the FAK, highlighting the gap between the Afrikaner elite and the majority of Afrikaners. David Kramer is another important artist who also clashed with the censorship board because he used a mixed-race and mixed-language form in his music.<sup>45</sup>

I suppose the most political thing I did in my work was not the content but the form. Political messages are sought in the content and there is a lot of innuendo and politics but the really radical stuff was in the style and form.<sup>46</sup>

Kramer's style, a form of *platteland* coloured-influenced music that was very popular, stood in stark contrast to the accepted image of popular Afrikaans singers.<sup>47</sup> This style is described by Kramer as follows:

... a style of singing that was obviously not white and a way of playing the guitar that was influenced by farm music. My purpose was to pull together South African influences into a kind of melting pot that would form a South African sound. Now when Johnny Clegg does it, it's all very obvious to people. When a white man sings Zulu, it's obvious. When a white man sings Afrikaans, it's not. When I started it was the time of the hugely popular Afrikaans singers Gé Korsten and Sonja Heroldt. And that kind of Afrikaans, it was “Omo Afrikaans” – whiter than white. ... Then came two fresh voices. The one was Anton Goosen and the other was me.<sup>48</sup>

In the lyrics of “Mpanzaville” and “Atlantis”, the political slant is obvious. Furthermore, the first-person narrator in “Atlantis” is coloured, as is the case in David Kramer's songs “Botteltjie Blou” (“Little blue bottle”, referring to the drinking of blue methylated sprits, normally by homeless persons) and “Skipskop”, which show a deliberate empathy with the racial “other”. Despite his

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44 *Ibid.*

45 <http://www.3rdear music.com/lyrics/drywine.html>, accessed 29 April 2013.

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

47 *Ibid.*

48 *Ibid.*

success as songwriter, Goosen has an uneasy relationship with the Afrikaner establishment. The following extract from an interview with Goosen provides poignant comment on how the Musiek-en-Liriek artists were regarded by the conservative Afrikaner establishment.<sup>49</sup>

In the middle of this Musiek-en-Liriek highlight did the powers to be – Bennie Bierman, who was head of Afrikaans music on television and radio, now look, the FAK's offices, and the Broederbond's offices, were both there by Die Eike, and Brigadiers, Brigadiers Films. Everything under one hat. [They then decided] now "Kruitjie" is going on the charts and *Boy van die Suburbs* comes out, and the whole album and it sells a shitload – 90 000, that kind of thing – and thanks to that I can now sit here and chat to you and you know who I am, that kind of thing. The powers that be then decided it was time for Anton to be brought down to earth. Now we had a symposium – what does the Afrikaner do? You go and you dissect this whole thing and take it apart and see where you can find some fault. So, the symposium is on this new type of music and Hennie Aucamp [Afrikaans writer] is invited to come and talk about cabaret, Laurika [Rauch] is invited to talk about the performing part of the cabaret and Musiek-en-Liriek in Afrikaans, and I was invited to talk ... But in the meantime behind my back, [they] ... had decided that Anton must be brought back to earth since things were getting a bit out of control. And they got Hennie Aucamp en Bennie Bierman to – before I made my speech – deliver critiques on me. And Bennie Bierman spent his time saying that the accent in "Waterblommetjies" was wrong – that "Waterblommetjeeees in die Boland" should be "Waterblommetaas in die Boland" and that was his main issue. And Hennie Aucamp said that geographically the song was not correct. ... And then after they had their fanfare, I had a chance to answer them first, and then I could do my speech. And, so I just told Bennie Bierman that I did not give a hoot about where the accent lies, about 80 000 people had by now bought covers of this song and for me that was quite enough, thank you very much. ... Hennie told me he was sorry, he was instructed to say these things and to bring me back to earth ...<sup>50</sup>

This kind of response was quite typical from the establishment, considering the number of FAK symposia on Afrikaans music throughout the previous four decades. Interestingly, despite the fact that sixteen of Goosen's songs have been included in the 2012 version of the FAK Songbook, his name is not among those listed as the pioneers of Musiek-en-Liriek,<sup>51</sup> which begs the question whether or not his ambivalent relationship with the organisation has not in some way endured.

*Boy van die suburbs* has strong rock elements and Goosen has, among other things, been called the father of Afrikaans rock. This would no doubt have added to his unpopularity with Afrikaner conservatives. Ironically, the rock elements in his music came about coincidentally:

With "Blommetjie gedenk aan my", I didn't go and sit and think that I was going to make the first (Afrikaans) rock album. To hell with that! Chris Kritzinger, my producer, told the drummer in the studio "think 'baby come back'". [laughs] Do

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49 *Ibid.*

50 *Ibid.*

51 *FAK Sangbundel*, Vol. II, p. 3.

you remember the song? *Ta ta ta dum tak*. So there we had the rhythm, which was coincidentally rock. And it is coincidentally a rock riff.<sup>52</sup>

While “Blommetjie gedenk aan my” is clearly a rock song, “Kruitjie roer my nie” (the first hit from the album) was not, which suggests that one should be careful not to overstate the rock elements in his music at this time. However, video footage of a 1980 concert shows how Goosen’s live concerts were faster and louder with distorted guitar solos and screaming fans – all elements associated with rock music, which he clearly embraced.<sup>53</sup> There had been earlier artists who played Afrikaans rock – like the Bravados, the Hobos and The Bats, but Goosen’s style and performances resembled the rock ethic of rebellion much more realistically. He did not shy away from confronting censors, the FAK, the SABC and the establishment in general and thus exposing the banality of the rules imposed on the Afrikaans culture industry up until then. Goosen would also be instrumental in the success of other artists who benefited more directly from *Musiek-en-Liriek*. On Danie Pretorius’s list of the 100 biggest Afrikaans songs,<sup>54</sup> Goosen contributed thirteen (more than any other Afrikaans songwriter), of which Carike Keuzenkamp sang two<sup>55</sup> and Sonja Herholdt six.<sup>56</sup>

### “Movement”?

But to what extent was *Musiek-en-Liriek* a “movement”? Eyerman and Jamison define social movements as “central moments in the reconstitution of culture”.<sup>57</sup> Influenced by Herbert Marcuse, who underscored the aesthetic dimension of the social movements of the 1960s, they explore the way in which the musical part of social movements acts as a “cognitive praxis”, i.e. a way of organising different elements into new knowledge.<sup>58</sup> Did *Musiek-en-Liriek* form part of, and link up with, a wider consciousness that challenged the existing order and if so, in which ways did this consciousness and new identity manifest itself in the music?

Initially, there seems to have been a reluctance to call this new Afrikaans music a “movement”. Rauch mentions that there was no initial sense of belonging to a movement as such. David Kramer shared this view:

I am quite sceptical about labels like “alternatiewe beweging” [alternative movement]. They are usually invented by journalists for their own convenience and don’t serve to inform our understanding of the creative thrust of the individuals involved. Usually the people who are collectively described as a “beweging”

52 Goosen, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013.

53 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14evw09Z3jY>, accessed 12 December 2014.

54 D.C. Pretorius, *Musieksterre Van Gister En Vandag: lewensketse en foto’s van meer as 100 musieksterre* (Pretoria: Van der Walt, 1998), pp. 271-275.

55 “Byeboerwa” and “Hoeka Toeka”.

56 “Hanoverstraat”, “Harlekyn”, “Jantjie”, “Straattoebadoere”, “Tant Mossie se sakkie-sakkie boeredans” and “Waterblommetjies”.

57 R. Eyerman and A. Jamison, *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 6.

58 *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

[movement] had no idea they were part of it until it gets described in the media as such.<sup>59</sup>

Kramer makes two very important observations here: firstly, the role of journalists in creating “movements”, often without the cognisance of the artists associated with it and secondly, that this construction is done with limited consideration of the artists as creative individuals. Some journalists were also influential cultural role players at the time, like Stephan Bouwer. Rauch was even reluctant to call it “new”.<sup>60</sup> Being part of a specific movement, or confined to its requirements, does not seem to have been an attractive prospect to her. This was probably the reason why Rauch moved away from the *luisterliedjie* by the release of her fourth album in 1983. Some commentators preferred calling it a “renewal of the Afrikaans song”,<sup>61</sup> while others had no qualms in calling it a “revival”.<sup>62</sup> With time, the *Musiek-en-Lirie* has grown in stature. The 2012 FAK Songbook not only accepts it as a bona fide movement, but also credits it for “laying the foundations for the explosion in Afrikaans music in the following decades”.<sup>63</sup> Pat Hopkins referred to this phase as “a minor revolution in mainstream Afrikaans music”.<sup>64</sup>

During the twentieth century, popular Afrikaans music had undergone very little academic scrutiny, which contrasted sharply with the attention given to Afrikaans literature. Literary criticism was better equipped, endorsed and positioned during the 1980s to engage critically with an emerging generation of writers known as the *Tagtigers* (referring to the 1980s). *Brekfis met vier* (published in 1980) for example, was a collection of poetry by four of these prominent young writers: André le Roux du Toit (also known as André Letoit who later changed his name to Koos Kombuis), Etienne van Heerden, Daniel Hugo and Peter Snyders. By this time, there was a sizable body of literature on the various Afrikaans literary movements of the twentieth century, most notably the *Dertigers*, *Veertigers* (referring to the 1940s) and *Sestigers*. Although this division by decade remains somewhat clumsy and has drawn criticism, it has become convention.<sup>65</sup> Bezuidenhout has likened *Musiek-en-Lirie* more with the *Dertigers* and *Veertigers*, and *Voëlvr*y with the more radical *Sestigers*.<sup>66</sup> There is some merit in this view, since *Voëlvr*y was definitely more radical than *Musiek-en-Lirie*, just as the *Sestigers* were more radical than the *Dertigers* and *Veertigers*. O’Meara, on the other hand, pointed to the irony that while the *Sestigers* broke the mould of “official” Afrikaans culture and often displayed a harsh critique of Afrikaner nationalism, it elevated Afrikaans (and Afrikaans culture) to new heights, one of the very goals of the establishment they were criticising. In contrast, *Voëlvr*y did not use pure Afrikaans – they sought to undermine the whole Afrikaner cultural project.<sup>67</sup> A decade earlier, the *Tagtigers* emerged alongside *Musiek-en-Lirie*, which invites a search for

59 D. Kramer, <http://www.oulitnet.co.za/mond/kkramer.asp>, accessed 5 June 2013.

60 Jamneck, “Jana se ‘sangstem’ nie sonder maatemmer”, *Die Vaderland*, 26 July 1979, p. 2.

61 Bouwer, “En hoor jy die magtige dreuning?”, p. 6.

62 K. Breytenbach, “Ons musiek skielik is byderwets”, *Die Burger*, 27 February 1980.

63 Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings, *FAK-Sangbundel*, Vol. II, (Pretoria: FAK, 2012), p. 3.

64 Hopkins, *Voëlvr*y, p. 56.

65 E. Botha and P.H. Roodt, “Die Tagtigers en die Tydskrif vir Letterkunde – was daar ’n Tagtigerbeweging?”, *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* 43:1 (2006), pp. 57-58.

66 Bezuidenhout, “Skielik is jy vry”, *Oulitnet*, 2 March 2004.

67 D. O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years: The apartheid state and the politics of the National Party, 1948–1994* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1996), pp. 370-371.



links between the two groups. The Tagtigers's status as true literary movement has, however, been seriously questioned by none other than Etienne van Heerden:

...[T]he "tagtigers" was not a literary generation in the true sense of the word, compared to Dertig and Sestig. For that, the Tagtiger writers rely too much on the themes and narrative techniques of an older generation. They took the things that people like Aucamp, Brink, De Vries, Haasbroek, Elsa Joubert, Weideman and others, did, further and radicalised it in a postmodern sphere ... Tagtig was a radicalisation rather than a clean break with the past. And an indication of what was to come.<sup>68</sup>

Van Heerden's assessment is supported by Botha, who opines that although there was no real Tagtiger movement, there was a movement in the 1980s.<sup>69</sup> Other than the Tagtigers, Musiek-en-Liriek did offer something new that differentiated it from what had gone before in Afrikaans music. Musiek-en-Liriek artists did occasionally move in the same circles as those of the Tagtigers, but their work rarely overlapped. Some Musiek-en-Liriek artists did, however, set to music some poetry of the Sestigers, like Laurika Rauch who did a musical version of Ingrid Jonker's "Toemaar die donker man" on *Fyn net van die woord*.<sup>70</sup> Rauch has subsequently set to music a number of poems by Jonker, but also earlier Afrikaans poets associated with the Dertigers.<sup>71</sup>

Afrikaans theatre showed similar developments. Afrikaans playwrights and writers of this time were informed by Western/European art. Most of them had had tertiary education and moved through university and onto the stage, or in behind the typewriter. In essence, they were achieving what the cultural entrepreneurs of apartheid had always wanted: Afrikaans art created in the contemporary traditions of Western Europe. Ironically, this newly graduated elite showed a knack for viciously interrogating and deconstructing Afrikaner archetypal identities, and recasting them in post-modern scenarios. In the words of Deon Opperman:

What is Reza de Wet's *Diepe Grond* (Deep Earth) if not an iconoclastic and devastating (especially for Afrikaners) protest play, not against Apartheid, but against Calvinism and conservatism in the Afrikaner family?<sup>72</sup>

No one central artistic movement characterised these shifts, but the fact that they overlapped chronologically is significant. Pieter-Dirk Uys rose to prominence with his satirical character Evita Bezuidenhout and his/her one-person theatre shows that mocked the National Party. Notably, Uys's theatre shows were never censored, although much of their content was against the law. It was only with the release of video recordings of the show that it was given a 2-21 age restriction.<sup>73</sup> Theatre provided Afrikaans protest voices with one of the few outlets for expression:

68 E. van Heerden, "Vier tagtigers hou Brekvis ... en jy's genooi!", *Insig*, March 2005, p. 59.

69 Botha and Roodt, "Die Tagtigers en die Tydskrif vir Letterkunde", pp. 57-58.

70 <http://www.laurikarauch.com/biografie/2/>, accessed 09 February 2015.

71 Like I.D. du Plessis and Boerneef.

72 D. Opperman, "Revolution and conscience: South African theater, June 1976 to February 1990, Program of African Studies, Northwestern University, 5, 1993, pp. 14-16, available at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/passages/4761530.0005.012/>, accessed 02 March 2015.

73 P. Uys, *Between the devil and the deep: a memoir of acting and reacting* (Cape Town: Zebra, 2005), p. 89.

Indeed, ... the theatre became one of the last voices permitted to speak after the media and other avenues of protest had effectively been silenced ... Why the theatre was allowed to continue, when other voices of protest were banned, imprisoned, murdered, exiled, and tortured is a question frequently debated. A popular explanation – perhaps the most convincing – is that the government used theatre, and Black theatre in particular, as evidence for their argument before world opinion that conditions within South Africa were not truly repressive. But while the Market Theatre and other groups were permitted to mount productions of radical protest and even to tour abroad, plays that threatened to gather popular support in the townships were severely restricted and quickly silenced.<sup>74</sup>

The Market Theatre especially, was a space that hosted not only the first live *Musiek-en-Liriek* concert in 1979, but also Hennie Aucamp's political cabaret *Met Permissie Gesê* (Stated with permission) in 1981 and a number of others, like *Die van Aardes van Grootoor*, featuring Pieter-Dirk Uys.<sup>75</sup> These were very popular with middle-class Afrikaners. Although *Musiek-en-Liriek* was not as overtly political as the radical Voëlvry movement of the late 1980s, both resonated – at different times and in different ways – with wider fault lines in the power base of Afrikaner politics. Beinart has pointed out that by the 1970s, Afrikaner ethnic identity was being eroded by cultural secularism which was probably exacerbated by the arrival of television.<sup>76</sup> Koos Kombuis provides a reminder of how important context is for those who seek to understand the changing Afrikaans cultural landscape of the late 1970s and 1980s:

Yes, for justice to be served to all the small literary streams of that time ... I'll have to describe the whole cultural landscape in the South Africa of the early eighties in broader terms. Because the things that happened to us, and what we caused to happen, must be seen against a backdrop of parallel streams in popular music, underground politics and protest theatre.<sup>77</sup>

Despite the decades of conservatism, isolation, fear mongering and censorship demanded and engendered by Afrikaner nationalism, some Afrikaans artists made the intellectual migration out of the *laager*. Afrikaans literature, music and theatre all reflected the changing socio-political conditions in South Africa. It questioned the status quo, resisted the conservatism of a Calvinist society and embodied the feelings of alienation that accompanied those Afrikaners who made this move. Coming back to the question of whether *Musiek-en-Liriek* was a movement – its cohesiveness was probably exaggerated by journalists and its political impact as such negligible. It was not underground (but perhaps did not need to be), mostly not subversive, but nevertheless signalled a level of change in the quality – however subjective that may sound – for the better. One must also be honest and ask whether there is even a need to consider it as a movement – being a real movement or not will do nothing to tarnish the way in which the music of that era is revered today. There were also other notable things happening in popular Afrikaans music during the early 1980s that were disconnected from *Musiek-en-Liriek*.

74 Opperman, "Revolution and conscience: South African theater, June 1976 to February 1990", pp. 14-16.

75 Uys, *Between the Devil and the Deep*, p. 88.

76 W. Beinart, *Twentieth Century South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 187.

77 Kombuis, *Seks & Drugs & Boeremusiek*, p. 163, translated from original.

## The Border War as background for subversive Afrikaans rock

Since the beginning of the 1980s, growing numbers of Afrikaner national servicemen began to ask: "What are we fighting for?"<sup>78</sup>

The social impact of South Africa's involvement in the Border War on the Namibian/ Angolan border during the 1970s and 1980s has drawn new interest in recent years.<sup>79</sup> Under Botha, the role of the military expanded between 1978 and 1983.<sup>80</sup> This militarisation of white South African society, as well as the construction of white militarised masculine identities were powerful societal forces, but grew increasingly unpopular and elicited some resistance from within South Africa's white population. This resistance was indicative of wider political dissent and opposition to apartheid. Drewett has explored representations of this tension in popular culture by looking at relationships between popular music (mostly English) and resistance, as well as musicians' roles as "movement intellectuals" within wider circles of political protest.<sup>81</sup> English bands like Bright Blue, the Kalahari Surfers and the Cherry Faced Lurchers, along with solo artists like Roger Lucy, were openly opposed to apartheid and the conscription of white males into its armed conflicts, and often performed under the banners of the End Conscription Campaign (ECC). These performances were highly politicised and held a considerable element of risk for the artists. Roger Lucey's outspokenness especially, had brought him to the attention of the secret police, who assigned an officer, Paul Erasmus, with orders to destroy his career.<sup>82</sup>



Afrikaans albums in support of the Border War: Gé Korsten's *Huistoe*, 1979 (MFP 54954)



Bernoldus Niemand's 1983 single "Hou my vas Korporaal" (Shifty Music OU 116-A).

78 Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 59.

79 M. Drewett, "Battling over Borders: Narratives of Resistance to the South African Border War Voiced through Popular Music", *Social Dynamics: A Journal of African Studies*, 2003, 29: 1, pp. 78-98; see also M. Drewett, "The Construction and Subversion of Gender Stereotypes in Popular Cultural Representations of the Border War", in G. Baines and Peter Vale (eds), *Beyond the Border War: New Perspectives on South Africa's Late Cold War Conflicts* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2008), pp. 94-119.

80 Beinart, *Twentieth Century South Africa*, p. 263.

81 Drewett, "Battling over Borders", pp. 78-98.

82 Drewett, "Stop this filth", p. 25.

In contrast to this, popular culture in support of the war effort (music, film and literature as propaganda) was of course also common. Numerous music releases in both English and Afrikaans subsequently appeared on the market. Among the Afrikaans releases were albums by two of the most popular and big-selling South African singers of all time, Gé Korsten's *Huistoe* (Homewards) and Bles Bridges's *Onbekende Weermagman* (Unknown Soldier). Notably, while some English bands were openly opposed to the army, the war and apartheid, Afrikaans music remained almost completely compliant. Protest among Afrikaners was still rare, although there are some exceptions.



Wildebeest's 1983 EP *Horings op die Stoep* (12 Wild (C) D 001).

In 1983, two acts released Afrikaans songs that parodied the army experience at a time when opposition towards conscription and South Africa's involvement in the Border War was steadily increasing. Bernoldus Niemand (the alternative persona of English-speaking musician James Phillips) released his single "Hou my vas Korporaal" (Hold me tight, Corporal) and the rock group Wildebeest released an EP, *Horings op die Stoep* (Horns on the Stoep) containing the

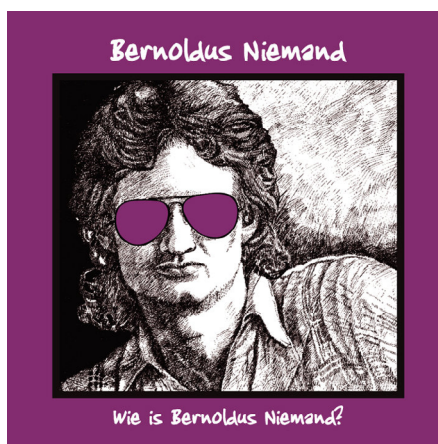


Wildebeest in the early 1980s.

song "Bossies" (Bushies). "Bossies" is a vernacular term referring to post-traumatic stress following battle during border service. The fact that these are *Afrikaans* songs, make them a poignant testimony to the unravelling of Afrikaner hegemony. This was a significant change, since Afrikaners as a group arguably had more invested in the apartheid system than their white English counterparts, as Afrikaner society and culture was more directly linked to (and responsible for) the nationalist ideology that upheld it.

Regardless of the fact that they were not successful commercially, "Hou my vas Korporaal" and "Bossies" represented the earliest examples of Afrikaans music that echoed the dissent felt among a large group of troops that questioned the armed conflict they had been dragged into. They also highlight another major theme: the differentiation in the responses between "high" and "low" (or "popular") art. The post-modern deconstruction of Afrikaner society in Afrikaans literary works and cabarets represented a discourse that resided in established critical artistic circles, whereas bands were wholly unsanctioned and unaccountable. Bands like Wildebeest and artists like Bernoldus Niemand (and undoubtedly many, many more lesser-known acts) represented a

non-commercial sub-category that had little to no exposure to the mainstream. This was in contrast to *Musiek-en-Liriek*, which had the support of mainstream television, and theatre and cabarets commissioned and funded by state-sanctioned provincial performing arts organisations.<sup>83</sup> The two worlds sometimes overlapped – Koos Kombuis was a leading figure of the *Tagtigers* and had published literary works long before he became known as a musician songwriter – but further links between the literary movements and music movements of the 1980s remained indirect, often depending on something as tenuous as what Shaun de Waal calls “tone”:



James Phillips' alter-ego, Bernoldus Niemand's debut album on Shifty Records, 1985 (Shifty 003).

Many consider Bernoldus Niemand's album, *Wie is Bernoldus Niemand?* to have started the “Afrikaans new wave” which has climaxed in the *Voëlvry* tour. It was the first record of its kind, and it set the tone: observant, satirical (sometimes gently so, sometimes more biting), and couched in the rebellious language of rock 'n roll.<sup>84</sup>

“Hou my vas Korporaal” was followed by the release of the album, *Wie is Bernoldus Niemand?* (Who is Bernoldus Niemand?), in February 1985, again by progressive record company, Shifty.<sup>85</sup> Even though these were not the first releases by James Phillips – the artist behind the persona Bernoldus Niemand – “Hou my vas Korporaal” was his first Afrikaans release. The album was submitted as a project for his B.Mus degree at Wits University, but was not accepted. Not surprisingly, it was banned by the SABC.<sup>86</sup> The clear satirising of the army experience – which so many young white South Africans could relate to – would become a regular theme for later *Voëlvry* artists. “Hou my vas Korporaal” also became the unofficial anthem of the ECC after its formation in 1984.<sup>87</sup>

Before Bernoldus Niemand, James Phillips played in an English band called *Corporal Punishment* which hailed from his hometown of Springs, a mining town on the East Rand of Johannesburg and a hotbed of punk-styled anti-establishment music in the late 1970s.<sup>88</sup> With Phillips and Carl Raubenheimer as the main songwriters, *Corporal Punishment*'s songs delivered biting political and social commentary. Although stylistically influenced by punk in Britain during the 1970s, punk bands in South Africa could not realistically claim the same links to the working class as, say, the Sex Pistols, since in the general local context, their race made them privileged. However, not all whites were equally privileged, and James Phillips wrote into song the characteristics (and in Bernoldus Niemand, into character) of working-class whites who he no doubt had observed

83 Like Kruik and Truk.

84 S. de Waal, “Rocking rebels discover R 'n R”, *The Weekly Mail*, 26 May – 1 June 1989, p. 30.

85 [http://rock.co.za/files/jp\\_niemand.html](http://rock.co.za/files/jp_niemand.html), accessed 21 June 2013.

86 [http://rock.co.za/files/jp\\_niemand.html](http://rock.co.za/files/jp_niemand.html), accessed 21 June 2013.

87 <http://mhambi.com/2010/02/ninja-is-the-new-james-phillips/>, accessed 13 August 2013.

88 Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, pp. 91-92.

in Springs. The East Rand *does* have an interesting history of working-class Afrikaans music from an earlier era. The music of David de Lange (who lived in Benoni, not far from Springs) is a good example. Many other *boereorkeste* who recorded albums in the early 1930s also hailed from the East Rand. While the music of the other Voëlvry artists Koos Kombuis and Johannes Kerkorrel later mocked the vapidity of middle-class Afrikaner suburbia from the position of rebellious middle-class Afrikaners, the white working-class character theme in James Phillips's music, especially his Afrikaans work as Bernoldus Niemand, represented a different subversion. In the 1980s working-class Afrikaners tended to support the political right of Andries Treurnicht's 1982 breakaway Conservative Party.

Phillips did not belong to this class constituency linguistically, culturally or politically. He went on to form the Cherry Faced Lurchers who, as mentioned before, often performed at political rallies of the ECC and produced very outspoken political music. One of their songs, "Shot down in the Streets", was included in Shifty's 1985 compilation album released in collaboration with the ECC, called *Forces Favourites*.

Although Niemand's influence on Voëlvry might have been debatable (as suggested by Hopkins),<sup>89</sup> and does not seem to have been the apogee of James Phillips's artistic expression, it remains a very poignant comment on white conscription during apartheid. Notably, Phillips resurrected the Bernoldus Niemand persona for the Voëlvry tour and performed songs from Niemand's repertoire, and rarely (if ever) material from his Corporal Punishment and Cherry Faced Lurchers days.<sup>90</sup>

Wildebeest, on the other hand, was an enigmatic group in their own way. For one thing, the bassist, Piet Botha, was the son of Minister for Foreign Affairs, Pik Botha.<sup>91</sup> They appeared on television programme *Kraaines* (Crow's Nest) in 1981, sporting military style khaki outfits, beating traditional African drums and playing heavy Afrikaans rock.<sup>92</sup> The songs were all composed by drummer Colin Pratley who, like James Phillips, was also not a first-language Afrikaans speaker. Wildebeest was influenced by African genres and rock music, and used a variety of indigenous instruments while sometimes singing in Afrikaans. Their first live album, *Wildebeest Bushrock One*, was the *Rand Daily Mail's* album of the year, and contained little Afrikaans material.<sup>93</sup> They also ran into some trouble with the establishment when a church in Potchefstroom wanted to stop them from performing there.<sup>94</sup> In 1983, they recorded an EP,



Shifty Records' *Forces Favourites*, in support of the ECC, 1985 (SHIFT 10).

89 *Ibid.*, p. 91.

90 Electronic communication with Dagga-Dirk Uys, organiser of the Voëlvry tour, 14 March 2014.

91 He became one of the most recognised Afrikaans songwriters of the last 30 years.

92 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42wjjQmKC6Q&hd=1>, accessed 24 January 2014.

93 Interview with Piet Botha, 05 May 2014.

94 *Ibid.*

*Horings op die Stoep*, with Anton Goosen as producer. It contained four tracks and tellingly, all were in Afrikaans (although technically, “Hotnotsgot” was an instrumental track). This was their final trip to the studio. In contrast to Phillips, however, Wildebeest was not associated with formal opposition to conscription, and did not link up with liberal leftist political movements.

Considering the socio-political atmosphere of the early 1980s, songs like “Hou my vas Korporaal” and “Bossies” were significant releases. Both songs touched on sensitive and realistic aspects of a shared experience between many white South African males conscripted into military service since 1967. This was in stark contrast to the numerous music releases in support of military service that portrayed conscription as the patriotic duty of young white South African males. In a wider context, the sentiments of Niemand and Wildebeest’s songs linked up with a growing body of *grensliteratuur* which deconstructed monolithic Afrikaner identity stereotypes as constructed through the army. Such a counter-hegemonic culture from within Afrikaner society was an especially potent issue. It also resonated with wider fault lines in Afrikaner society as the apartheid regime’s grip on power started to slip. The specific significance of “Hou my vas Korporaal” and “Bossies” is that they offered alternative interpretations of the army experience, and by extension white Afrikaner male identity, that resonated with much wider socio-political shifts.

### State response and censors

As mentioned before, the establishment of the Directorate of Publications in 1974 signalled a new dimension to censorship.<sup>95</sup> On the cultural front, this meant an increased sophistication in the implementation of censorship. Jansen van Rensburg’s study into censorship at the SABC from 1976 to 1996 focused on photographs of unsorted documents which allowed her to construct a graph of songs submitted for airplay on the radio stations of the SABC and how many were considered unsuitable for broadcasting.<sup>96</sup> Her study is of importance since, among other things, it provides quantifiable data. In a period spanning from 1986 until 1996, a total of 1 619 songs were submitted to the SABC for broadcasting. Of these, a total of 890 songs were considered unsuitable for broadcasting. That means that almost 55% of all songs during this period (which, admittedly, represented only a late stage of apartheid censorship and the first few years of democracy, but nonetheless represent a trajectory that started much earlier) were kept off the air. These numbers refer to all types of music submitted, not just Afrikaans songs, and it is uncertain whether or not they include releases from international artists.

The complex set of security measures, including censorship laws, resulted in much confusion and uncertainty on the sides of the censors, as well as the artists whose works were censored. This manifested for some in a cat-and-mouse game, with the irrational implementation of laws

95 For a more detailed analysis of the structure of state censorship during apartheid, Drewett’s work is authoritative, as is Merrett’s. See M. Drewett, “An analysis of the censorship of popular music within the context of cultural struggle in South Africa during the 1980s”, (Unpublished D.Phil Thesis, Rhodes University, 2004); also C. Jansen van Rensburg, “Institutional Manifestations of Music Censorship and Surveillance in Apartheid South Africa with Specific Reference to the SABC from 1974 to 1996”, (Unpublished MMus dissertation, Stellenbosch University, 2013), pp. 34-37; also see C. Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship: Secrecy and Intellectual Repression in South Africa* (Cape Town, David Phillip Publishers, 1994).

96 Jansen van Rensburg, “Institutional Manifestations of Music Censorship and Surveillance in Apartheid South Africa”, p. 98.

providing ample ammunition to anti-establishment Afrikaners. In a discussion on censorship at the First Freemuse World Conference on Music and Censorship in Copenhagen in November 1998, former SABC censor, Cecile Pracher, shared the following information with the panel:

At the time I was there between the 1980s and 1990s. It was the time of P.W. Botha and Apartheid was in full swing and the state of emergency was declared and everything became tighter and tighter. Things that would have been allowed five years earlier were frowned upon so therefore it was a very unnatural society to live in ... Records weren't banned by the SABC as a record with all the cuts. It was normally one, two or three cuts but sometimes it was eight, nine or ten. But mostly it was about three or four cuts and we had to put on stickers onto the LP's and in fact some of the LP's were scratched so that those cuts weren't played. With CD's of course that opportunity was lost.<sup>97</sup>

To an extent, Pracher's statement confirms that the censors were more sensitive during certain periods, as Ingrid Byerly also pointed out.<sup>98</sup> For Anton Goosen, the influence of the SABC censors on the composition of his songs up to the early 1990s was very significant. He responded to censorship by deliberately antagonising the censors, which not only undermined their position of power, but belittled them in public. It is doubtful whether this would have been possible a decade before. Goosen explains:

The psychological thing that happens here is that you start to wage this war against the censorship board. The SABC censorship board. Which is not healthy. You must write what is inside of you. ... [Y]ou know you are going to be prohibited, so okay, the first thing we're going to do is we're not going to go to the radio, the first thing we do is phone *Rapport* and we make a headline story out of it. Like "Boude" (Buttocks), or "Gatvol" (Fed-up).<sup>99</sup>

Boet Pretorius, owner of Decibel Records, also referred to this type of contest between artists and the SABC censors. In his case, they involved the Sunday newspaper *Rapport* – whose journalists "hated the SABC"<sup>100</sup> – when they were informed that an album by one of his top artists, the comic Leon Schuster, was going to be banned. The headline in the newspaper apparently helped the sales of the album.<sup>101</sup> One memo shows that wrestler/entertainer Mike Schutte's song "Moeilike Mike", also released by Decibel, was unsuitable for use "in any programme of the SABC's services".<sup>102</sup> Bizarrely, even operatic pieces would sometimes be banned, as in the case of world renowned opera singer Maria Callas's release of *Lucia Di Lammermoor*, sung in Italian, which had one side scratched out.<sup>103</sup>

97 Drewett, "Stop this filth", pp. 53-70.

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

99 Interview with author, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013.

100 Telephonic interview with author, 22 July 2013.

101 *Ibid.*

102 SABC internal memo, 28 November 1986, cited in Jansen van Rensburg, "Institutional Manifestations of Music Censorship and Surveillance in Apartheid South Africa", p. 75.

103 <http://soulsafari.wordpress.com/tag/music-and-censorship-during-apartheid-in-south-africa/>, accessed 22 August 2013.



Coenie de Villiers is another artist affiliated with the Musiek-en-Liriek movement. He was influenced by the music played on Radio Bantu, the black radio service of the SABC which deliberately divided programming between separate ethnic groups. This influence is yet another example of how music managed to cross the fiercely guarded racial boundaries during apartheid. De Villiers recalls:

From childhood I was fascinated by the sounds other ethnic and cultural groups created and grew up with the sounds of the erstwhile Radio Bantoe (!) in the kitchen ... I realised for the first time that this might be problematic when I wanted to make music with the Abasandizi Singers in the Cape, and they shyly suggested that we rather make music “at home” – that it would be problematic in public. After that I’ve made a lot of music with the wonderful jazz musicians of the Cape Flats, but it wasn’t always well received by the previous regime. My first albums were also saddled with an embargo, since the old SABC saw it as “undesirable”.<sup>104</sup>

Cora Marie was a mainstream pop singer who also sang gospel songs. Her song “Ster van Bethlehem” (Star of Bethlehem), written by Anton Goosen, was banned for an apparently bizarre reason, remembers Marie’s husband Corrie Myburgh:

They banned it because they said you can’t gospel to a beat. Today it is ridiculous, but it was their rule at that time. I still believe to this day the SABC stunted the growth of Afrikaans music due to all the rules and regulations. It was only after 1994 that the language, especially concerning the music, started growing again.<sup>105</sup>

All of these examples undermine the idea that only politically subversive music was banned. Myburgh’s statement about the SABC doing damage to Afrikaans music because of its restrictive measures is shared by many.

Conservative Afrikaner society also applied other kinds of pressures. In an extraordinary act of political defiance, Amanda Strydom, who was also part of the *Met Permissie Gesê* cast, gave the black power salute and shouted “Amandla” (meaning “power” in isiXhosa and isiZulu, and a popular rallying cry in the anti-apartheid struggle), at a performance at the Oude Libertas Theatre (the same theatre that hosted early Musiek-en-Liriek concerts) in Stellenbosch in 1986. It happened after she sang her own composition, “Die pas”, written in protest against the Pass Laws. She was heavily criticised by the Afrikaans media as unpatriotic and a blemish on the name of the Afrikaner.<sup>106</sup> Strydom remembers:

The incident changed my life. Initially, the effects were extremely traumatic – to stand up during the eighties in the then conservative Stellenbosch during the apartheid years and sing my song about the pass laws, was as good granting myself a death sentence. But it was a conviction of my soul.<sup>107</sup>

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104 Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 52, translated from original.

105 Corrie Myburgh in Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 56, translated from original.

106 Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, pp. 9-10.

107 *Ibid.*, p. 10, translated from original.

The gesture came at a price. Following the negative reactions by the Afrikaner community, Strydom had a breakdown and was diagnosed with bipolar depression. She only returned to the stage in the early 1990s.<sup>108</sup> Anton Goosen also talked of other strategies of intimidation:

The moment you moved outside of it, like Roger Lucey, they started tapping telephone lines. And this continued ... Houtstok was in 1990. Even there they were eavesdropping on my phone. If I talked to my girlfriend I could hear these people chip in and out. There were people with guns at the church square with our show.<sup>109</sup>

It was even very difficult to print albums with offensive content, as Lloyd Ross of Shifty Records explained:

These albums introduced us to another form of creative strangulation in the person of Pietman, a cutting engineer at EMI's record plant. At that stage, EMI had the only cutting lathe in southern Africa, so you either dealt with EMI and Pietman or didn't make records at all. Pietman got through the first side of Happy Ships without mishap, but halfway through the second he heard the word "fuck" and stopped the lathe. The Kalahari Surfers album *Own Affairs* didn't even make it past the second song! It is difficult to believe this now, but in 1984, a technician essentially had the power to decide what got released on vinyl in pretty much all of southern Africa.<sup>110</sup>

Another factor to keep in mind is that very few artists earned enough income from music – or other forms of art – to pursue it full-time, which explains the pragmatic approach artists often had to follow to survive in the constricted Afrikaans music market. Pracher added some perspective on how artists had to navigate these complex systems to stay afloat:

The effect of the SABC clamping down on information was directly resulting in the record companies taking a particular stance. They were in it for business, that's very clear, and they were protecting their rights. They knew that most often if a song is not given air time it doesn't have the same chance of being popular as the next one. So they forced a kind of censorship on their artists. I think what happened then was that the artists had their own censorship forced on themselves for bread and butter. If you rely on your income then you very often take the easier road. That had a major effect on SA's music in the 1980's and the 1970's. If censorship wasn't so completely successful, there would sooner have been a reaction from the people. That goes for music, but also much wider.<sup>111</sup>

The artists who became famous with *Musiek-en-Liriek* had to find innovative ways to remain successful. Laurika Rauch had performed cabarets before the start of *Musiek-en-Liriek* and continued doing so after the initial successes of her first three albums, when she performed a number of cabarets by Jacques Brel. Goosen wrote numerous hits songs for other, more

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108 *Ibid.*; see also G. Edwards: "Amanda op die Kruin", *Huisgenoot Tempo* 3 2012, p. 48.

109 Anton Goosen, Interview with author, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013

110 <http://shifty.co.za/the-shifty-story/>, accessed 03 April 2017.

111 C. Pracher, "The Censored meet their Censor – Music and Censorship during Apartheid in South Africa", available at <http://freemuse.org/archives/5671>, accessed 8 May 2012.

mainstream singers like Sonja Herholdt<sup>112</sup> and Carike Keuzenkamp.<sup>113</sup> David Kramer famously became associated with the Volkswagen Kombi through a series of television commercials that lasted from 1984 until 1996 – the longest endorsement of a product by a celebrity in South African advertising history.<sup>114</sup> This public persona, so popular with Afrikaners, was often a cause of unease for Kramer.<sup>115</sup> He has consistently been the most prominent white Afrikaans musician to explore the common musical heritage of white and coloured Afrikaans speakers, thereby undermining constructions of white racial dominance in popular Afrikaans music. His work became much more political with the release of his 1986 album *Baboondogs*, and he teamed up with coloured musician Taliep Petersen for *District Six – the musical*, the start of a long and fruitful partnership which would tragically end with Petersen’s murder in 2006.<sup>116</sup> Four songs from the soundtrack were banned by the SABC,<sup>117</sup> and the musical had limited access to state-controlled theatres, which prohibited productions by ‘non-white’ writers and casts.<sup>118</sup> Of all the artists with links to Musiek-en-Liriek, Anton Goosen, David Kramer and Amanda Strydom were probably the most outspoken politically. However, it is pointless to look for Voëlvry-like radicalism among the Afrikaans artists of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Musiek-en-Liriek was less cohesive and more diverse, and connected with a much wider audience. And most tellingly, if you listened to the music of the Musiek-en-Liriek artists during this era, it did not necessarily make you liberal or dissatisfied with apartheid or the National Party.

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112 Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 231.

113 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

114 Slabbert and De Villiers, *David Kramer*, p. 180.

115 *Ibid.*, p. 196.

116 *Ibid.*, p. 11, p. 277.

117 SABC Memo no. 209, 28 November 1986, C. Jansen van Rensburg, “Institutional Manifestations of Music Censorship and Surveillance in Apartheid South Africa with Specific Reference to the SABC from 1974 to 1996” (MMus Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2013), p. 75.

118 Slabbert and De Villiers, *David Kramer*, p. 229.

# CHAPTER SIX

## Alternative Afrikaans music towards the end of apartheid

### Some autobiography

I was born in Uitenhage in 1975. We lived on the edge of a typical white middle-class suburb. In front of our house there was an open field and a small hill, behind which lies Langa, meaning “Sunrise” in isiXhosa. Langa was close enough for me to hear the fiery political speeches – and violence – that became a regular evening background noise growing up. Although this is not the better known township close to Cape Town, it is the site where, on 21 March 1985, 20 people were gunned down by police during a funeral procession. That was just more than a kilometre from our house. One of the earliest documented cases of “necklacing”<sup>1</sup> followed two days later with the killing of Benjamin Kikini. According to history books, Enoch Sontonga, the Xhosa missionary who wrote *Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika* in 1897, was born in Uitenhage c. 1873 and although the exact location is unknown, it must have been close to where I grew up. The hospital where I was born is around the corner from our house and about 200 metres up the street. Like many state hospitals during apartheid, there was a ‘European’ ward, and a ‘Non-European’ ward. All the injured and sick residents of Langa who needed medical attention had to cross the field and walk past our house. I often saw blood trails crossing the street and going around the corner and up the hill to the ‘non-European’ entrance

1 The practice of executing someone by putting a tyre around their neck, filling it with petrol and lighting it.

(on the left) of the hospital. During the mid-1980s our street was constantly patrolled by Casspirs (armoured military vehicles). At one time, there were four snipers stationed on the roof of the hospital, thus having a clear sight of the field in front of our house in case some of the township violence spilled over into the white suburbs. In the mornings, the sun rose from behind the hospital so that it cast their shadow onto our lawn.

By mere coincidence, it turned out that the location of my parents' house made it impossible for me as a young boy not to be aware of the political reality of South Africa during the last years of apartheid. Growing up on the border of white suburbia looking outwards politicised a large part of my formative years. The "onluste" (riots) during the state of emergency in the mid-1980s were not out of sight and out of mind. One day, in 1989, a friend gave me a bootleg tape with a mix of Voëlvry and *Piekniek by Dingaan* songs. Suddenly, I heard music that related directly to what I saw every day. The fault lines they exposed (and the lines they drew in the sand) also resembled our street on the edge of town. It had a significant influence on me as a thirteen-year-old boy. I learned all the lyrics. I also learned to play Johannes Kerkorrel's songs on the piano and Koos Kombuis's songs on the guitar (which were easier). From then on, thanks to a mix of hormones and teenage rebellion, my friends and I would often challenge teachers in the classroom on their staunchly nationalist politics (we were given extra courage by a rumour going round – which was never actually confirmed – that it was illegal for schoolboys to be caned for their political views). Somehow, a group of white schoolboys in the Eastern Cape became politicised (at least on a basic level) by the music of the Voëlvry movement. We also took great joy in mocking the conservatism of the society we grew up in, just like other teenagers around the world. In a sense, then, my personal connection with Voëlvry makes me sympathetic to the claims by some that it was a monumental, ground-shifting, cultural-political movement. However, I am also cognisant of the fact that the small group of friends at school who listened to Voëlvry music from 1989 onwards was just that: small. A few years later, in either 1992 or 1993, Anton Goosen and his Bushrock band – which included Piet Botha – came to perform at our school. It was the first live band I had ever seen and it was in Afrikaans, and fantastic. However, for me, Voëlvry remained the most seminal.

## Voëlvry

He [Johannes Kerkorrel] is busy overrunning South Africa with a shit-hot Afrikaans rock band, to dodge here and duck there, but everywhere he pops up with his message of protest, of dissatisfaction, of rising up against the status quo. Everywhere he goes he releases people from the demons of Calvinistic feelings of guilt and Nationalist racism, he opens them up to new emotions, he knows exactly how to weave his web of nationwide mutiny, he preaches the truth loud and clear, he preaches the gospel that the youth have been yearning for up to now.<sup>2</sup>

2 K.A. Kombuis, *Die tyd van die Kombi's* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 2009), p. 130, translated from original.

During April and May 1989, three alternative Afrikaans acts – poet/singer André Letoit (who later changed his name to Koos Kombuis), Bernoldus Niemand's Swart Gevaar and Johannes Kerkerrel's Gereformeerde Blues Band – toured South Africa (and visited Namibia for one show) to liberate the Afrikaner youth with Afrikaans rock 'n roll. It was called Voëlvry ("feel free; free as a bird; outlaw; free penis; free love"<sup>3</sup>) and was a deliberate attack on the pillars of a conservative Afrikaner society that was facing an uncertain future as the apartheid regime's rule was drawing to an end.

The tour attracted a lot of interest because it was markedly different from anything that had gone before in Afrikaans music. As the preceding chapters illustrate, there was scant prior antagonism toward the state in the Afrikaans music sector. By the end of the penultimate decade of the twentieth century, it was extremely easy for these alternative Afrikaans artists to shock Afrikaner society. The suffocating conservatism of the Church, the politics of the National Party regime, and their musical rivals in the form of mainstream Afrikaans artists (especially the sentimental crooner Bles Bridges), were all easily identifiable as part of a single enemy. Conservative family upbringings were also to blame:

We did not merely dislike our parents; we despised them, loathed them, we wanted to torture and hurt and discredit them utterly. We had come to that terrible place in a neglected child's life when he loses the final vestige of respect for abusive elders.<sup>4</sup>

Politically, it was the fifth year of P.W. Botha's state of emergency, troops had been deployed in the townships across the country to contain widespread black political uprisings, international pressure against apartheid was reaching critical levels and the economy was suffering. By January 1989 Botha had suffered a stroke, resigned as leader of the National Party in February, but refused to acknowledge F.W. de Klerk's election by the Party as new State President the following month. He eventually resigned in August and F.W. de Klerk came to power on 20 September 1989. By this time, almost half of the white Afrikaans-speakers had left the National Party.<sup>5</sup> The term of duty in the army was reduced to one year while the defence budget was halved, which signalled the government's reluctance to fight against political change.<sup>6</sup> In 1990, de Klerk also unbanned the ANC and other black political organisations and released Nelson Mandela, a momentous and much publicised event in South Africa's history. In the same year, the ethno-political definition of Afrikaner was compromised by the inclusion of 'non-whites' into the National Party.

Although Voëlvry never became part of the mainstream, the body of academic work it has attracted bears testament to its significance as a movement. It has also bestowed on Voëlvry the label of the most definitive example of politicised Afrikaans music of the apartheid era. As subject matter, Voëlvry has offered an attractive opportunity to explore the various intersections of changing Afrikaner identities and political unravelling at an almost apocalyptic time for white Afrikaners. In contrast, the work of other Afrikaans music artists who expressed their political

3 P. Hopkins, *Voëlvry: The movement that rocked South Africa* (Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2006), p. 14.

4 Koos Kombuis, afterword in Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 235.

5 H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003), p. 580. *Ibid.*, p. 597.

6 *Ibid.*

identities in more subtle ways has attracted less attention. The less obvious, more understated approach by Musiek-en-Liriek, was, in general, far more popular among the broader Afrikaans public, but too mild for those directly involved in the Voëlvry movement. In the words of Max du Preez:

We had a general fuck-you attitude, and didn't believe the 1980s was a time for subtlety and good manners.<sup>7</sup>

There are other traces of critical, counter-hegemonic Afrikaans music performance that pre-date Voëlvry, like David Kramer's use of musical form as a means of subverting racial hierarchies, "Hou my vas Korporaal" in 1983 and Amanda Strydom's black power salute in Stellenbosch in 1986. Cabarets like *Met Permissie Gesê* in 1981 were also subtly critical of the state. However, by the end of the 1980s, it was time for a much more radical approach which was given strong momentum with the cabaret *Piekniek by Dingaen*. It premiered at the 1988 National Arts Festival in Grahamstown and featured the music of Johannes Kerkorrel and André Letoit, and was an openly subversive political text that defied the dominant narratives of the National Party and apartheid. According to the philosopher Johan Degenaar, *Piekniek by Dingaen* was the quintessential post-modern Afrikaans text of the 1980s since it contravened the schism between what was considered "high art" and "popular art". Literary scholars Elize Botha and P.H. Roodt wrote:

[*Piekniek by Dingaen*] slaughtered holy cows with a slight touch, deconstructed the values of the establishment, reversed hierarchies, gave back to words the ability to sting, and illustrated the inter-textuality between the language and the body.<sup>8</sup>

This statement illustrates clearly how radical this new strain of Afrikaner protest was and how it differed fundamentally from Musiek-en-Liriek and the cabaret shows associated with it. The latter just did not achieve such a level of disruption. In *Piekniek by Dingaen*, old favourite Afrikaans songs (like Sonja Herholdt's "Waterblommetjies" and Randall Wicomb's "Dans met die rooi rok") were re-worked and given either political or sexually explicit lyrics. It was highly controversial and antagonistic, but also very liberating for Afrikaners stuck in conservative middle-class society. The link between *Piekniek by Dingaen* and Voëlvry was strong – not only did it feature the music of Kerkorrel and Letoit, but the Gereformeerde Blues Band members Willem Moller and Jannie van Tonder were also in the cast. When the Voëlvry tour kicked off less than a year later, it took the message and ethos of *Piekniek by Dingaen* to the next level and exported it beyond the theatre to thousands more across the country. These concerts, especially in the countryside, served as meeting points for likeminded Afrikaners. Arriving in Clarens in the Eastern Free State, the tour found a crowd of people from different surrounding towns waiting outside the concert venue who, for the first time, were meeting and exchanging phone numbers with other Afrikaans people who felt the same as they did.<sup>9</sup> In this way, new networks of liberals in the conservative rural towns were established. It is almost impossible to trace these connections that started there, but – as a node that attracted people – this was significant in new

7 M. Du Preez, in Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 6.

8 E. Botha and P.H. Roodt, "Die Tagtigers en die *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* – was daar 'n Tagtigerbeweging?", *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* 43:1 (2006), p. 59, translated from original.

9 Personal communication with Willem Moller and Jannie van Tonder, March 2017.

ways that did not function like *Musiek en Liriek*, with their access to TV and Radio, or their arch enemies, the mainstream. Voëlvry was true underground and meaningful because it harnessed the energy of years of frustration. As a result, Voëlvry occupies a special place in the memories of those who witnessed it.



Shifty Records' *Voëlvry* compilation of various alternative Afrikaans artists, 1988 (SHIB 29).

Arguably even more important than *Piekniek by Dingaan's* connection is the influence of Shifty Records, the small independent record company that was the first to release albums by Bernoldus Niemand, André Letoit (as he was known at the time) and Johannes Kerkorrel. Lloyd Ross, the founder of Shifty Records, first joined the Radio Rats, an influential punk band in the late seventies, and was exposed to the underground punk scene in and around Johannesburg and Springs,<sup>10</sup> where he met James Phillips (Bernoldus Niemand). His chance meeting with another punk musician, Ivan Kadey of the multi-racial punk band National Wake, led to the establishment of Shifty Records. Later he teamed up with Warrick Sony of the outspoken political band the Kalahari Surfers.<sup>11</sup> As not many other record companies in South Africa were willing to record protest music at this time (early to mid-1980s), Shifty attracted politically conscious artists.<sup>12</sup> It released an eclectic collection of albums that ranged from Lesotho band Sankomota, Jennifer Ferguson, The Genuines, Vusi Mahlasela and Urban Creep, to the "People's Poet" Mzwakhe Mbuli, the Fosatu Worker Choirs and compilations in support of the End Conscription Campaign, like *Forces Favourites*.<sup>13</sup> In 1988 Shifty released an album called *Voëlvry*, featuring various alternative Afrikaans artists,<sup>14</sup> including Niemand, Kerkorrel and Letoit. The fact that the Voëlvry artists were part of this stable is noteworthy.

However, Voëlvry had no direct link to international anti-apartheid music movements associated with exiled black and coloured South African artists. Abroad, popular music concerts played an important role in harnessing support for the anti-apartheid struggle. A prime example is the 1988 Free Mandela concert at Wembley Stadium that attracted a crowd of 72 000 people, and featured a number of international stars like Peter Gabriel (who sung his hit "Biko") and exiled South African artists like Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela. The concert was a major international event, broadcast to sixty countries and viewed by almost one billion people.

10 Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 81.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82, 87.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 87.

13 *Ibid.*

14 Koos, Randy Rambo en die Rough Riders, Pieter van der Lugt, The Genuines, Die Kêrels, Khaki Monitor and The Genuines, a coloured ghoema punk group from Cape Town.



Significantly, no Afrikaans artists were included in the line-up.<sup>15</sup> This fact puts into perspective statements like the following by Koos Kombuis:

We wanted the same thing as freedom fighters – to be free. In that respect we knew about them and they knew about us. But our contribution to their cause must not be underestimated, because at a crucial point in history we took from government its greatest power base, the youth. Never in their wildest dreams did the Bothas expect their own kids to turn against them and spit in their faces – and not with the gentle “loyal protest” envisaged by NP van Wyk Louw, mind you, but with real hatred, with all the pent-up rage our young hearts could muster.<sup>16</sup>

Here, Kombuis embodies, perhaps unintentionally, one extreme pole in the discourse on Voëlvry. His assertion – which he shares with many of those who took part in the tour – that they “took from government its greatest power base”, is a good example. As is his assertion that they contributed to “their cause”. It is hard to imagine white Afrikaans artists as comrades of ANC freedom fighters during the 1980s, or even to think that they had any impact on black society in South Africa at all. Albert Grundlingh has even pointed out that the movement lacked wider social purchase within white Afrikaner society itself.<sup>17</sup> That Voëlvry “spat in the face of the state”, however, is not in dispute. Such rebellion against the political system today is not as straightforward. Francois van Coke, lead singer of Fokofpolisiekar, which gained a very strong following among disaffected Afrikaner urban youth since their inception in 2003 and now represents the next generation of Afrikaans rockers of the 2000s, has admitted that, as Afrikaners, they are wary of criticising the government in case they come across as racist.<sup>18</sup> Considering the complexities of post-apartheid South Africa, and because of Voëlvry’s re-emergence in the public sphere more than twenty-five years on, a re-assessment of the “Movement that rocked South Africa”<sup>19</sup> is due.

## Reconsiderations

In April 2014, at the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK), a panel of Afrikaans music experts consisting of writers, journalists and musicians gathered to discuss the significance of the Voëlvry tour in celebration of its twenty-fifth anniversary. Earlier, in February, three of the surviving members of the Gereformeerde Blues Band – Willem Moller, Gary Herselman and Jannie “Hanepoot” van Tonder – appeared together onstage at the Fiesta awards, broadcast live on television, also as an appreciative nod to the movement. This was the first time in more than two decades that all three of them were in the same room. Even though it also lay mostly dormant for almost two decades, Shifty Records celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in September 2014 with “Shifty September”, an array of offerings from its archives including the screening of live footage of performances by politically subversive South African music artists during the 1980s.<sup>20</sup>

15 <http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/british-anti-apartheid-movement-hosts-concert-mandela>, accessed 20 January 2014.

16 Kombuis, cited in Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 19.

17 Grundlingh, “Rocking the boat?”, p. 17.

18 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K\\_XekcXPBQs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_XekcXPBQs), accessed September 2014.

19 To quote Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, (Cape Town, Zebra press, 2006).

20 <https://www.facebook.com/shiftyseptember?ref=ts&fref=ts>, accessed September 2014.

Serendipitously, it also coincided with the Voëlvry anniversary, and a number of panels and discussions took place in celebration and contemplation of this milestone. Direct connections were drawn between Voëlvry and post-1994 alternative Afrikaans music culture, specifically the Oppikoppi rock festival and rebellious Afrikaans rock group Fokofpolisiekar.<sup>21</sup>

One of these panel discussions attracted criticism and the accusation that what was an opportunity for “non-racial musical culture turned out to be not much more than a bastion for Afrikaner Bohemia and a liberal pathology for denial”<sup>22</sup> Tolsi and Gedye are certainly correct in their observation that the discussion was a white affair. Whatever subversion there was among the political Afrikaans writers, musicians and playwrights of the 1980s, they very seldom used the sharpest tool available for undermining a racist regime: collaboration with black artists (there are, of course, exceptions, like Jannie van Tonder of the Gereformeerde Blues Band who joined the multi-racial African Jazz Pioneers in 1986). The most likely explanation is that they simply did not move in the same circles as black artists, one of the intended results of a racially segregated society.<sup>23</sup> Other, major exceptions include David Kramer and his collaboration with Taliep Petersen, and Anton Goosen, who collaborated with black artists such as Lucky Dube and Margaret Singana and even joined the ANC in 1992. Regardless, the criticism of the racial make-up of the discussion group relates to only a fraction of what Voëlvry represented. As Gary Herselman, bass player of the Gereformeerde Blues Band mentioned in one of the discussion panels, it wasn’t an inter-racial movement, but rather an act of standing up to their own parents and the society and politics which they represented, and saying “Fuck, man, there must be a better way.”<sup>24</sup> Grundlingh has suggested that their very success depended on them being Afrikaans, but that this had to be a broader definition, or a different mould, of Afrikaans in line “with the pressures of the time.”<sup>25</sup>

Laubscher’s deconstruction of Johannes Kerkorrel’s music on an identity level offers an insightful glance into the unravelling of the hegemonic horizon of the late-apartheid era and puts into perspective the ferocity with which the Voëlvry artists attacked the status quo.<sup>26</sup> Despite the open hedonism, it was by no means limited to scatological expressions of rebellion. Koos Kombuis, for instance, was already a published author when Voëlvry commenced and openly confesses that his artistic background lies in literature, not music.<sup>27</sup> Kerkorrel made his stage debut in a 1986 cabaret, *Met ander woorde*.<sup>28</sup> Both were involved in *Piekniek by Dingaen*. The significance of this is that, regardless of the punk ethic that accompanied many aspects of the Voëlvry movement, it was artistically very rich. Many of the songs penned by the Voëlvry artists have become Afrikaans classics, such as Kombuis’s “Lisa se Klavier” (Lisa’s Piano) and Kerkorrel’s “Hillbrow”. Kerkorrel was also posthumously awarded a lifetime achievement

21 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K\\_XekcXPBQs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_XekcXPBQs), accessed September 2014.

22 N. Tolsi and L. Gedye, [www.theconmag.co.za/201/09/12/white-noise-and-lost-irony/](http://www.theconmag.co.za/201/09/12/white-noise-and-lost-irony/), accessed 15 September 2014.

23 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K\\_XekcXPBQs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_XekcXPBQs), accessed September 2014.

24 *Ibid.*

25 Grundlingh, “Rocking the boat?”, p. 10.

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

27 <http://www.oulitnet.co.za/mond/kkramer.asp>, accessed 05 June 2013.

28 I. Roggeband, *50 Stemme: Die grootste name in Afrikaanse musiek* (Cape Town: Delta, 2009), p. 135.

award for his contribution to South Africa's music heritage at the 2013 SAMA awards.<sup>29</sup> Prior to his suicide in 2002, he had won three SAMA awards. While artists like Laurika Rauch, Anton Goosen and David Kramer had achieved commercial success with their fresh offerings in Afrikaans, Bernoldus Niemand in particular represented a subversive undercurrent that influenced Kerkorrel and Kombuis. Unfortunately, Niemand's musical legacy was cut short with his death in 1995 from injuries sustained in a car accident during the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. His work, however, is very highly appraised by music critics, even though he never had any commercial success. Although their music differed significantly, as a whole, Niemand, Kerkorrel and Kombuis constituted a formidable and divergent assault on the status quo, a fact recognised by Kerkorrel:

I was intensely aware at the beginning of the movement that it would have to be a collaboration of a range of diverse artists to survive against the power of the state and censorship.<sup>30</sup>

The Voëlvry artists, along with other alternative Afrikaans bands like Joos Tonteldoos en die Dwarstrekkers, Die Kêrels and Randy Rambo en die Rough Riders represented an extreme new perspective in Afrikaans music. The latter's 1990 album *Die Saai Lewe* (The boring life) was banned in its entirety and not one song from the album could be broadcasted or distributed. It was deemed so subversive that it was illegal to have the album in one's possession, the only Afrikaans album ever to achieve this status.<sup>31</sup> Randy Rambo was the stage name of *Die Beeld's* music critic Theunis Engelbrecht, who strongly supported the Voëlvry artists.

Another factor to consider is that the Voëlvry artists mostly came from respectable middle-class backgrounds – a fact that bears some resemblance to the artists connected to the social movements of the 1960s in the US.<sup>32</sup> This contrasted sharply with other movements, like punk in Britain in 1976/77. Clearly distinguishable as an expression of working-class interest, punk hit the establishment hard.<sup>33</sup> Although the initial movement did not last very long, since it immediately lost its legitimacy when it became part of the mainstream,<sup>34</sup> it proved very influential in establishing many offshoots like new wave, post-punk and ska. The South African punk scene of the late 1970s and 80s, on the other hand, did not display such a clear class-consciousness. The dynamics of South African punk also differed from Britain's in various ways, just as the politics of apartheid South Africa differed vastly from politics in Britain.<sup>35</sup> Although there is a loose connection between these punk bands and Voëlvry, mainly through James Phillips's musical past as part of bands like Corporal Punishment, Voëlvry's music had more similarities with rock music. Two decades prior to punk, rock music had a global impact, with varying different responses and motivations. Journalists were the first to respond and to initiate discourse on this impact, often commenting on rock music's ability to serve as a vehicle for voices of dissent,

29 C. Leonard, "Johannes Kerkorrel: The wise fool who left the fray", *Mail & Guardian*, 10 May 2013.

30 Johannes Kerkorrel, in Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 231.

31 <http://www.roekeloos.co.za/ritme/die-saai-lewe.html>, accessed 06 March 2015.

32 Grundlingh, "Rocking the boat?", p. 4.

33 S. Frith, "Rock and the Politics of Memory", *Social Text* 9:10, (1984), p. 61.

34 *Ibid.*

35 For an in-depth analyses of the South African punk scene of this era, see the documentary directed by K. Jones and D. Maas, *Punk in Africa* (Pelogrosso: Meerkat Media, 2012).

particularly among the youth. In South Africa, rock music attracted much the same kind of response in the press,<sup>36</sup> and over the next few decades journalists would become intimately involved in the development of music movements, either as participants, or as commentators.

## The role of journalists

Voëlvry's highly subversive slant was quickly noticed by the Afrikaner left, who responded with articles in publications like *Vrye Weekblad*, which became a sponsor of the tour.<sup>37</sup> While the more liberal press gave the tour regular coverage, virtually nothing was reported in *Die Burger* until mid-May, when the Voëlvry artists were banned from performing on the Stellenbosch University campus by the then Rector Mike de Vries. This led to a rare sit-in by more than 1 500 students, with some staff joining the protest.<sup>38</sup> Whereas *Die Matie* (Stellenbosch University student newspaper) reported the event as a protest in support of free speech, *Die Burger* focused on a smaller march by students in support of the Rector.<sup>39</sup> A review of the concert, held at an alternative venue off-campus, was at least very favourable.<sup>40</sup> Almost exactly a month before the protest and subsequent concert, *Die Matie* ran a poll on music preferences among students on campus. Interestingly, 40% did not listen to any Afrikaans music (which is reminiscent of earlier polls in the 1970s among the Afrikaner youth), while 22% listened to it sporadically. Among the remaining 38% that did listen to Afrikaans music, the most popular artists were pop singers like Anneli van Rooyen, Rina Hugo, Carike Keuzenkamp and Gé Korsten, while a small minority listened to David Kramer, Koos du Plessis and Jannie du Toit, who was part of the Musiek-en-Liriek movement.<sup>41</sup> Bles Bridges, possibly the most popular Afrikaans singer of the 1980s, was very unpopular among students, with 72% despising him. Only 16% listened to "alternative Afrikaans" music, with a further 40% who had never heard of it.<sup>42</sup> This is significant, given the size of the sit-in a month later. Although one campus poll does not necessarily stand up to methodological scrutiny, it did bear some resemblance to polls done on other campuses.<sup>43</sup>

Ultimately, the more liberal Afrikaans publications had a much smaller readership than the mainstream Afrikaans press. As with Musiek-en-Liriek, newspaper journalists were the first to describe Voëlvry as an Afrikaans music movement. This tendency by print media to be the first to recognise, identify and even create new music "movements" is a common and vital element in commercial music industries. Music artists globally have long benefited by being associated with the cutting edge of new music styles. Often, hype is created for an upcoming release and adds to a product's commercial possibilities. The efforts by sympathetic journalists at mainstream dailies, like Theunis Engelbrecht at *Die Beeld*, did much to publicise the Voëlvry movement, but did not – as was the case with Musiek-en-Liriek – give them access to the main channels of distribution. This could have been one of the reasons Voëlvry remained a marginal group until

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

37 Du Preez, foreword in Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, pp. 6-8.

38 P. Joubert, "Protes vir vrye keuse", *Die Matie*, 11 May 1989.

39 "Talle Maties steun konsert-verbod", *Die Burger*, 11 May 1989, p. 3.

40 E. Joubert, "J. Kerkorrel en sy Blues Band maak vriende", *Die Burger*, 15 May 1989.

41 V. Brand and L. Eloff, "Afrikaans musiek onbekend by student", *Die Matie*, 13 April 1989, p. 6.

42 *Ibid.*

43 Grundlingh, "Rocking the boat?", p. 17.

after the tour. Koos Kombuis and Johannes Kerkerrel became relatively successful, but James Phillips's albums were commercial failures.<sup>44</sup> At the other end of the musical spectrum, the Afrikaans pop mainstream could not have been more different and the chasm quickly spilled over into open animosity in the press.

### "Music wars"

It was really with the unravelling of apartheid that the media began to question the efforts of the different Afrikaner nationalist organisations to use light Afrikaans music as a political tool. In this sense, the Voëlvry movement succeeded in exposing the banalities of mainstream Afrikaans music. Their music provided a sharp contrast to the music sponsored by the FAK, ATKV and SABC. This contrast was lyrical, musical and political. Hopkins pointed out that the *lekkerliedjies* of the mainstream were politically motivated and claims to the contrary by those who performed them were disingenuous. Even though this type of Afrikaans music remained the most popular, by the late 1980s, the enthusiasm for the *lekkerliedjie* had dissipated enough to open the door for more subversive artists.<sup>45</sup> This polarisation made it very clear: mainstream Afrikaans pop music was deliberately superficial and compliant with the ideologies of the apartheid state, while the "alternative" Afrikaners provided Afrikaans music that for the first time contained overt socio-political comment and criticism of Afrikanerdom. Many Afrikaner youths discovered in these rebels a new legitimacy in Afrikaans music, something which had been lost decades ago, specifically because of the influence of the Afrikaner cultural bosses.

Several articles in *Insig* and *Die Vrye Weekblad* juxtaposed the light Afrikaans music (given the term "LAM" by music critic Theunis Engelbrecht – which can also be read as "Lamb", or "Lame")<sup>46</sup> artists with the "alternatiewe" (alternative) Afrikaans music artists.<sup>47</sup> Alternative Afrikaans artists experienced intimidation by intelligence officers and the police, while light Afrikaans artists enjoyed the support of the SABC on expensive TV programmes like *Teletreffers*, and in conservative newspapers like *Die Transvaler*.<sup>48</sup> When Anton Goosen sharply criticised the FAK's involvement in Afrikaans music during a television interview on *Goeiemôre Suid-Afrika* (Good Morning South Africa), the SABC and SATV banned him for six months.<sup>49</sup> Bles Bridges even assaulted Goosen in 1990 after he alluded on national television to Bridges's much-publicised affair.<sup>50</sup> Light Afrikaans music represented the establishment in all its banality. The FAK and

44 Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 214.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

46 T. Engelbrecht: "Babapap vir bleeksiele", *Beeld*, 10 August 1988, in Arnold, "Pomporrels, plaasromans en popmusiek", *Insig*, December/ January 1990, p. 43.

47 See A. Arnold's column "Boere-ritmes" in *Insig*, "Muurmusiek, potjiekos, Karoo-soul, techno-pop, en rou underground op een plaat", January 1989, pp. 33-34; "Veertien uur se rock by Houtstok", May 1990, p. 37; "Kwêla laat die mure val!" September 1990, p. 39; "Pomporrels, plaasromans en popmusiek", December/January 1990/1991, p. 43; "Om van te lag ... of te huil: Afrikaanse plate plesierig bekend gestel", May 1991, p. 34; "Boem-boem, raai-raai, en sedes waai: niks skort met Afrikaanse sangers se seksdrif al sing hul ook van blomme", June 1991, p. 33; "Worsmasjien van kits-emosies maal voort" Feb. 1992, p. 39. Also see H. van Staden, "Afrikaanse Musiek: Voëlvry of op hok? Die bytjies, die blommetjies en big brother", *Vrye Weekblad*, 6–12 March 1992, pp. 13-15; and A. Vinassa, "Die boere het nie hul huiswerk gedoen nie", *Vrye Weekblad*, 6–12 March 1992, pp. 17-18.

48 Van Staden, "Afrikaanse Musiek: Voëlvry of op hok?", p. 14.

49 *Ibid.*

50 Interview with author, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013.

SABC sponsored music competitions, with the winning entries providing ample ammunition for the argument that mainstream Afrikaans music had become utterly superficial. Nonsensical lyrics proliferated:<sup>51</sup>

Come grab the feeling that wiggles and (moves?) in a new jacket. Come grab the feeling that sounds and buzzes. Come grab it now, little friend, and you're in, you're in. Come grab the joy that makes conversation flow, that makes for super hours. Come grab the joy that shines and teases and plays in crazy ways and you're in, you're in. For the little mouth, for the awake wild bull, for the grab it generation, grab it quick and scream. Come grab the roar that makes your toes curl and sounds over kilometres. Come grab the roar that fills evenings, loosen your tie and laces and you're in, you're in.

In another example, Brendan Jury summed up a typical narrative of what he called “trite and banal” Afrikaans pop songs:<sup>52</sup>

She looks deep into my eyes. She gives me another look. Then it looks as if she looks as if I look different to her. My arm is around her shoulders. I say: I want to talk to you. Tonight we must say goodbye. Tomorrow I'm a soldier. She says: Right, you have your orders, go do your army thing. Go roll around in the dust and sweat.<sup>53</sup>

The FAK attempted to regain legitimacy among the Afrikaner youth by reworking popular Afrikaans folk songs in a more modern idiom:

In 1985, Oom [Uncle] Dirkie de Villiers again reworked several popular songs for the *Tweede FAK-lekkersingliedjies* [Second FAK nice singing songs]. The titles of the songs speak for themselves. “Sproetjies”, “ta' Mossie se sakkie-sakkie boeredans” “Waterblommetjies”, “Jantjie kom huis toe”, “Die trein na Magersfontein”, “Kinders van die wind”, “Kaalvoet in die reën” – again music for the broadest layer of the population.<sup>54</sup>

As in 1976, Dirkie de Villiers was the FAK's go-to arranger. Interestingly, most of the songs mentioned here were composed by either Anton Goosen or Koos du Plessis, both connected to Musiek-en-Liriek of only five and a half years earlier. These efforts by the FAK were ultimately unsuccessful, and alternative Afrikaans musicians would play a larger role in giving Afrikaans music a legitimate voice among the youth. Goosen and other Musiek-en-Liriek artists were heavily criticised by the Voëlvry artists, and Dirkie de Villiers's reworked versions of their songs contributed to this divide. Max du Preez mentions that Goosen was criticised because he believed the system could be changed from within, while Voëlvry wanted to destroy it all.<sup>55</sup>

51 Arnold, *INSIG*, June 1991, p. 33. Translated by author. The writer of the song is unknown and it is uncertain whether it was ever recorded and released.

52 Jury, “Boys to Men”, p. 100, from the song “Omkeer” by Louise du Toit Smit, who came second in a songwriting competition jointly hosted by the SABC and the ATKV. The lyrics can also be read as propaganda for military service.

53 Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 50, from the song “Omkeer”, by Louisa du Toit Smit. Translated by author.

54 A. le Roux, *Handhaaf*, April/May, 1988, p. 5. Translated by author.

55 Hopkins, *Voëlvry*, p. 57.

While this statement clearly differentiates the two camps of alternative Afrikaans musicians, which loosely combined to represent an alternative to the superficial pop mainstream, it is also reminiscent of the intellectual critique posited by André Du Toit in *Die sondes van die vaders*. Here, the legitimacy of in-group criticism of the Afrikaner establishment was questioned on the basis that the whole system was morally corrupt and needed fundamental change.<sup>56</sup> However, by the time of Voëlvry and the first Houtstok concert the following year, Goosen had become much more politically outspoken than he had been at the end of the 1970s.

The animosity between the FAK, its affiliated cultural and religious organisations, and the alternative Afrikaans music artists was serious enough to prompt June Goodwin and Ben Schiff to refer to it as “music wars”.<sup>57</sup> The borders between both camps were well demarcated: The FAK, SABC, Decibel record company, and artists such as Bles Bridges, Danie Botha and Innes and Franna Benade on the one hand; and artists like Johannes Kerkorrel, Anton Goosen and Koos Kombuis, and publications like *Die Vrye Weekblad* on the other. The first group (LAM) represented much more than just a different music genre. They were portrayed as regime-friendly, utterly superficial and totally out of sync with the reality of South African politics. Furthermore, they were accused of actively and deliberately writing, producing, promoting and broadcasting Afrikaans music of such low standards that it had badly damaged Afrikaner culture. Not making a political statement became a political statement in itself during the state of emergency of the 1980s, as can be seen in the following 1988 statement from Bles Bridges:

I don't need to contaminate my nation's brain with political information in my songs. I want to sing about the pretty things. Sing about the positive things. Because a positive nation is a nation that is productive, and is a nation that can mean something to someone.<sup>58</sup>

LAM artists dominated the mainstream of Afrikaans music and were well connected with influential conservatives in the media, the church and government, and used their influence to intimidate their opponents. They sent transcripts of offensive lyrics to conservative newspapers to incite public outcry against alternative Afrikaans artists. Anton Goosen noted that the offices of the FAK, the Broederbond and Brigadiers were all in the same building.<sup>59</sup> David Kramer criticised mainstream Afrikaans music packaging on television a few years earlier in 1985 when he expressed disgust at “... the cabaret-style artist in the Liza Minnelli aspiration mould ... concentrat(ing) on trying to produce semi-spectacular shows based on the American model walking down 50 steps, sequins, glitter”.<sup>60</sup> Liberal journalists were unflinching in their criticism of LAM. In an article in *Vrye Weekblad*, journalist Hanneli van Staden provides the following insights into how Afrikaans music could be “cured” of its anaemia:

56 A du Toit, *Die sondes van die vaders* (Cape Town: Rubicon Press, 1983).

57 J. Goodwin and B. Schiff, *Heart of Whiteness: Afrikaners face black rule in the New South Africa* (New York, Scribner, 1995), pp. 174-183.

58 L. Ross, *Voëlvry: the Movie*, Shifty Studios, DVD 2006.

59 Interview with author, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013.

60 “Kramer – the man no one (except) SATV can ignore”, *The Friend*, in M. Slabbert and D. de Villiers, *David Kramer 'n Biografie* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2011), p. 197.

[T]he SABC can play a leading role, but for some questionable reasons they favour only certain artists and companies – markedly Decibel. ... [T]here is no hope for organisations like the FAK and the ATKV. They are irrelevant in the transition phase South Africa is in. Furthermore, they have done Afrikaans culture enough damage by dumping it into a laager and treating it as if it was a terminal patient. The monopoly of MFP and Decibel must end.<sup>61</sup>

## Houtstok vs FAK

The animosity between the alternative Afrikaans press and their associated artists and the Afrikaans pop mainstream culminated on 31 May 1990:

The occasion was dubbed Houtstok – Woodstock in Afrikaans – taking its name and inspiration from the American rock festival that symbolized youthful liberation in 1969. Houtstok offered the Afrikaners present a joyful repudiation of their inherited image as a conservative people intolerant of racial differences and resistant to progress.<sup>62</sup>

The festival was held on the Le Château estate outside Pretoria and was intended as an alternative to the FAK's Republic Day music festival held on the same day, not too far away at the Voortrekker Monument.<sup>63</sup> At the monument, the most sacred of Afrikaner sites, a different crowd of Afrikaners gathered to celebrate 39 years of the South African republic. The FAK's festival was not without controversy. The organisers required the artists to mime to recordings of their music to avoid sound problems when the concert was televised.<sup>64</sup> This was apparently no secret, as one audience member from Pretoria remarked:

"I want to look the singers in the eye. And it doesn't matter that they don't really, really sing. The faces are there at least," while her husband stated: "This is our *Volk's* people. I am here for Gé Korsten."<sup>65</sup>

The identification of Gé Korsten as part of the "*volk's* people" resonates with the *volkseie/volksvreemde* construct. The difference in audiences at the two events was as marked as the different artists who performed. Johannes Kerkorrel did not perform at Houtstok since he was touring Belgium and the Netherlands at the time, but also displayed a level of reluctance to participate, for which he was heavily criticised by the festival organisers.<sup>66</sup> Apart from personality clashes, this also indicates that the alternative Afrikaans music movement was not hegemonic. There is little doubt that Voëlvry served as the inspiration for this concert, but the resulting live double album of the concert only features one song from a Voëlvry artist (Koois Kombuis's "Ou

61 Van Staden, "Afrikaanse Musiek: Voëlvry of op hok?", *Vrye Weekblad*, 6-12 March 1992, p. 15., translated from original.

62 *New York Times*, 4 June 1990, quoted in S. Hofmeyr: *Mense van my Asem* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2008), p. 121.

63 A. Arnold, "Veertien uur se rock by Houtstok", *Insig*, May 1990, p. 37.

64 *Ibid.*

65 M. Ley, "Mimiekmusiek by die monument", *Die Burger*, 2 June 1990, translated from original.

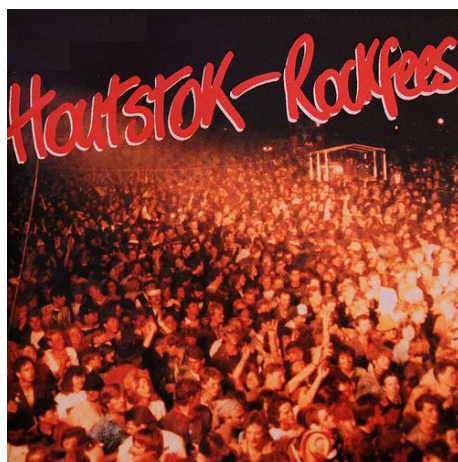
66 B. Hough, "Vir die 'Orgel' sê mens nie 'Sit dit af' nie!", *Rapport*, 17 June 1990, p. 5.



Tannie Blues”), while the rest represent a much wider array of alternative Afrikaans and English artists.<sup>67</sup>

Somewhat surprisingly, one of the most popular acts at Houtstok was Die Briels – with Tant (Aunt) Sannie Briel performing with her two children for the first time in decades.<sup>68</sup> Sannie Briel’s presence at the concert seems anomalous, since Houtstok was a strictly “alternative” music festival that featured artists representative of the liberal new wave of Afrikaans music artists, with whom Die Briels had no direct association. Yet when tant Sannie, her son Frans and daughter Anita walked onto the stage, a crowd of 20 000 kept chanting “Ouma Sannie, Ouma Sannie” (Grandma Sannie, Grandma Sannie). Die Briels were no rockers and at one stage even had the crowd singing along to “How much is that doggy in the window”. They did not even appreciate Koos Kombuis’s rude language.<sup>69</sup> Yet Johannes Kerkerrel, when asked about his absence at the festival, did not portray any regret other than the fact that he missed Die Briels, of whom he apparently was a great fan.<sup>70</sup>

Sannie Briel was not even listed among the artists listed to play Houtstok (Kerkerrel was) in an article in *Insig*.<sup>71</sup> Perhaps Die Briels were added to the line-up as a caricature of the 1950s and 1960s although, at the height of their success, and as mentioned before, Die Briels offered a rare, working-class alternative to the European-styled operatic Afrikaans pop of singers like Gé Korsten. To the Houtstok crowd, Die Briels probably represented a mixture of comic relief, a form of acceptable Africana, outcasts like themselves, and perhaps also just a strange anomaly at such a concert that was received in good spirits. They might have also played in on a type of nostalgia that stood free of the baggage of apartheid, which was in stark contrast to the type of nostalgia invoked at the FAK concert that day. This play of nostalgia is an important part of post-apartheid Afrikaans music which will be discussed in chapter seven.



Houtstok live album (Gallo HOUT 1).



Houtstok live album tracklisting.

67 See Figure 19.

68 T. Engelbrecht, “Kranse dreun, maar Ouma Briel kom weer”, *Die Burger*, 2 June 1990.

69 Frans Briel, interviewed by Engelbrecht, “Kranse dreun, maar Ouma Briel kom weer”, *Die Burger*, 2 June 1990.

70 Hough, “Vir die ‘Orgel’ sê mens nie ‘Sit dit af’ nie!”, *Rapport*, 17 June 1990, p. 5, trans.

71 Arnold, “Veertien uur se rock by Houtstok”, *Insig*, May 1990, p. 37.

Houtstok was a risky venture at a time when militant right-wing Afrikaner organisations were at their most dangerous. A disaster was averted when police defused two limpet mines placed under the stage by right-wing Afrikaners.<sup>72</sup> As Anton Goosen remembers, the security police were also never far away at such shows:

It was still seriously going on with Houtstok. Now Houtstok was after the Voëlvry thing. I mean Voëlvry had already by then picked up trouble, and if they had by now added a lot of hype to it or not, there was trouble. There was definitely trouble. And up to and including Houtstok, because Houtstok was a *direct* confrontation between the new Afrikaner that feels like that, and the old one at the Voortrekker Monument who is celebrating on the same day for Republic day [31 May 1990]. The FAK, backtracks, lollipops, uhm eating candyfloss, family fun and etc. Shiny shoes, which you mustn't forget. And we beat them. There were 22 000 people at Houtstok and there were 16 000 people at theirs.<sup>73</sup>

Goosen could not have given a more succinct summary of the tensions between the new wave of Afrikaans music and the old guard. On stage at the concert, he sang his song “Wit Kaffers van Afrika” (White Kaffirs of Africa).<sup>74</sup> The title of the song alone undermines so effectively the racial and class principles on which Afrikaner society was based, that the message is wholly unambiguous: a group of young Afrikaners have broken away – they now self-identify as “African”/“other”.

Steve Hofmeyr, who would become one of the most popular Afrikaans singers of all time, played at both the Houtstok concert and the FAK concert. However, Hofmeyr was accused of placating both sides after he “married” Bles Bridges on the television program *Debuut*, as well as the fact that the FAK dubbed him as “alternative” before a big concert in 1991. The latter strategy was a deliberate ploy to gain legitimacy for the concert among a younger generation of Afrikaners, but it only succeeded in placing Hofmeyr in the camp of the light Afrikaans singers<sup>75</sup>, something for which he would become grateful. As he later explained:

... but later I was grateful that the Afrikaans light music world would come off mostly unscathed from the institutionalised, politically correct threats and petty attitudes<sup>76</sup>

Indeed, mainstream Afrikaans pop continued to sell well and continues to do so today,<sup>77</sup> while more alternative Afrikaans groups struggle to sell a fraction as many albums. Of course, as will be discussed in the next chapter, the conservative attitudes of the Afrikaans mainstream carry with them different significations and challenges in post-apartheid South Africa. Houtstok 2 was held in 1992 and again attracted a large crowd. Hofmeyr did not perform at this one, but he did at that year's FAK concert. Even though the post-apartheid years loom large in studies on

72 Anton Goosen, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013, confirmed by Peter Pearlson, sound engineer at the concert, Strand, 11 April 2014. See also T. Engelbrecht, *Houtstok: Die verhaal agter die verhaal*, (Melville: Musiek SA, 1990), p. 4.

73 Goosen, Gansbaai, 29 April 2013, translated.

74 *Ibid.*, the song also appears on the live recording of the concert.

75 Arnold, “Kom gryp die gebrul wat jou tone laat krul”, *Insig*, July 1991, p. 34.

76 Hofmeyr, *Mense van my asem*, pp. 119-120, translated from original.

77 See chapter seven.

Afrikaner identity, from a music perspective, the tensions between censors, the FAK (and the artists they supported) and the artists who challenged them indicate deep divides in Afrikaner society towards the end of apartheid. Voëlvry and Houtstok represented the last phase of political Afrikaans music that, although exclusively white, was aligned with the ideals of a new South Africa. Post-apartheid political Afrikaans music almost invariably creates tension when it criticises the government. As a privileged minority group with a difficult past, more liberal Afrikaans artists like Fokofpolisiekar avoid political comment lest they be seen as racist, and distance themselves from those artists who openly engage with race and politics, often with political implications. This latter group – headed by Steve Hofmeyr – is often accused of hate-speech which brings into question the acceptable limits of artistic freedom in a multi-cultural society. Voëlvry's South Africa was changing fast, and their criticism of Afrikaner society welcomed (or at least shared) by the greater South African public. Their political antagonism was a colourful voice amidst the unravelling of apartheid, but Afrikaner political resistance more than twenty years after apartheid has a very different dynamic and meaning.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## Nostalgia, fear and profit in post-apartheid Afrikaans music

At the time of writing, the post-apartheid era has already reached young adulthood and at 23 years old continues to change at what seems like a rapidly accelerating pace. South Africa in 2017 is quite different from the South Africa of 2007, or 1997. Filmed in 2003, the documentary, *Kom laat ons sing*, portrayed the first decade of the post-apartheid era as one in which Afrikaans music became free from the clutches and restrictions of the apartheid regime. Gone were the mundane censors, political (and societal) restrictions – to be replaced by a scene where artists could ‘breathe’ and express themselves more freely. And many did. Compared to how limited the industry was during the apartheid era in terms of the number of artists, their output and original compositions, the post-apartheid Afrikaans music industry has provided more scope and opportunity. However, there does not seem to have been an explosive reaction in the Afrikaans music scene to the democratic transition itself. Instead, the changes that did occur did so gradually, even before 1994. By 1992, CDs had replaced vinyls and in the following few years, record companies were making good money by re-releasing older Afrikaans hits onto the new format (this had already started in the late 1980s),<sup>1</sup> an opportunity unrelated to the political changes of the time. Some artists *did* embrace the opening up of the cultural sphere by collaborating with black African artists, like Anton Goosen who roped in Lucky Dube for his 1992 album *Danzer*. The first big post-apartheid Afrikaans hit album was Leon Schuster’s

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1 Pretorius, telephonic interview with author, 22 July 2013. Bles Bridges released the first Afrikaans CD in 1987, and the printing of vinyl albums was discontinued in September 1992. Examples of these include TEAL’s *Afrikaanse Goue Jare Vol. 1 & 2* in 1996, which were compilation albums of Afrikaans hits going back decades.

rugby themed *Hier kommie Bokke* (Here come the Springboks – South Africa’s national rugby team), which capitalised on the 1995 Rugby World Cup (hosted by South Africa) and sold in the region of 275 000 units. These sales were undoubtedly bolstered by the euphoria of South Africa’s crowning as World Champions, which was at least felt by the country as a whole.

One prominent effect of the democratic transition, however, was that the official status of Afrikaans was diminished from being one of two national languages (along with English) to being one of eleven. The funding that the state provided for the Afrikaans arts ended with the dismantling of the four provincial councils in the same year.<sup>2</sup> This led to the establishment of the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK) in 1995 as a refuge for the Afrikaans arts,<sup>3</sup> although some have commented that it has really become the refuge of white Afrikaans culture, based on the demographic profiles of festival goers.<sup>4</sup> Since then South Africa has seen a proliferation of arts festivals all across the country. The more alternative Oppikoppi festival was established in 1994 and has since stood out as a showcase of multi-cultural South African (and more regional) music. Towards the end of the decade and into the next, however, a new wave of Afrikaans pop hit the airwaves with artists like Juanita du Plessis and Kurt Darren emerging as big names. Yet one gets the feeling that the growth that had indeed occurred, had very little to do with freedom, and more with marketing, along with other general trends as technology developed.

Popular Afrikaans music has been one of the biggest selling local genres in the South African music market since the days of Chris Bignaut and David de Lange in the 1930s (and possibly even earlier). Even by these historic standards, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has so far been a golden era for Afrikaans artists. Actual numbers are difficult to come by, but have probably fluctuated between 30% and 40% of all locally produced music sales, including music releases in other languages. Steve Hofmeyr (for *Toeka*, 2004),<sup>5</sup> Lianie May (*Boeremeisie*, 2009),<sup>6</sup> Bok van Blerk (*Afrikaner Hart*, 2010),<sup>7</sup> Theuns Jordaan (*Roeper*, 2013)<sup>8</sup> and Riana Nel (*Die Regte Tyd*, 2015)<sup>9</sup> have all won the South African Music Award (SAMA) for best-selling South African album of the year. Furthermore, besides Theuns Jordaan’s success with *Roeper*, the five top-selling albums in South Africa for the 2012/2013 period were all Afrikaans. Riana Nel’s *Die moeite werd* (87 000 copies), Jay and Lianie’s *Bonnie en Clyde* (80 000 copies), Bobby van Jaarsveld’s *Wat geld nie kan koop nie* (80 000 copies) and Juanita du Plessis’s *Jy voltooi my* (70 000 copies), outsold all other genres at a time when the traditional record industry has increasingly become threatened by digital music

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

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

4 T. Hauptfleisch, “Eventification: Festivals and the making of a theatrical event”, *South African Theatre Journal* 15 (2001), p. 6. Of course, the festival has evolved over the years and has more recently actively embraced a more inclusive strategy.

5 <http://www.channel24.co.za/Music/News/SAMA-audience-boos-Steve-Hofmeyr-20110523>, accessed 20 July 2013.

6 <http://beta.mnet.co.za/ChannelO/ChannelArticle.aspx?AId=15541>, accessed 20 July 2013.

7 <http://www.channel24.co.za/Music/FeaturesInterviews/2010-SAMA-Winners-20100414-2>, accessed 20 July 2013.

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

9 <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/entertainment/2015/04/20/xxi-south-african-music-awards-samas---photos>, accessed 28 May 2015.

downloads.<sup>10</sup> To date, Steve Hofmeyr has sold more than two million records,<sup>11</sup> as has Juanita du Plessis,<sup>12</sup> making her the top-selling female Afrikaans recording artist in history. These are remarkable numbers considering that the market is relatively small, and the fact that there are a number of artists who have sold hundreds of thousands of albums attests to the robust health of the industry.

Arnold Coleske (from Coleske Artists, organisers of the massively popular *Afrikaans is Groot* concerts) attributes these successes to the quality of the music: Afrikaans listeners demand good-quality Afrikaans music, and these Afrikaans artists deliver.<sup>13</sup> Another possible explanation is that the changing demographics in the Afrikaans music-buying public have led to a sharp increase in sales. As mentioned before, from the 1950s until the late 1980s Afrikaans youth did not really listen to Afrikaans music. With the end of apartheid and the onset of the 1990s, Afrikaans students and teenagers started listening to, and buying, Afrikaans albums.<sup>14</sup> It has also become easier and less expensive to record albums, which means that there has been a substantial increase in the number of records released onto the market. Without the restrictions of the SABC and with print media targeting a younger market, sales figures have grown substantially. The demand-side of the record business is also of interest. What motivates people to buy so many Afrikaans albums? Afrikaans music is marketed on Afrikaans television channels, online, in print media, with public endorsements (ranging from commercial products like clothing and cars, to churches, schools and housing estates) having become commonplace. Social media, especially, has become an increasingly important platform for artists to promote their profiles. The top ten Afrikaans music artists, judged purely on Facebook likes<sup>15</sup> are:

1. Steve Hofmeyr – 402 568
2. Juanita du Plessis – 337 485
3. Bobby van Jaarsveld – 307 275
4. Karlien van Jaarsveld – 290 764
5. Lianie May – 251 814
6. Bok van Blerk – 196 863
7. Jack Parow – 184 729
8. Die Heuwels Fantasties – 181 374
9. Kurt Darren – 139 866
10. Jay du Plessis – 132 093

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

11 Electronic communication with author, 05 August 2013; see also <http://stevehofmeyr.co.za/website/biography-parent?showall=1>, accessed 21 July 2013.

12 <http://www.juanitaduplessis.com/>, accessed 21 July 2013.

13 *Ibid.*

14 Boet Pretorius, telephonic interview with author, 22 July 2013, see also chapter three’s discussion of FAK polls.

15 Admittedly, this is not an accurate measure of support and is only included here as a form of anecdotal evidence. It is, however, probably more accurate than Twitter, since people tend to follow celebrities not only because they support them, but also because they are curious about what they are going to tweet next. Not everyone who follows Steve Hofmeyr on Twitter shares his views, although they are unlikely to like his Facebook page. These numbers were taken on 7 March 2017. Die Antwoord – South Africa’s most famous/ notorious music export is not included here since they operate mostly outside of South Africa and their fan-base is far more diverse. They have almost 2.5 million Facebook likes, no doubt from all around the world.

These numbers do not necessarily reflect sales. For instance, Theuns Jordaan has a relatively low online profile, but sells a lot of records. What is very telling is that Afriforum, the Afrikaans civil rights organisation with probably the largest following among Afrikaners, has 199 343 likes. Solidariteit, another Afrikaans organisation, has 131 522. Another, probably more significant observation is that Emo Adams has 34 712 likes – the most of any coloured Afrikaans artist.

But there seem to be other factors also in this success story. Jordaan ascribed it to the loyalty of the Afrikaans music-buying public and their preference for physical copies over music downloads. He might be right, but this loyalty has many dimensions. Without an actual survey among music buyers, a gut feel says that the very fact that it is in *Afrikaans* motivates a significant number of buyers. This is related to a nagging suspicion that this greater cultural buy-in is somehow connected to the perception that there is a real danger that if Afrikaans culture (and by extension Afrikaans music) does not get enough support from its public, it will erode in a multi-cultural South Africa. Steve Hofmeyr offers an insightful comment:

The reason for the millennium's Afrikaans music explosion has a lot to do with politics. With the cultural marginalisation of Afrikaner interests and Afrikaner symbols, it was always impossible to regulate this one domain, or to over-regulate it with "BEE, AA, PP, EE, quotas and representivity". In this way our concerts had become untouchable spaces where you can still enjoy liberty and a degree of cultural homogeneity.<sup>16</sup>

The situation has changed somewhat in the last few years due to the rising prominence of downloads (illegal and legal), as well as streaming platforms that have had a negative effect on CD sales. Artists like Karen Zoid have embraced the online world of music with great success, but these more trying circumstances have forced others to release artistically conservative albums, opting for proven formulas instead of innovation. To add to this, as political tension is on the increase in South Africa, Afrikaners become more aggressive in demarcating their cultural "territories", which often represent elements of nostalgia for the "old days". The use of nostalgic themes in Afrikaans pop songs (like Bok van Blerk's "De la Rey", and Steve Hofmeyr's "Pampoen") memorialises this past. Such invocations make these songs, to apply the thoughts and words of the French historian Pierre Nora, "*les lieux de mémoire*" (sites of memory) where the past, present and future coalesce into new relationships that affect modern collective identity.<sup>17</sup> Evolving forces of cultural de-differentiation often cause tension when local, traditional value systems conflict with growing global cultures disseminated through channels of mass (including more recently social) media. In short, Afrikaners feel the onset of the postmodern world acutely. Stuart Hall's comments on the constant transformation of cultural identities come to mind. Subject to the influence of the "narratives of the past", our identities are forever evolving and are not fixed to some essential truth.<sup>18</sup> As the political landscape in South Africa evolves, and with it relations of power, the responses to these developments and the resulting adjustments of the "self" are important factors of change. It is conceivable that, when Afrikaners feel threatened by such change, they revert back to old narratives that they perceive as non-threatening and "safe",

16 Steve Hofmeyr, email interviews, August 2013 and May 2017; translated from the Afrikaans by the author.

17 Colmeiro, "Nation of Ghosts?", pp. 21-22.

18 S. Hall, "Cultural identity and Diaspora", in J. Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), p. 225.

even if those narratives are rooted in a problematic past and do not resonate with the idea of a rainbow nation. In other words, a reliance on nostalgia remains an integral strategy to conserve aspects of Afrikaner identity.

## Stereotypes

Deidre Pretorius, in her study of stylised representations of masculinity in *Huisgenoot Tempo* magazine, identifies seven types: *boer*, *metroman*, *sportsman*, *retroman*, *student*, *worker* and *rebel*.<sup>19</sup> This classification establishes identity stereotypes of contemporary Afrikaner masculinities and when read in conjunction with Drewett's work on "packaging desire",<sup>20</sup> the way in which commercial Afrikaans singers represent themselves – the way in which they position their bodies as texts – provides a foothold for further exploration of what these identities mean. Drewett has also commented that the manner in which HG-Tempo represented women in relation to men extended the latter's "patriarchal dividend" and even went further to suggest that the Afrikaans music mainstream has become a space where Afrikaner men could reclaim their lost political power and once again become "heroes who have to defend the honour of the nation".<sup>21</sup>

Apart from gender stereotypes, sexuality stereotypes form a central part of identity presentation in Afrikaans pop music. One article in *HG-Tempo* on gay Afrikaans singers revealed the conservative nature of the Afrikaans music-buying public.<sup>22</sup> One popular Afrikaans singer, known for the (hetero) sexual contents of his music videos, did not even want to give anonymous comment on his homosexuality, because the risk was too great that his female fans would find out.<sup>23</sup> This is undoubtedly a valid concern, but his fears probably extended to a wider conservative audience that does not respond well when their perceptions of acceptable notions of sexual conduct are challenged. Previous articles in *Huisgenoot* on singers who openly discussed their homosexuality were met with strong anti-gay messages and condemnation from readers. There is also a conservative religious dogma to consider.<sup>24</sup> Homophobia is seemingly more common among older Afrikaners, and the generation that are fans of Fokofpolisiekar and Karen Zoid, judging by fan-comments on their social media pages, are more tolerant concerning issues of race, gender and sexual preference.<sup>25</sup> Some gay artists are accepted by Afrikaans audiences under specific conditions, normally by projecting certain stereotypes like "extravagant costumes and flamboyant performances".<sup>26</sup> However, globally, even though the music industry is modelled on traditional heterosexual values, anti-gay statements by pop singers themselves are rare. Another tendency is for pop singers to release gospel albums. Nicholis Louw's *Gebed van 'n Sondaar* (Prayer of a Sinner) and Gerhard Steyn's *Nuwe Krag* (New Strength) are recent examples of

19 D. Pretorius, "The Visual Representations of Masculinities in Huisgenoot Tempo Magazine", *Communicatio* 39:2 (2013), pp. 210-232.

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

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

22 H. Booyens, "Gay sangers: in of uit die kas?", *Huisgenoot Tempo* 3 (2012), pp. 37-39.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 37. On the other hand, there are many younger Afrikaners with very conservative views on these topics.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 39, anonymous gay singer, translated from original.

25 *Ibid.*

26 A. Bouwer in H. Booyens, "Gay sangers: in of uit die kas?", *Huisgenoot Tempo*, 3, 2012, p. 38.



secular singers (known for their sexual innuendos) releasing gospel albums. Singer Chris Chameleon released *Herleef* (Relive), an album with rock versions of gospel verses, in 2013.

When asked how he consistently seems to know what works for the Afrikaans music market, Steve Hofmeyr answered as follows:

Then I have also never underestimated the importance of the younger generation's love of eye-candy. From early on my shows have been audio-visual spectacles. Fashions change, but I'm not too good in that department. As artist, even commercial artist, I'm hesitant of too much style over content. My whole concert can continue even if there's a power cut. Just pass the guitar... I am still a relatively weak predictor of hits, but yes, I definitely know what won't work. I navigate carefully through weird genres, weird tattoos, weird pictures and off-beat experiences. I keep everything simple, also for myself. I make tonight's experience strong enough that most clients will book me for the next year without knowing my plans for that year. They also already know that every year, for 25 years, I change the concert and bring something new – always with a new quota of nostalgia: like aunt *Stienie*, the *Toekas* and my films and TV series.<sup>27</sup>

This avoidance of “weird” genres, tattoos and pictures corresponds with Pretorius's findings. These representations of identity stereotypes reveal a clear reluctance by Afrikaners to depart from what they consider to be traditional. This is present not just in gender roles, but also in representations of race and in political views. Artists who do not position themselves in line with such prescribed roles, or do not assume one of the accepted identity stereotypes, have limited access to the main channels of music distribution and as a result, do not sell nearly as many units. In this way, the value systems put in place to regulate Afrikaans music production during the apartheid era – the concepts of *volkseie* vs. *volksvreemd* – have persisted and thrived into the twenty-first century. This does not, however, mean that popular Afrikaans music did not diversify after apartheid.

The opportunities for new groups to produce music in new genres have increased, especially with the establishment of Kyknet's music television channel MK in 2005<sup>28</sup> (which was taken off the air in 2013 and became an exclusively online platform), and rock festivals such as Oppikoppi. Bands and artists like Bittereinder, Jack Parow and Die Heuwels Fantasties (co-founded by some of the members of Fokofpolisiekar) have thrived in the last decade. In fact, the nucleus of Bellville just north of Cape Town has spawned a number of successful rock bands that have links to Fokofpolisiekar, like aKing, Van Coke Cartel and now also Francois van Coke's solo career. Combined, they have substantial support from a new generation of young Afrikaans rock fans. One could argue that in some regard they have a similar ethos to the earlier Voëlvry movement in the sense that, especially in the case of Fokofpolisiekar, they subvert the Afrikaner middle-class lifestyles in the suburbs they grew up in. The music video for Fokopolisiekar's acoustic version of “Hemel op die platteland”<sup>29</sup>, for instance, is a collection of old video footage of Afrikaner suburban life – people around a braai, primary school rugby matches, school cadets,

27 Steve Hofmeyr, email interviews, August 2013 and May 2017; translated from the Afrikaans by the author.

28 Roggeband, “Tekens van die tye”, *Huisgenoot Tempo* 1 (2012), p. 25.

29 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLPxMGxaosI>, accessed 18 April 2017.

churches and the like, which is strongly contrasted with lyrics that say “can someone phone a god and tell him we don’t need him anymore?” and “can you shove your idea of normal up your arse?”<sup>30</sup> Understandably, in a post-apartheid South Africa they do not have the same political angle as Voëlvry. They have, in fact, stayed deliberately *apolitical* and the band is not associated with any contemporary Afrikaans protest singers. Their following has remained fanatic and the band has managed to raise a whopping R1 077 710 in just two months (March to May 2017) through online crowdfunding for their next album.<sup>31</sup>

An interesting and innovative new addition to the Afrikaans music scene is the very popular TV-programme *Republiek van Zoid Afrika*, hosted by Karen Zoid, who originally made a significant impact as an authentic Afrikaans female rock singer with her hit “Afrikaners is plesierig”<sup>32</sup> from her debut album, *Poles Apart* in 2001. Its first season launched in 2014 to critical and popular acclaim. It is a talk show with mostly Afrikaans celebrity guests (actors, athletes, authors, comedians and the like), of which there is always a music artist who does a song (often a re-worked version of one of their own) with Zoid at the end of the episode. Although Zoid is mostly known as a rock singer, these collaborations have crossed numerous stylistic boundaries with a wide variety of singers from the past and present. Old Afrikaans pop songs have been re-worked into modern rock, or even metal versions, while other more orchestral originals have been stripped down to their most basic forms. It successfully bridges the uncomfortable gap between ‘pop’ and ‘artistic’ which has so often in the past caused friction. Immediately after each episode, the song is released online on the Apple iTunes platform and later on a compilation CD and DVD. 26 songs from the last three seasons have reached number one on the South African iTunes charts (based on music downloads on iTunes, including downloads of international releases), often within hours after its release. To date, no other artist in the world has had so many number one hits on a local iTunes chart.

## Whose culture?

When one considers the current state of Afrikaans music, the relationship between culture and politics is, in my opinion, paramount. Afrikaans culture – with a central spot reserved for Afrikaans music – is a highly commercialised commodity. Exactly whose version of Afrikaans culture is, however, a pertinent question. In the post-censorship, post-apartheid context new cultural spaces have led to identity constructs and movement across cultural and racial boundaries.<sup>33</sup> Even the term “Afrikaner” has become contested (or has become more contested than ever before) and not all white Afrikaans speakers would describe themselves as such.<sup>34</sup> If “Afrikaner” has contested meanings, so too does the term “coloured”. As a group, it is one of the truly diverse constructs in South African history. Under apartheid and specifically the

30 Translated by author from the original “Kan iemand dalk ’n god bel, en vir hom sê ons het hom nie meer nodig nie?” and “kan jy jou idee van normaal by jou gat opdruk?”

31 <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=fokofcrowdfunding>, accessed 22 May 2017.

32 This was a play on a traditional song with the same title (which translates as “Afrikaners are jolly”), and was a poignant social comment on Afrikaner life.

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

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

Population Registration Act of 1950, all coloured people were classified under one group, despite many heterogeneous elements. This group succeeded in inventing lifestyles and traditions that consolidated a diverse collection of people into a distinct part of the “mosaic of South African populations”.<sup>35</sup> The majority of Afrikaans speakers belong to this group (already by 2002, 58% of Afrikaans speakers in South Africa were either coloured or black).<sup>36</sup> Despite intense introspection by language activists throughout the twentieth century, the question of whether or not the Afrikaner community was based on race or language has remained in the air. Afrikaans as a language was a central cog in the mobilisation of white Afrikaners into a hegemonic political entity, while at the same time excluding coloured Afrikaans speakers from this process. As Kennelly aptly stated:

If the social identity of the Afrikaner was to be shaped by the acceptance of Afrikaans as a public language on equal footing with English, the creed that the language constitutes the entire people (“die taal is gans die volk”) had to be race-blind.<sup>37</sup>

Historically then, the cultural separation of different groups of first-language Afrikaans speakers along racial lines was a very deliberate political act. This historic divide has caused considerable tension in the interplay between Afrikaans music artists from different races. It has already been mentioned that, historically, coloured Afrikaans artists were clearly under-represented in the Afrikaans recording industry, despite making fundamental contributions to Afrikaans music.

This is still the case today, although a number of coloured Afrikaans artists have also found a wide and diverse audience in the post-apartheid context. The hip-hop group Brasse Vannie Kaap (BVK) was a regular feature on the festival circuit from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s until the death of their frontman Mr. Fat (Ashley Titus) in 2007. Along with the earlier Prophets of da City (POC), they are prime exponents of the hip-hop culture from the Cape Flats outside Cape Town. The well-known and acclaimed DJ Ready D, or Boeta D, was co-founder of both groups and very influential in the development of local hip-hop since the 1980s.<sup>38</sup> BVK as a group did much to bridge the gap between coloured Afrikaans, or as they called it, “Kaafrikaans” hip-hop from the Cape and the white music industry.<sup>39</sup> Another notable coloured Afrikaans artist (and this is just a descriptive term that will hopefully become redundant as Afrikaans music evolves, and not meant to reduce any artist’s work and/ or identity to just two things: race and language) is the rapper, motivational speaker, language activist, author and poet, Hemelbesem. He has done a number of collaborations with (among others) white Afrikaans singers, from Francois van Coke to even Steve Hofmeyr on a re-worked version of the latter’s hit “Pampoen”. This was a seemingly idiosyncratic move, but also poignant in that it adds a subtext of cultural conciliation to the existing (white) nostalgic and romantic theme of the original song.<sup>40</sup> Hemelbesem remains active in language politics and education and has been working with the ATKV in

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

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

37 B. Kenelly, “Beauty in Bastardry?”, p. 1.

38 I. Roggeband, *50 Stemme*, p. 34.

39 *Ibid.*

40 M. Malan, “Hemelbesem vier taal in komende produksie ‘Meeste hiphoppers wil net stem vir straat wees’”, *Die Burger*, 22 May 2015.

developing young Afrikaans talent in rural areas.<sup>41</sup> This is important work in that it educates young Afrikaans speakers from different racial backgrounds in the possibilities of writing music in Afrikaans, while for some it offers a way out of difficult domestic situations. Furthermore, it adds vital momentum to the development of inclusive Afrikaans music.

Another prominent artist is Jitsvinger, who according to his website, is “An award-winning Afrikaaps (Afrikaans with a Cape Town dialect) vernacular performer who combines hip-hop, poetry, self-composed music, theatre and storytelling.”<sup>42</sup> The reference to Afrikaaps is important since the very act of performing in Afrikaaps creates a space for Afrikaans music (and other artistic media) that, despite the historic forces involved in the development of the dialect, stands free from the baggage of white Afrikaans language politics.

Despite the contributions of these artists, the mainstream remains overwhelmingly white, not only in terms of who sells the most, but also how it is marketed. The top-selling series of *Afrikaans is Groot* (Afrikaans is big) CDs, which is now on its 9<sup>th</sup> instalment, has to date not featured a single coloured Afrikaans artist, apart from Emo Adams, and two-thirds of the female vocal trio Blackbyrd. Line-ups of big concerts like *Huisgenoot Skouspel* and *Afrikaans is Groot* rarely feature coloured artists – again, Emo Adams is probably the most regular feature, while the Bala Brothers have been included in some line-ups in the last decade. Although *Afrikaans is Groot* has become more popular than *Skouspel* in recent years, combined, these concerts have been the biggest live events in Afrikaans music for a long time, and their success is no doubt due to the fact that they feature the highest selling Afrikaans music artists with the most prominent public profiles. This year’s concert series in March included Steve Hofmeyr, Juanita du Plessis, Karen Zoid, Bobby van Jaarsveld, Karlien van Jaarsveld, Elvis Blue, Laurika Rauch, Jay, Bok van Blerk, Jannie Moolman, Corlea Botha, Dewald Wasserfall, Riana Nel, Lianie May and “a few surprises.”<sup>43</sup> It is interesting to note that Hofmeyr has again been included on the line-up despite his controversial political statements, and that the sponsors have not withdrawn as some have in the past. One way for the organisers to avoid further controversy is to make sure that Hofmeyr sticks to a pre-determined setlist and does not sing the the old national anthem, “Die Stem”, as he has done at recent Arts festivals. Theuns Jordaan was dropped from the most recent AIG concerts because of a legal dispute with the organisers.<sup>44</sup>

Whereas Hofmeyr is outspoken politically, the other artists on this list are more careful about what they say in public and not all of them necessarily share Hofmeyr’s political views. Interestingly, between them, almost no one, including Hofmeyr, produces political music per se. The situation, however, is somewhat more complex. The Afrikaans pop mainstream caters for people who find other public spaces compromised. National and provincial sports teams are under pressure to transform, which angers many white fans, especially when the teams are not performing well. When, indeed they are, like the (transformed) national Cricket team of late, the transformation debate is more silent. This is, however, not about the murky world of transformation in sport. There are no quotas in music, and if white Afrikaans pop singers sell

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41 *Ibid.*

42 <http://www.jitsvinger.co.za/>, accessed 17 April 2017.

43 <http://www.ticketpros.co.za/portal/web/index.php/event/14311756-bf77-294f-4cf6-5836cf5e3e9e>, accessed 14 March 2017.

44 <http://afmusieknuus.co.za/2016/10/19/afrikaans-groot-2016-nog-groter/>, accessed 14 March 2017.

a lot of albums, it makes sense to have them all on one line-up. It reminds one of the late FAK chairman N.J. van der Merwe's complaint in 1931 about the release of low-quality *boeremusiek* records, when he said that sentiment and business do not go together. However, somewhere along the way, white Afrikaans nostalgia and an industry with a history of exclusion combine to form a lens that refracts mainstream Afrikaans music to such an extent that the reception thereof differs vastly, depending on who is listening. For some, it is painful, while many are blind to its ability to cause hurt. Anecdotal references to how divisive Afrikaans pop music abound on social media.

In a recent TV interview, the (white) Afrikaans singer/songwriter and member of Die Wasgoedlyn (Washing Line) music collective, Riku Latti, claimed that mainstream Afrikaans music was a racially exclusive space that was demarcated by parameters set in place by apartheid ideologues during the 1950s. Die Wasgoedlyn actively seeks to take Afrikaans music back to a time before it was white-washed by the *volksvriendelike* machine. This is an interesting new narrative, since it identifies the political involvement of Afrikaner nationalist minded cultural entrepreneurs – and Anton Hartman seems to have been singled out – in denying a “natural” state of existence in Afrikaans music and even the language itself. The standard use of Afrikaans is portrayed as a nationalist project, while the Afrikaans music mainstream today is seen as the by-product of decades' worth of political meddling. What attracts particular vile is the *Ghoema* awards, organised by a Pretoria-based radio station. “Ghoema” or “goema” music has deep roots in the slave history of the Cape. A “ghoema” or “goema” was a type of hand drum played with a specific beat, accompanied by lyrics that made fun of people in positions of power.<sup>45</sup> It forms an integral part of Cape Minstrel music and is particularly linked to the (often painful) heritage of coloured people. However, the awards – based on public votes – are almost exclusively white. This appropriation of coloured Afrikaans music culture for a white platform reminds one of the way *kwela* music became popular among white audiences and recording artists during the 1950s and 60s. Even the spelling of the word “Ghoema” has attracted criticism from coloured artists like Les Javan and Loit Sols, who claim the correct version is “Goema”. According to them, the fact that the WAT (*Woordeboek vir die Afrikaanse Taal*, or Dictionary of the Afrikaans Language) spells it with the offending ‘h’, is indicative of the language politics of the twentieth century and the appropriation of coloured heritage. Fellow Wasgoedlyn member Churchill Naudé is a rapper who is especially active in addressing issues of language and coloured identity in his lyrics. Of course, generally speaking, Afrikaans music produced and performed by coloured artists today is by no means centred around this critical narrative. However, in its current manifestation it asks important questions about how mainstream Afrikaans music today invokes painful memories of cultural appropriation and exclusion.

An exception to this racial divide in post-apartheid Afrikaans music is, again, David Kramer, who was responsible for successful albums and theatre productions, among them *Karoo kitaar blues* in 2002, in which he searched the *platteland* (rural areas) for vanishing guitar traditions of disempowered coloured communities, and *Ghoema* in 2006. Both projects showcased the music heritage of coloured Afrikaans speakers. In recent years, the ATKV has made a notable break with its Afrikaner nationalist roots and has launched numerous discussions, competitions, and

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45 D. Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa*, (Somerset-West: African Minds, 2012), p. 113.

concerts that promote aspects of coloured Afrikaans identity. The ATKV's annual *Rieldans* (referring to ceremonial dances performed by the Khoi-San) competitions have become very popular and the finals, held at the Afrikaans Language Monument in Paarl, regularly attract thousands of spectators. The fact that it is held at that specific venue also implies a spirit of inclusivity. The ATKV also hosts the annual *Oesfees* (Harvest festival) on the farm Solms-Delta near Franschhoek. This concert is markedly different from other Afrikaans concerts in that it caters for farm owner and farm worker alike, while showcasing coloured and white music artists in a collegial spirit found almost nowhere else. Solms-Delta is also a very progressive farm in terms of transformation, as its workers own an equal share in the farm.<sup>46</sup>

These examples reflect one end of the spectrum and although there seems to be a willingness on the side of Afrikaans arts festivals to change its image of exclusive white Afrikaans cultural enclaves, race remains an integral issue. Adam Haupt has raised the key question of whether those who determine the conditions of access to arts festivals, as well as which of the historically disadvantaged groups are allowed through the gates, are the same people who funded such festivals before the democratic transition. More importantly, he questions the motivations behind inviting black Afrikaans speakers and/or artists to Afrikaans festivals.<sup>47</sup> Such exchanges are meaningless if “others” are invited purely to legitimise such festivals, do little to change the material conditions of marginalised people, and perpetuate Afrikaner nationalist hegemony.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps a look at some examples of performances at arts festivals will help in answering these vital questions.

## Controversy and live performances

Martin states that ‘culture’ is rarely of pure origin, and is more the result of exchanges and appropriation. However, when culture is celebrated – through things as diverse as festivals, music and even cuisine – it is done in such a way that it highlights difference and invokes purity.<sup>49</sup> This takes on very real dimensions at Afrikaans arts festivals, where one often finds a vast variety of unsanctioned products among the numerous stores that exploit difference. For instance, t-shirts saying “Praat Afrikaans of hou jou bek” (Speak Afrikaans or shut up) might be intended as humorous, but also harbours a tinge of aggression. Whereas deliberation on the artistic offering of the festivals falls to a selection panel more in tune with complex language politics, the festival fringes operate under different rules. Having said that, one could also argue convincingly that buying a *boerewors* roll at an Afrikaans arts festival should not be taken as a political act. What does hold a level of truth though is that Afrikaans festivals *do* function as acute celebrations of Afrikaans culture (to varying degrees depending on the festival), which makes them useful focus points for studying the political dynamics and dimensions of live performances.

46 Lisa Isaacs, “No more baas or Klaas at wine estate”, 18 January 2017, <http://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/news/no-more-baas-or-klaas-at-wine-estate-2097037>, accessed 04 April 2017.

47 A. Haupt, “Is Afrikaans music the biggest ‘rassedeurbraakmedium?’”, [http://www.argief.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=print\\_article&news\\_id=6792&cause\\_id=1270](http://www.argief.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=print_article&news_id=6792&cause_id=1270), accessed 17 July 2013.

48 *Ibid.*

49 D. Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa* (Somerset-West: African Minds, 2013), pp. 7-8.

In what must surely be a low point in cross-cultural reconciliation, singer Miriam Makeba was pelted with beer cans and verbally assaulted by white Afrikaner audience members at the 1997 *Kaktus op die Vlakte* (Cactus on the Plains) rock concert of the KKNK. It was clear that the majority of the crowd did not appreciate Makeba's style of music, despite the fact that she was one of South Africa's most famous international stars of the twentieth century.<sup>50</sup> When Afrikaans singer Amanda Strydom later shouted *Amandla!* (as she had controversially done in 1986), she also had beer cans thrown at her.<sup>51</sup> Another eyewitness agrees that the incident started because the audience was not familiar with Makeba's music, but adds that her performance lasted much longer than it was supposed to, and that they were impatient to hear Johnny Clegg and Juluka. He also feels that the incident, though regrettable, was blown out of proportion by the media, but concedes that if no alcohol was involved, it would not have happened. Johnny Clegg was extremely well received by the crowd.<sup>52</sup> This is not surprising, since Clegg had numerous radio hits on the radio stations this audience listened to, while Makeba's music had only patchy exposure on the same stations. Of course, the fact that Makeba was not as familiar to the crowd as Johnny Clegg, was in itself a result of the racial politics embedded in South Africa's popular music history.

Since their inception in 2003 Fokofpolisiekar has solicited various divided responses from the wider Afrikaner community – as do many rock music artists in conservative societies globally – but a 2006 incident where the bassist, Wynand Myburgh, wrote the words “Fok God” (fuck God) on a fan's wallet, created a public outcry.<sup>53</sup> As a result, church groups put pressure on the festival organisers of that year's KKNK to cancel their invitation to the group to perform at the festival.<sup>54</sup> The festival board decided not to cancel the invitation since they were wary of censoring artists and because, constitutionally, the group had the right to free speech. They did, however, not ignore the complaints, and held talks with church representatives to establish a future platform for constitutional guidance in such matters.<sup>55</sup> The Dutch-born journalist Fred de Vries, in his review of Annie Klopper's biography of Fokofpolisiekar, compared the incident to the Sex Pistols:

But “Fok God” has real danger. In the first place this was said in a town, in a country, where the majority of the population is still very Christian in its beliefs. And although the NG Kerk has suffered severe setbacks in its membership since 1994, the rise of the charismatic churches, especially among Afrikaners, is staggering. And their followers don't take blasphemy very well either. So “Fok God” was comparable to the Sex Pistols sneering at that ultimate symbol of Englishness on their second single God Save the Queen (“she ain't no human being”) from 1977, which got

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50 D. Eyal, “Beer cans and boer wars”, *Mail & Guardian*, 04 April 1997.

51 *Ibid.*

52 Gerhard Gibbs, electronic communication, 18 July 2013.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 122, see also J. Nel, “Bobby se ma sit agter bid-brief”, *Die Burger*, 27 February 2006, p. 3.

54 L. le Roux, “Polisiekarre nie welkom, kla Oudtshoorn”, *Die Burger*, 10 March 2006, p. 3.

55 J. Kruger, “Kerkleiers verwelkom ‘Waardes vir KKNK’”, *Die Burger*, 24 March 2006, p. 3.

them banned from the radio, banned from theatres and beaten up by gangs of patriotic thugs. Something similar befell the five members of Fokofpolisiekar, who were banned from venues, received bomb threats and eventually were forced to make a half-hearted apology.<sup>56</sup>

Conservative religious views play an important role in the way the Afrikaans community assess artists and their music. Many Christians felt that the group had over-stepped the line and reacted publically and vocally. The story happened to have been made public by the mother of popular mainstream singers Bobby and Karlien van Jaarsveld.<sup>57</sup> She also started a chain letter for Christians to pray for the group. As mentioned before, much has been written about Fokofpolisiekar – most notably by Klopper<sup>58</sup> – and their music and lyrics will undoubtedly feature in future academic discourse on popular Afrikaans music in a similar, though not necessarily identical, manner to that on Voëlvry.

In 2009, another incident of beer can throwing took place at OppiAarde in Potchefstroom, a rock concert that was part of the annual AARDKLOP arts festival. The rap-group Max Normal TV, in their last show under this name and first show as Die Antwoord – which would become a global internet sensation and a world-touring Afrikaans “zef”<sup>59</sup> supergroup – antagonised the conservative crowd by a visual display on the big screens of suggestive homoerotic material. Beer cans were thrown, and some concertgoers wanted to storm the stage, but were prevented by security.<sup>60</sup> A video of this performance shows young, white male Afrikaners making offensive hand-gestures and shouting obscenities while the visuals on the screens are out of shot.<sup>61</sup> Although these negative reactions were not racially motivated – all the members of Die Antwoord are white – the content of their music was too extreme for many conservative, mostly male, people in the crowd. It is also important to note that this was not a concert aimed at the mainstream Afrikaans music market. It was organised by Oppikoppi, which specialises in organising events that fall outside the pop genre. The line-up for that evening included Fokofpolisiekar and Freshlyground.<sup>62</sup> No Afrikaans pop singers were present.

At the *Innibos* festival in Nelspruit in June 2013, 21 500 people left the concert area after the performance by Afrikaans singer Juanita du Plessis, and just before the multi-racial group Freshlyground took the stage. Only a crowd of 2 000 mainly young festivalgoers, remained. One female Freshlyground fan, aged 17 and Afrikaans, raised the following point:

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56 F. de Vries, “Biografie van ’n bende: Fokof, we’ll piss where we want”, review in Litnet, 14 June 2011, <http://www.argief.litnet.co.za/>, accessed 17 July 2013.

57 J. Nel, “Bobby se ma sit agter bid-brief”, *Die Burger*, 27 February 2006, p. 3.

58 MA Dissertation, 2009; see also “‘In wrede woede het ek die hand wat beheer gebyt’: Die opkoms van Afrikaanse (punk) rockmusiek”, in A.M. Grundlingh and S. Huigen (eds), *Van Volksmoeder tot Fokofpolisiekar: Kritiese Opstelle oor Afrikaanse Herinneringsplekke* (Stellenbosch: Sun Media, 2008), pp. 207-217 and *Biografie van ’n Bende: Die Storie van Fokofpolisiekar* (Cape Town: Protea, 2011).

59 ‘Zef’ roughly translates into “working-class” or “common”.

60 The author also performed at the concert, confirmed through personal communication with Tim Rankin, 17 July 2013.

61 <http://www.yourepeat.com/watch/?v=NAu6eR2KnNM>, accessed 17 July 2013, see also <http://www.youares.com/v/fzYdYbHCOuU/die-antwoord-enter-the-ninja-live-rome/>, accessed 17 July 2013.

62 <http://entertainmentafrika.mobi/music/view/news/23934>, accessed 17 July 2013.



I hope people stood up because they're old and don't know the music, rather than because there are black members in the band and they sing in English.<sup>63</sup>

Although it is impossible to assess exactly why so many of the mainly white Afrikaans concertgoers decided to leave before Freshlyground's performance, it is unlikely that it was because they did not know their songs. Apart from a number of hits, three years prior to this concert, the group – along with international pop star, Shakira – released the official anthem (“Waka waka”) of the 2010 Fifa Soccer World Cup, hosted in South Africa. Naturally, the song, and the group, received maximum exposure because of this and the music video has been viewed more than a billion times on YouTube.<sup>64</sup> One should also consider that language could have been a contributing factor.

How does one make sense of the way music performances elicit such strong responses from audience members? Audiences around the world respond similarly for a variety of reasons that differ from these South African examples. In the case of Miriam Makeba and Amanda Strydom, there were possible racist and/or political overtones to audience reactions, whereas in the case of Die Antwoord, reaction was partly fuelled by homophobic sentiments. Freshlyground's performance at Innibos is more complex. This concert line-up consisted of mostly mainstream Afrikaans artists. The target audience was a group of white Afrikaans speakers who constitute a large market segment of the top-selling Afrikaans pop stars and who not normally listen to Freshlyground's music. Regardless, these four incidents indicate a reluctance on the part of white Afrikaans audiences to tolerate music and artists which they interpret as threatening, or “other”, or both. It seems that in this context of reception, politics, race, religion and sexuality are non-negotiable topics. In such cases, popular music does not seem to function as a fluid medium that crosses old boundaries. This recalcitrance is, of course, not absolute (Emo Adams, for instance, has been able to win conservative white Afrikaans audiences over). One should take into account that all four instances happened at Afrikaans arts festivals, which can serve as spaces for what Hauptfleisch has called the “eventification” of Afrikaans and Afrikaans culture. This alludes to a heightened sensitivity to cultural tropes during heritage celebrations.<sup>65</sup> Under such circumstances, Afrikaners are less likely to share their cultural events with the “other”. In this way, old established concepts of race, religion and sexuality form the boundaries of acceptance in the post-apartheid context.

There are, of course, always exceptions. In 2013, the KKNK invited the legendary African jazz singer and songwriter, Dorothy Masuka, to perform two shows in conjunction with a lifetime achievement award she received from the festival's main sponsor, ABSA Bank. Notably, Masuka co-wrote the song “Pata Pata”, which was a massive hit for Miriam Makeba (who had an ambivalent reception at the festival). This time the show was in a theatre venue, Masuka performed alongside Laurika Rauch, Karen Zoid, and Zolani Mahola of Freshlyground (three months prior to their show at Innibos). The shows received standing ovations, with Masuka

63 L. Eckhard, “Meeste loop toe ‘beste by fees’ sing”, *Beeld*, 29 June 2013.

64 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRpeEdMmmQ0>, accessed 25 March 2015.

65 T. Hauptfleisch, “In Search of the Rainbow: The Little Karoo National Arts Festival and the Search for Cultural Identity in South Africa”, *South African Theatre Journal*, 15 (2001), p. 84; see also E. Van Heerden, “Liminality, Transformation and Communitas: Afrikaans Identities as Viewed Through the Lens of South African Arts Festivals 1995–2006” (DPhil Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2009).

even inviting old Afrikaner men from the audience to dance the *pata pata* with her.<sup>66</sup> Three months later it was also the opening flagship show of the Vryfees – an Afrikaans arts festival held in Bloemfontein – where it also received a standing ovation.

There are also examples of Afrikaans artists having to perform in front of other population groups at political rallies. In 2001, the author performed at a Heritage Day concert at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. Also performing that day was the Afrikaans group Beeskraal, who played a mix of *boeremusiek* and rock by blending concertina with electric guitars. They dressed in traditional khaki clothing and *veldhoede* (a type of hat associated with *boers*) – an image which was loaded with potentially negative connotations for the 10 000 plus overwhelmingly black, ANC supporters. Yet they were very well received – even more so than the more familiar black acts that followed them on stage.<sup>67</sup> This does not imply that black audiences are more tolerant of the “other” than white Afrikaans audiences. At most, it indicates the situational complexities surrounding music performance on different stages in South Africa.

### White politics in post-apartheid Afrikaans music

My people are dying like flies. Just more violently. – Steve Hofmeyr<sup>68</sup>

A number of Afrikaans artists have addressed political issues in post-apartheid South Africa but notably, many of them have positioned the Afrikaner in the role of victim. Senekal and Van den Berg have provided a rare focus on such Afrikaans offerings – in what they call a “preliminary exploration” of protest music based on lyrical analyses. They identified 62 post-apartheid protest songs released between 1998 and 2009,<sup>69</sup> and divided them into four main lyrical themes: crime (the reality of crime and the psychological effects thereof), service delivery, (assumedly white) Afrikaner identity and protest, and an appeal to stand together.<sup>70</sup> Under Afrikaner identity, they sub-categorise the theme to include issues surrounding the problematic place of the Afrikaner in South Africa, the new generation positioned between the past and the future, the changing landscape (including Afrikaans place names), the maltreatment of the past and emigration as an alternative.<sup>71</sup> Stylistically (apart from a number of metal and industrial groups such as KOBUS and Battery 9), a sizable contingent of the protest singers seems to have continued on a trajectory established by Voëlvry, but since the context has changed so dramatically – Senekal and Van den Berg suggest a “re-contextualisation” – so has its meaning. The broader South African

66 Note: The author was part of the cast of this show, other media reports can be viewed at: <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/e8b1b3004f8495c9aeffee0b5d39e4bb/Dorothy-Masuka-honoured-at-KANA-20130605>, <http://www.newsday.co.zw/2013/04/02/kknk-honours-dorothy-masuka/>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsQf94hzExI>, all accessed 18 July 2013.

67 Here, I must cite my own observation, as well as correspondence with Charles Schmidt, the singer and guitarist of *Beeskraal* on 17 July 2013.

68 <http://stevehofmeyr.co.za/website/steve-se/steve-se-blog-layout>, accessed 21 July 2013.

69 Strangely, they also included Johannes Kerkerrel's “Hillbrow” from 1989, which is strictly speaking not a post-apartheid song. One could argue (convincingly) that by 1989, a post-apartheid theme had developed in Afrikaans music, but then you had to include the sizable canon of Afrikaans protest music of that specific era, like the work of artists such as Koos Kombuis, Die Naaimasjiene, Anton Goosen, etc.

70 “n Voorlopige verkenning van postapartheid Afrikaanse protesmusiek”, *LitNet Akademies* 7:2 (August 2010), pp. 110-118.

71 *Ibid.*

public is sensitive to Afrikaner calls “to stand together” or complaints about crime and the government’s inefficiency, and often see them as the cultural tropes of right-leaning Afrikaners. On the other hand, true art should reflect society. Artists ask difficult questions. Theoretically, Afrikaans artists should have the freedom to criticise, inspect, condone and/or reject whatever they want without automatically being regarded as apartheid apologists. For instance, Koos Kombuis, on his 2008 album *Bloedrivier*, did not hold back his critique of the ANC government. As an Afrikaans protest singer, Kombuis has an impeccable pedigree, and perhaps more than any other living Afrikaans songwriter (apart from David Kramer) has earned the right to talk “frankly” without being branded as “right wing”. With his latest album, *Langpad na Lekkersing*, Kombuis takes a more positive stance towards South African society:

We have a bad president, but I can think of a number of countries that have worse leaders than us. There are plagues and floods and earthquakes and civil wars and here you and me are sitting in the kitchen quietly chatting and I know there’s the threat of crime, but how often do you actually feel directly threatened?<sup>72</sup>

Although Senekal and Van den Berg cast their analytical focus widely, their list only includes one song from a coloured group – Kallitz’s “Wat gaan ons maak?” (What are we going to do?). Does this mean that coloured Afrikaans artists avoid politics? Furthermore, the long list of artists they focused on – i.e. those who have written songs of protest – does not really resemble the mainstream of Afrikaans music. They *did* include well-known artists such as Johannes Kerckorrel and Kombuis, but apart from Bok van Blerk and Lianie May, the really big mainstream names are not there. This suggests that mainstream Afrikaans music is not overtly political. It appears that it is mostly young up-and-coming and/or more marginal (in terms of album sales) artists who bring politics, by broad definition, into their songs. It can of course be argued that it is in the cultural spaces where Afrikaans pop is performed that one finds the politics and not in the music per se. Lydia Goehr has argued persuasively that by not considering the “extra-musical”, the observer is left with an incomplete understanding of the musical text itself – the two are inextricably linked.<sup>73</sup> Mundane Afrikaans pop songs are thus also subtle reflections of the various ways in which Afrikaners are expressing and constructing themselves as individuals and as a collective.

Since Senekal and Van den Berg’s article in 2010, a series of public debates on music and South African politics have taken place. A prime example came in 2011, when the Afrikaner interest group, Afriforum, took the then-president of the ANC youth league, Julius Malema, to the Equality Court because of his and his supporters’ repeated singing of the anti-apartheid struggle song, “Dubhula I’bunu” (Shoot the Boer). Afriforum’s argument was that the singing of this song constituted hate-speech. Judge Collin Lamont agreed: “The words undermine their dignity, are discriminatory and harmful [to Afrikaners]”<sup>74</sup> citing the Promotion of Unfair Discrimination and Equality Act. During the trial, Steve Hofmeyr wrote an Afrikaans song “Ons sal dit oorleef” (We shall survive this), in which he threatened to use the highly offensive “K”-word<sup>75</sup> if the court

72 Nadine Theron, “Koos Kombuis dra album aan Kramer op”, *Netwerk* 24, 03/03/2017.

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

74 *Mail and Guardian*, 13 September 2011.

75 Referring to the highly offensive word “kaffir”.

ruled in favour of Malema, which it did not. Similar controversy surrounded the old struggle song “Umshini wam” (Bring me my machine gun), often sung by President Jacob Zuma and his supporters at political rallies and outside courtrooms.

In January 2012, supporters of the murdered AWB leader Eugene Terreblanche gathered outside the court during the trial of two men accused of committing the crime. They wore AWB uniforms and had speakers blaring songs like “De la Rey”:

The situation threatened to turn nasty when the song “Bobbejaan Klim die Berg” [baboon climbs the mountain] started playing. Tshing residents took offence and retaliated by singing President Jacob Zuma’s favourite song, “Umshini Wam”. A clash between the two groups threatened, and police stepped in.<sup>76</sup>

These songs represent some of the most visible and explicit musical examples of how heritage and identity politics clash in the new South Africa. There are also other ways in which artists involve themselves in politics. On 10 October 2013,<sup>77</sup> a group called Red October organised marches and gatherings around South Africa and in expat enclaves around the world in protest of “black on white” violent crime, like the farm attacks on white Afrikaners that elicit highly emotional responses from white Afrikaners and open accusations of genocide. Singer/activist Sunette Bridges, daughter of Bles Bridges, publicly associated herself with the movement (as did Steve Hofmeyr) and used her website and other social media as platforms for right-wing Afrikaner politics, mostly by publicising statistics on violent crimes against whites.<sup>78</sup> Her political involvement has drawn sharply contrasting responses from various Afrikaans speakers that has a wider impact than her music,<sup>79</sup> and her Facebook page has led to accusations of hate speech and a case before the Human Rights Commission.<sup>80</sup> The theme of violence on farms reappeared in a 2014 court case when the (mixed) hip-hop group, Dookoom, was charged before the South African Human Rights Council on accusations of hate speech after releasing a controversial video, “Laarnie jou poes” (Hey Boss, you cunt, fuck you).<sup>81</sup> It was argued that the song and its accompanying video is an incitement to violence, since it depicts coloured farm workers about to set fire to a white-owned farm.<sup>82</sup> In diametric opposition to the concept of “Afrikaner as victim”, Dookoom use the context of the farm to portray the historic racial and economic oppression of coloured farm workers by white landowners, a political issue that flared up in the Western Cape Province in 2013.<sup>83</sup> Denying any intent on inciting violence, the group claimed that the video was only intended to invite debate on these problematic themes.<sup>84</sup> It

76 O. Mooki, “Battle of the songs”, 31 January 2012, available at <http://www.iol.co.za/the-star/>, accessed 29 May 2012.

77 It was repeated again in October 2014.

78 <http://sunettebridges.co.za/>, accessed 16 July 2013.

79 <http://www.channel24.co.za/News/Local/Sunette-denies-racism-claims-20101029>, accessed 12 August 2013; [http://www.news24.com/Tags/People/sunette\\_bridges](http://www.news24.com/Tags/People/sunette_bridges), accessed 12 August 2013.

80 <http://www.sahrc.org.za/home/index.php?ipkArticleID=330>, accessed 20 May 2015.

81 <http://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2014/10/15/afriforum-submits-hate-speech-complaint-against-rap-group-dookoom>, accessed 14 January 2015.

82 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmgpDostEqk>, accessed 26 March 2015.

83 <http://www.citypress.co.za/entertainment/dookoom-angry>, accessed 26 March 2015.

84 <http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/2014/11/27/steve-hofmeyr-0-chester-missing-1>, accessed 26 March 2015.

has certainly revealed deep racial animosity and contrasting claims of oppression by the racial “other”. Attempts to have the video removed from YouTube have failed.

In another, slightly bizarre 2014 court case, Afrikaans activist Dan Roodt requested an interim court order (which was later overturned) to bar comedian ventriloquist Konrad Koch (and his puppet Chester Missing) from harassing Steve Hofmeyr on social media platforms after the latter had tweeted that according to him, “blacks were the architects of apartheid”. The fall-out of the tweet and the ensuing case had a much wider impact than just a spat between a puppet and a singer. Pick n Pay and Jaguar Land Rover South Africa, sponsors of the *Afrikaans is Groot* concerts, withdrew their support because Hofmeyr was not taken off the line-up.<sup>85</sup> In reaction, an unapologetic Hofmeyr tweeted:

“Boycotts won’t change my observation that Africa never did & still doesn’t inspire integration #ArchitectsOfApartheid.”<sup>86</sup>

These two cases underscore the complexity of aggressive racial politics in post-apartheid popular Afrikaans music and challenge the social and legal parameters of artistic expression, the censoring of such expressions, and the legitimacy of protest. They also signify rising tension in a culturally pluralistic society. Also in 2014, at the Innibos festival in Nelspruit, Hofmeyr led the 45 000 strong crowd<sup>87</sup> in an impromptu rendition of “Die Stem” – the pre-1994 national anthem. The reaction was a highly emotional one and most people in the crowd sang along.<sup>88</sup> This put the festival organisers in a difficult position since they do not want the festival – which is very popular among white Afrikaners – to become a politicised platform. As a result, the Innibos directors did not invite Hofmeyr back to the 2015 festival,<sup>89</sup> a decision echoed by the 2015 KKNK festival.<sup>90</sup> The fall-out on social media in favour of Hofmeyr suggests that by taking this decision, festival organisers did not avoid their festivals becoming political platforms, at least for the 2015 season. Hofmeyr also included “Die Stem” on his most recent album, which many radio stations refuse to play as a result.<sup>91</sup>

Although Hofmeyr’s name almost always pops up when Afrikaner politics and music overlap, his controversial actions should not be the only determinant of the political slant of Afrikaans pop music of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Although he has been a major Afrikaans music artist since the late 1980s, his politics have only really surfaced relatively late in his career. However, his name invokes a number of things: for some he is a relic of apartheid, a stirrer of racial hatred and an embarrassment for Afrikaners. Many others take his message much more seriously, which forces one to accede that he represents more than just an extreme right fringe. It is telling that

85 <http://www.channel24.co.za/music/news/land-rover-and-pick-n-pay-pull-concert-sponsorship-after-steve-hofmeyrs-racist-tweet-20150317>, accessed 13 March 2017.

86 <http://www.channel24.co.za/music/news/land-rover-and-pick-n-pay-pull-concert-sponsorship-after-steve-hofmeyrs-racist-tweet-20150317>, accessed 13 March 2017.

87 <http://www.channel24.co.za/Music/News/Hofmeyr-urges-fans-to-continue-singing-Die-Stem-20140708>, accessed 25 March 2015.

88 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2wDNYVe7uo>, accessed 30 March 2015.

89 <http://lowvelder.co.za/247693/hewige-reaksie-na-innibos-steve-nie-weer-nooi/>, accessed 30 March 2015.

90 <http://www.netwerk24.com/nuus/2015-01-24-kknk-sou-steve-hofmeyr-nie-toelaat>, accessed 30 March 2015.

91 <http://www.timeslive.co.za/entertainment/2014/08/27/steve-hofmeyr-to-include-die-stem-on-new-album>, accessed 26 March 2015.

currently, one way of measuring the size of the political right among Afrikaners is to look at Hofmeyr's following. When 45 000 white Afrikaners sing "Die Stem", it is no longer a fringe. He has more than 225 000 twitter followers (although this is not necessarily an accurate indication of support) and more than 400 000 people like his Facebook page (which is perhaps a better indicator). Incidentally, these are the highest numbers of any of the mainstream Afrikaans singers. There simply is no precedent in the history of Afrikaans music for what Hofmeyr embodies. While it is important not to overstate his influence, it is just as important not to *underestimate* it and it is necessary to try and explain how it has evolved over the last few years:

Things do change. You get older. Notice different things. I'm somewhat of a latecomer to politics, but by 2006 it had become clear that my own tribe had become victims of my keen YES vote in the early 90s (when I had almost no political brain). Ironically I still misuse very little of my 100 minute concert for my political campaigns. But that hour remains a cultural and populist one: some English, lots of Afrikaans, lots of nostalgia, dance tunes and ballads. ...With the absence of sufficient numbers for majoritarian party politics, I am living proof (and I carry first-hand knowledge) of how strong and how many we still are, how we agree on simple rights and expectations – therefore my hubris.<sup>92</sup>

This is especially telling. Many Afrikaners are frustrated by the same issues, and agree with Hofmeyr's public statements that concern them. His concerts function as spaces where "Afrikaans people can speak their minds". Although highly controversial, this represents the wider emerging theme of "Afrikaner as victim" mentioned before which has some parallels with the first four decades of the twentieth century, out of which grew the ethnic nationalism that developed into formal apartheid. By positioning Afrikaners as victims, a complex transformation is undergone in which the past is no longer a difficult memory linked to apartheid, and more a source of legitimisation. This theme often appears in post-apartheid Afrikaans pop songs, the most obvious being "De la Rey". The song laid bare some strong undercurrents in Afrikaner society – there's a reason it was so successful – and not all of them were/are unproblematic.<sup>93</sup> Hofmeyr gives an explanation of this political repositioning as "victim" on his blog:

State-induced poverty on any minority is genocide and my little tribe is dying at the hands of other people and my government is marginalising my culture by undermining mother tongue education and keeping us out of the workforce with skin based policies.<sup>94</sup>

Politics become part of the pop experience, entertainment is mixed with a need to verbalise socio-political concerns, and brings into focus various fault lines among Afrikaners. More recently, Hofmeyr has campaigned for the protection of Afrikaner monuments after a number

92 Hofmeyr, email interviews with author, August 2013 and May 2017.

93 Imagine being in Emo Adams' shoes when walking onto a stage to perform in front of a white crowd who had just stood with their hands on their chests singing "De la Rey" in unison.

94 <http://stevhofmeyr.co.za/website/steve-se/steve-se-blog-layout>, accessed 21 July 2013.

were vandalised.<sup>95</sup> When asked whether his audiences have divergent political views and if he sees pop music as a valid medium to convey political messages, he responded:

Diverging, no. But much in need to articulate what you are not allowed to anywhere else, absolutely. The song "Ons sal dit oorleef" is just 4 minutes out of my 100 minute long concert. But during my routine lights-on-ask-what-you-want-sessions every night, I can see that many use my concerts as get-togethers for more than pop music and notes and chords and flippancy. My audiences are very broad, families, safe, culturally nostalgic and predominantly conservative. Because I don't have a political party or mandate, I'm really free to say what I want and I do. I am lucky that my people understand me and that the inefficiency of my government strengthens my case every night. I'm not a preacher. I don't speak to people. I am a poet. I speak FROM people. I've reached 1000+ people four times a week now for 25 years. That is a lot of canvassing for one partyless South African. Social media included in that and you can see why the liberal media will do anything to undermine us and sink us when we don't conform to prevailing narratives. Your presumption is correct. I get more done by being subtle, but I do understand full well my boundaries. That's why my concert is not a political one. It's a cultural carnival with fun between people who don't need to explain much to each other. And 25 cd's is a lot of music to get through!

In early 2015, Hofmeyr announced that he would enter official politics if he could get a million supporters. A subsequent Facebook group was formed to reach this target. At last count it had more than 190 000 members.<sup>96</sup> However, the actual number is difficult to determine, since a number of people, including other Afrikaans artists,<sup>97</sup> were added to this group without their knowledge and subsequent requests to be removed were met with vitriol. It is not only Hofmeyr's online followers that can launch political attacks. In February 2017, Francois van Coke, lead singer of Fokofpolisiekar and Van Coke Cartel and now successful solo artist, was heavily criticised online for appearing on the same bill as Hofmeyr at a concert in Port Elizabeth. Although Van Coke has always remained publicly apolitical, he was accused of endorsing racism by not withdrawing from the concert. The situation was exacerbated when Hofmeyr posted a photo of the two of them (taken in passing at the guest house where both were staying) on his website. Almost no Afrikaans artist has withdrawn from a shared line-up with Hofmeyr. One exception happened weeks before, when David Kramer refused to appear at a concert on a wine farm in Stellenbosch (where he would have received a lifetime achievement award) when he learned that Hofmeyr was also on the line-up. Showing how precarious the politics of Afrikaans music can be, the move was applauded by some, but heavily criticised by many others to the extent that Kramer had to shut down his Facebook page. It also affirms that we are currently experiencing one of the most acute political phases in the history of Afrikaans music with clearly drawn fault lines that make even the performance of apolitical Afrikaans rock impossible. Furthermore, even if, hypothetically, Afrikaans music becomes inclusive and corrects the historical marginalisation of its majority of speakers, there will undoubtedly

95 "Steve Hofmeyr, Sunette Bridges defend Paul Kruger statue", available at <http://ewn.co.za/2015/04/08/Crowd-gathers-in-defence-of-the-church-square-statue>, accessed 20 May 2015.

96 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1409646456011242/?fref=ts>, accessed 13 March 2017.

97 Valiant Swart, especially, experienced threats and accusations that border on the bizarre.

be those who will distance themselves from it and create exclusive spaces where they can be entertained without sharing that space with people of other races. And as long as these spaces exist, there will be artists who cater for it.

One wonders if the Afrikaans music mainstream is not in fact more problematic than the odd overtly political statement from artists who have publicly declared their particular views. It is largely exclusive, it projects white privilege and mostly avoids constructive dialogue on development and inclusion. Also present is the appropriation of coloured Afrikaans cultural things for an almost exclusively white market (like the *Ghoema* awards). It is also more directly responsible for maintaining structures of power rooted in the apartheid past than the odd singer with an acoustic guitar who wants to be like Voëlvry, but somehow lacks the understanding that the current context makes this impossible.



## CONCLUSION

This book was never intended to be a complete discography or encyclopaedia of recorded Afrikaans popular music. It is therefore quite possible that some readers will be frustrated by the omission of certain Afrikaans singers and artists. What *was* intended was to lift out salient themes in the history of recorded Afrikaans music and its relation to, and evolution of, the society that spawned it. What is striking is that from the very moments in January 1900 that Van den Berg, Spieksma, Brückner and Cornelli laid down their respective renditions of music related to people who spoke Afrikaans, the motif of white Afrikaner nationhood was embedded in the process. The same goes for the first recordings in actual Afrikaans itself, not necessarily due to its content, but rather because of the individuals who recorded it. The relevance of people like J.J. Smith and Annie Visser specifically, was their direct relation to Afrikaner language politics of the first two decades of the twentieth century. Such early displays of strong affiliation to the Afrikaans language, which was still in a fluid phase of development at the time, are telling. Also of import is the way in which Afrikaans cultural ephemera, like the wording of advertisements, displayed the unease that existed between white English and Afrikaans speakers. When considering which Afrikaans speakers had access to recording facilities of this era, those who recorded in London were mostly white Afrikaners with bursaries, while the later recordings made by Dilnutt in 1912 in Cape Town and Johannesburg were of more established choirs or well-known poets and storytellers. If one had to gauge, just on content, what these recordings reflected, it would be a mixture between liturgical songs and more everyday things relating to leisure activities of white Afrikaners that included the odd derogatory racial comment that bore testament to the racial hierarchy of the time. This also shows that the insular character of the Afrikaans music industry, which is so problematic in the post-apartheid era, has deep historic roots that date back to the first recordings of popular Afrikaans music.

With regard to the development of radio in South Africa, the First World War signalled a stagnant phase, but from the early 1920s onwards, broadcasting became more common. The local recording industry, on the other hand, lay dormant until the mid-1920s and only really gathered momentum in 1930. Both would accelerate significantly against a background of severe social upheaval in the next decade. Writing about Afrikaner society in the 1930s brings with it its own challenges in that it is a particularly *dense* period in South African history. The socio-economic and political shifts of the time had far-reaching effects. Nominally, Afrikaans was equal to English after 1925 (and by implication, white Afrikaans speakers to English speakers), although in practice there was no parity in terms of access to capital, education, and managerial positions in parastatals such as the South African Railways for Afrikaners. It is partly from this disaffection that the emerging Afrikaner cultural organisations drew their energy. White South Africans in general, but white Afrikaners in particular, were very class sensitive since poor whites were in danger of slipping across the racial line and thus compromising the political integrity of the white vote. As a result, popular cultural manifestations of the Afrikaner working class were problematic on a political level. The FAK, for instance, immediately picked up on this when the Columbia Company advertised its search for music with “local flavour”. The recordings of early *vastrap boereorkste* such as Die Vyf Vastrappers and Die Voortrekker Danskwartet had hardly even started before the FAK executive complained. It was not just about musical taste; it was an embarrassment (and a real political concern) for those Afrikaners keen on uplifting Afrikaner culture to the heights and hygiene of their European counterparts and away from local, organically developed popular culture as it emerged from the underbelly of the rapidly expanding cities. The emergence of *kultuurpolitiek*, managed by ultra-nationalist “organisation men”, did much to establish a new ethnic nationalist identity based on an Afrikaner *volk* mythology. In essence, this was an effort to create centrifugal momentum that could homogenise a heterogeneous white Afrikaner population. Also important is the fact that this new Afrikaner nationalism was not the only available ideology for Afrikaners. Nationalists had to compete with socialist elements among Afrikaner workers, as well as South Africanists who did not share the view that white Afrikaners should develop a separate political identity from white English speakers.

Operating according to a *volksvriendelike* vs *volksvreemde* model, Afrikaans songs that were not sanctioned were excluded from the first FAK *volksangbundel* in 1937. This happened against the background of the first wave of commercial Afrikaans music that started in 1930 and became extremely successful. The music of singers like Chris Blignaut and David de Lange – the big names in Afrikaans music during the 1930s – was wholly left out of the *bundel*. This backfired somewhat during the 1938 Centenary Trek when the cultural elite became frustrated with many Afrikaners who were unfamiliar with the *volkswysies* (folk tunes), but were well acquainted with hits like De Lange’s “Suikerbossie”. This reflected a harsh reality of the commercial music market – ideology took second place to profit, as confirmed by FAK head N.J. van der Merwe in a lament already in 1931. It is easy to overestimate the role of the FAK and other affiliated cultural agents in influencing Afrikaner popular culture. At most, their impact during the 1930s was limited. Their specific impact on popular Afrikaans music is difficult to measure, but the indications (if one looks at David de Lange’s sales figures for instance) suggest that it was probably minimal, despite concerted efforts. The *Volksangbundel* may have become ubiquitous in schools and music classes, but often stood in contrast to the popular songs released on Afrikaans music

records. It is also a poignant indicator when trying to determine just how many Afrikaners were 'cultured' during this time.

An important addition to the Afrikaans music industry of the time was the establishment of the SABC in 1936 and the birth of the Afrikaans service in 1937. The different types of *boeremusiek* that emerged during this era bear testament to the heterogeneous nature of white Afrikaner society at the time. Certain *boeoreorkeste*, like the Stellenbosch Boeoreorkes, were outright propaganda vehicles for the nationalist cause and differed stylistically, behaviourally and probably ideologically from the early, working-class *boeoreorkeste* of people like Faan Harris and presented the antithesis to David de Lange's songs about drunkenness and fornication. Also noteworthy is the SABC's refusal to broadcast De Lange's music. Hendrik Susan's group was more modern, professional and geared for the demands of regular live broadcasts over the radio. Here, the primary motivation was economic, while politics remained pragmatic. Musically, Susan was instrumental in the development of *ligte Afrikaanse musiek*, which presented the executives on the FAK's Music Committee as well those from the SABC with the practical problem of determining its cultural value. Here was a modern genre that reflected international trends which on the one hand resonated with Afrikaner ambitions of being on par with the rest of the world, but on the other hand also represented something foreign and threatening. Had the cultural entrepreneurs not been so fixated on Afrikaner culture, they would not have embarked on a two-decade-long mission to try and differentiate traditional *boeremusiek* from *ligte Afrikaanse musiek*. Their acknowledgement of the once scorned *vastrap boeremusiek* of the early 1930s as legitimate Afrikaans folk music by the late 1940s suggests that by this time, it did not represent a threat any more. One might even venture a further speculation that it could also have been an indication that an acceptable level of cultural homogeneity had been achieved that translated into real political power and that class tension among white Afrikaners had eased somewhat. Furthermore, their papers, seminars and articles on commercial Afrikaans music from the 1940s onwards represent the earliest body of work on the subject which places its initial historiography squarely within the dominant narrative of Afrikaner nationalism. Anton Hartman's 1955 statement that, historically, coloured musicians were the primary performers of *boeremusiek* (he uses the term *hotnotsmusiek*) but that in *essence* it was the music of white Afrikaners since it was their dance music that they gave to the coloured labourers to play, is a prime example of how ideology took preference over truth.

Coming back to 1939, the outbreak of war heralded sweeping socio-political changes for South Africa. The political fall-out between Hertzog and Smuts over South Africa's participation on the side of the British has been written about extensively. Its relevance here is that it changed the dynamics at the SABC. The suspension of political neutrality at the SABC in favour of the war effort incensed some Afrikaner nationalist personnel. It also led to an increase in tension between the SABC and the FAK, which had already started with the Centenary Trek the year before when the SABC refused to broadcast political speeches by Afrikaner nationalists on the very basis of neutrality. During the war, Hendrik Susan received instructions that the SABC would not broadcast any live performances of songs from the FAK's *volksangbundel*. Given the danger Afrikaner nationalist organisations posed during the war, such instructions make sense. Susan was even briefly interrogated because he regularly followed the obligatory *God Save the King* with *Kent gj dat volk?* at concerts. Ironically, despite the tension at the SABC, there was

a gradual increase in Afrikaans personnel as English speakers volunteered for service. On the record business side, the shipping of recorded masters was disrupted to such an extent that it was almost impossible to release new music.

The primary political shift after the war was the National Party's victory at the polls in 1948 which ushered in the apartheid era. Needless to say, as with all sectors of South African society, this would also affect the local music industry in many ways during the following decades. However, it did not hamper the rapid growth of the local recording industry. In fact, the growing Afrikaner middle class in the following years, thanks to the spoils of apartheid's racial capitalism, meant an expanding market for commercial Afrikaans music. Gallo's opening of their local pressing plant in 1949 injected new life into the local recording industry after the lull of the war era and led to a proliferation of local, including Afrikaans, music records. Coupled with the establishment of the SABC's commercial station, Springbok Radio in 1950, these records were played on the radio and many sold very well, none more so than Nico Carstens's. Carstens and Anton de Waal launched what is probably still the most commercially successful songwriting partnership in Afrikaans music history in 1951 and tapped into the increasing spending power of white Afrikaners. Although Carstens's artistic scope was much wider than just *boeremusiek*, and he regularly denounced the genre, it was in fact his *boeremusiek* records that sold the most during this era. One can't but wonder if Carstens was not in fact trapped by his popularity among white Afrikaners and thus subject to their tastes (which, admittedly, could be very restrictive). *Boeremusiek* was very popular, while jazz (one of his great musical loves) held limited appeal.

The 1950s and 1960s were, of course, a time of optimism for white Afrikaners who were the primary beneficiaries of apartheid. Carstens's heyday coincided with this, but although his album covers often depicted Afrikaner nationalist symbols such as *ossewaens* and the like, there are signs that indicate that he did not wholly buy into the dominant narrative of racial segregation. He had a deep appreciation for, and a good knowledge of, the coloured music of the Cape. It influenced him stylistically and he also produced music specifically aimed at this small market with Stan Murray's Penny Serenaders. Of course, the fact that white musicians recorded coloured music for a coloured market in the late 1950s also attests to the lack of access to recording opportunities for coloured musicians.

But while these success stories indicate a level of vitality in the Afrikaans culture industry, it has to be seen against the background, and effects, of the ever-widening legal web of apartheid legislation at the time. The destruction of Sophiatown, starting in 1955, brought an end to a black cultural hub of singular importance and by extension limited the possibility of further exchange between musicians of different racial backgrounds in the Johannesburg area. *Kwela* was the music of resistance, of black celebration, of everyday life and the dance music of the time. It was a combination of African tradition and imported musical styles that resulted in new urban, non-traditional identities that were in opposition to the apartheid government's policy of maintaining tribal and rural identities. Its popularity among whites re-positioned it as something else – literally a white-washed version of the original – that had little to do with its origins. This wider popularity from the late 1950s onwards, just as the machinations of racial segregation were becoming a reality, shows that the cultural appropriation of the music of the racial “other” for commercial purposes did not present a problem for record companies and white musicians. It also did not draw any real criticism from the racially sensitive cultural

organisations and the SABC, the same people who could be quite opinionated about, say, the influence of jazz on local Afrikaans music. On the other side of the musical spectrum were Die Briels, who were sentimental, white working-class singers who tapped into an unsophisticated market and somehow came to represent something different than the Euro-kitsch mainstream, which earned them some capital among the later alternative Afrikaners.

While Nico Carstens was capitalising on the boom in the Afrikaans music market, Elvis Presley, and by extension rock 'n roll music, hit South Africa just as hard as the rest of the world. Rock music had its roots among black musicians in the US, but became popular to a wider audience through its appropriation by white artists. On this front, *kwela* and rock shared some aspects, as Lara Allen rightly concluded. However, where rock music served as a vehicle to bridge racial divides in the US at a time when racial politics were entering a new phase with the abolition of segregationist laws and the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement, rock music in South Africa did not. Criticism against the “evils” of rock music was common in the US and came from many fronts, including religious leaders and conservatives who were uncomfortable with its subversion of racial hierarchies. In South Africa, church ministers were concerned, as were the Afrikaner intelligentsia, but their fears were mostly unwarranted. The rock singers who did make the long trek down to South Africa (mostly from Britain) were some of the mildest, least controversial performers of rock music. Policemen, expecting riots at live concerts, eventually became bored. No teenager became possessed by the devil, as some church leaders feared. The National Party, in an opportunistic manoeuvre, even used the threat of rock for political purposes against the United Party in election campaigns. Probably the most significant point to make about rock music's reception among white Afrikaans youth is that, while it gathered support among youth in the rest of the Western world and musicians became movement intellectuals directly linked to the sweeping social changes of the 1960s, its popularity in South Africa had no such effect. Of course, local musicians were stylistically influenced by the new sound, and many rock groups formed, of which the Vikings (who sang in English) was one of the earliest. However, there really is scant evidence that the Afrikaner youth of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s had any similar overt leftist political agendas. It is important to ask exactly why this was the case. The lack of access to leftist political literature, strict government clampdowns and a weakness of the liberal left are important factors. Afrikaans universities were also incubators of nationalist ideology and not known for their critique of apartheid until later. Many Afrikaner youths embraced rock music, but this had no bearing on their political lives. The lack of outspokenness and the non-confrontational attitudes are all indicative and symptomatic of the wider Afrikaner accommodation of apartheid at the time and suggest that Afrikaners were happy enough with its economic benefits, leaving the consequences until later.

Afrikaans music during the height of apartheid remained depoliticised until long after the global movements of the 1960s. It was mostly characterised by kitsch Euro-pop and borrowed *Schlager* music with Afrikaans lyrics. This made it unpopular among the Afrikaner youth, who as a result did not consider Afrikaans suitable and ‘cool’ enough for the type of music they were listening to. However, scattered among the country-styled Afrikaans melodies and operatic pop of singers like Gé Korsten, were some very subtle counter-hegemonic elements. Rarely commercially successful, some Afrikaans artists released music that undermined the idea of Afrikanerdom's hegemonic character of this era. People like Chris Smit, with the imagery on

his 1962 album, or Coetzee en Ceronio with their cover of the banned “Meadowlands” and mixed-language song titles, and early exponents of Afrikaans rock like the Bravados in 1964 and the Hobos in 1966, all represent trace elements of counterculture that stood in contrast to the Afrikaans music mainstream. This was also a time of increasing censorship, with the SABC employing seemingly arbitrary methods in deciding what could be broadcast and what could not. But blaming the acquiescent attitudes of Afrikaans music artists on the strict censorship by the SABC and other cultural gatekeepers like the FAK, only partially explains its existence. South Africa, despite a high degree of censorship and political clampdown, coupled with the late introduction of television, might have seemed very isolated, but the isolation had limits. For instance, even though the Beatles were banned from the airwaves in 1966, you could still buy their albums and pick up their music from neighbouring LM Radio. Again, the accommodation of apartheid and the high living standards this secured for whites has some bearing. Living in white middle-class South Africa meant that you were, on an institutional and geographical level, sufficiently removed from the African part of South African society to entertain a comfortable European lifestyle without thinking twice.

It is perhaps for this reason that commercial Afrikaans pop music remained blissfully close to the bosom of the state and shows how Afrikaner nationalism was firmly embedded in the Afrikaans culture industry. Ultimately, to speak of resistance in popular Afrikaans music before the late 1970s is really to speak of subtle, often unintentional, expressions of identities more personal than political. This attitude came under heavy fire by liberal Afrikaners towards the end of the 1970s and into the 1980s as the failure of apartheid on all levels – social, political, moral and economic – became apparent.

This slow unravelling of Afrikaner unity also led to the emergence of clearer counter-hegemonic identities in Afrikaans music. It remains difficult to establish the exact nature of the relationship between Afrikaans artists, record companies, apartheid censors and the Afrikaans music-buying public at a time when the industry was relatively small. Artists had to be pragmatic if they wanted to survive, which tended to blunt political radicalism. *Musiek-en-Liriek*, which started in 1979, was not primarily about politics. It did, however, signal the first move away from the seemingly compliant *lekkerliedjie* towards the more introspective *luisterliedjie*. Regarding the perhaps unnecessary question of whether or not *Musiek-en-Liriek* constituted an authentic “movement”, one should consider its relation to what preceded it. Unlike the literary *Tagtigers*, who built on and radicalised themes already introduced by a previous generation of writers, the *Musiek-en-Liriek* artists introduced a number of new elements to popular Afrikaans music. There was some rock, some folk, a lot of poetry and generally more intellectual depth. *Musiek-en-Liriek* artists experimented with these new aesthetic principles and partly succeeded in creating new collective rituals (the *Musiek-en-Liriek* concerts, for instance) which were a source of renewal and rejuvenation. But it was not necessarily radical and it was not unified. The artists associated with it also did not feel part of a “movement” per se. It is also difficult to clearly demarcate the central message or ethos of *Musiek-en-Liriek*, other than that it produced more intellectual Afrikaans music. It was not as political as the movements of the sixties in the West, or as political as the later *Voëlvry*, but this should not detract from its contribution. The music of songwriters like Koos du Plessis, especially, is still very revered today. The fact that it coincided with new developments in other artistic media indicates that it was part of a wider shift in Afrikaans arts in general. It was not as commercial as the Afrikaans pop mainstream, but

it did get good exposure on television and drew positive responses from Afrikaner society and some albums, like Laurika Rauch's *Debuut* and Anton Goosen's *Boy van die Suburbs*, sold well.

Goosen was probably the most antagonistic of all the artists directly associated with Musiek-en-Liriek, but his dissension was not typical when compared to the others. His subtly critical songs "Mpanzaville" and "Atlantis", sung by Laurika Rauch on *Debuut* in 1979, were not the full extent of his subversion. He clashed with censors and cultural organisations, played loud Afrikaans rock music and later became highly outspoken against the politically compliant nature of the Afrikaans mainstream during the "music wars" of 1990. Although Afrikaners had been listening to rock and other types of music from abroad, it somehow did not seem viable to sing this type of music in Afrikaans until the late 1970s and early 1980s. The rock music of Goosen and the group Wildebeest in 1980 and 1981 attests to this. Afrikaans was the language of conservative parents, army drill sergeants, angry *dominees* (church ministers), politicians and apartheid. The following years saw a proliferation of political themes – in theatre, music, cabarets and literature – at a time of significant clampdown from the state. New strains of popular Afrikaans music emerged that were not linked to, or even influenced by, Musiek-en-Liriek. The Afrikaner working-class character Bernoldus Niemand was far removed from the poetic and literary music of, say, Koos du Plessis, and although this music failed commercially, it was an early version of what would culminate in the radical Voëlvry tour of 1989.

The acts of remembering and memorialising the cultural significance of an Afrikaans rock 'n roll tour that happened in 1989 in today's South African society is a complex psychological process. Voëlvry's impact has been amplified through literature and the passing of time, overshadowing the contributions of other alternative Afrikaans artists of the time. It is possible that Voëlvry is memorialised to compensate for the dearth of struggle capital in Afrikaner culture. The movement's main target was the conservative middle-class Afrikaner society in which they were raised. In many ways they were true radicals, but although they could be very specific in their cultural attack – identifying individuals like P.W. Botha, and Afrikaner symbols like the *ossewa* in their satire – they were indifferent towards linking up with black anti-apartheid movements. Middle class white suburbia and all its banalities were symbolically broken down, but therein lie the limitations of the movement. Voëlvry did not represent, or link up with, a rising working-class or cohesive political grouping. Although it displayed political undertones, it was not a political movement per se and claims that it brought down apartheid are exaggerations. A more accurate summation, without trying to sound determinist, would be to regard it as a product of its times. The social cohesion and hegemony of Afrikaner society had frayed enough for Voëlvry and other alternative Afrikaans artists to find a level of resonance among mostly young Afrikaners. However, a large majority of Afrikaners felt that society was facing a much bigger threat, namely an unknown future under a ruling black political majority. Under such circumstances, white middle-class suburbia had to be preserved, not undermined.

Viewed in a wider historical context, popular Afrikaans music has been characterised more by a lack of movements than their abundance. Between what little movements (employing a wide definition) there were, Voëlvry stood out and most effectively took on the appearance of the well-known and deeply influential music movements that originated from within the US and Britain in the second half of the twentieth century; movements like rock 'n roll and, to a lesser degree, punk. In a sense, they assimilated elements from decades of developments in these

genres in a very short time. It is, however, important to note here that despite the similarities in appearance, there were fundamental differences as well. Well-defined when compared to looser groupings of Afrikaans music prior to it, rebellious, subversive, loud and antagonistic, Voëlvry reached as large an audience as was receptive to such a movement in South Africa at the time. Ultimately, Voëlvry was the extension, and most publicised variant, of an alternative Afrikaans music underground that started with Bernoldus Niemand's first single "Hou my vas Korporaal" in 1983.

If one takes another step backwards to view the artistic output of Afrikaner artists of the late 1970s to late 1980s in its entirety, including literature, theatre, cabarets and music, it represents one of the more fecund eras in the history of Afrikaans culture. Seen in this context, Voëlvry was the quintessential example of Afrikaans protest music of the apartheid era. There were other Afrikaans groups – some who appeared on the original Voëlvry compilation in 1988 – that were also subversive, but did not become intimately associated with the tour. The Houtstok concert the year after the Voëlvry tour provided a stage – and a large audience – to many of the other alternative Afrikaans acts and can be seen as the culmination of the tension between the alternative Afrikaans movement and the politically accommodating Afrikaans music mainstream.

During the twentieth century Afrikaans culture served political needs as some speakers of the language sought to define themselves in terms of nationhood. As a result, it became embedded in the public sector as the state provided support for the Afrikaans arts and other cultural projects. Although the popular Afrikaans music industry has historically been in the hands of privately owned record companies and at times had a strained relationship with the apartheid state, it still indirectly profited from the prominence that the state gave Afrikaans. With the fall of apartheid, the Afrikaans culture industry lost the state patronage it had enjoyed for so long.

This might have been a blessing in disguise, since the subsequent privatisation of the Afrikaans culture industry has proven to be very successful. Afrikaans culture in general has become highly commoditised on many levels and in many fields such as dedicated television channels, Afrikaans films, literature, the press, online platforms catering specifically for Afrikaans speakers, Afrikaans corporate identities and the like. Part of this success is the perception that Afrikaans needs to be protected against the threat of erosion in a culturally pluralistic society. Many Afrikaners buy into this fear and have in these sectors found 'safe' enclaves where they can constitute a majority thanks to their material wealth. The proliferation of Afrikaans arts festivals, established as a response to the loss in status of being one of two to one of eleven official languages and the loss of state support for the Afrikaans arts, has also created spaces where Afrikaans culture could be 'eventified', to borrow from Hauptfleisch. These spaces continue to be problematic ones, though. Despite real efforts on the side of the organisers to develop and expand the artistic offering of festivals beyond just the white sector of Afrikaans speakers (such as the Suidoosterfees in Cape Town), the economic power this sector yields also limits such endeavours to an extent. This has a direct bearing on popular Afrikaans music as well.

For the Afrikaans music industry, the fall of apartheid heralded booming years as Afrikaans music artists have successfully tapped into the lucrative post-apartheid Afrikaans culture industry. The number of artists selling in the hundreds of thousands per album attests to this.



However, the historic insularity of the Afrikaans music industry has persisted to such an extent that the top rung of the ladder is represented by a homogenous group of Afrikaans singers. Reflecting wider fears that Afrikaans culture is drowning amidst the many other voices in South Africa, and voicing concerns over things like crime, some Afrikaans singers have placed white Afrikaners in the role of victim. Such narratives result in even further insularity. Pop concerts become homogenous spaces that Afrikaners can retreat to. It is not just Steve Hofmeyr's concerts that function like this, but also concerts whose line-ups are determined by popularity. Hence, *Afrikaans is groot* is mostly a white affair, as are the *Ghoema* awards. It remains very difficult for coloured and black Afrikaans artists to gain access to this market. Those who do, often have to make their music palatable for white tastes, rather than express more authentic coloured music culture.

As a final thought, the salient themes highlighted here are ones that influenced the way in which people related to Afrikaans music over time. In fact, they *are* the reasons people have related to Afrikaans music over time. Just as people related to *marabi* or early *boeremusiek* because it meant a temporary escape from the hardships of everyday life, others related to Euro-kitsch Afrikaans pop because it resonated with their romantic aspirations of European lifestyles. One cannot absolutely explain musical tastes through things like class, education, political ideology, religion and other such factors, but they do play a vital role in understanding the production – the very existence – of popular music. The success of mainstream Afrikaans music today is nothing new. Its trajectory from the start of the twentieth century ran parallel with fundamental developments in terms of language and identity politics. And still does. The continuation of popular music produced by and for mainly white Afrikaans speakers, from the era of early language activists at the turn of the twentieth century to the working-class *vastrap boeorekerste* of the early 1930s and the commercial music of *ligte Afrikaanse musiek*, has never been suspended. Even the political Afrikaans music of the 1980s, from *Musiek-en-Liriek* to *Voëlvry*, with its links to literary and theatrical criticism against apartheid from other Afrikaans artists, also functioned within the parameters of white Afrikanerdom. In the post-apartheid context, Afrikaans music has become more diverse, but many artists have become more assertive in projecting their political views and have shown a strong regard for Afrikaner nostalgia. A good question, of course, is if it is fair, or even relevant, to read the political into something as everyday as merely going to a concert of your favourite singer who happens to be white and Afrikaans and successful. Or about playing “De la Rey” in the background when you are having a braai with friends. These are most certainly not conscious political acts. And there is no easy answer. One also does not want to define the whole Afrikaans music industry and its history in terms of race alone. On the other hand, the numerous current discussions on Afrikaans language politics and its future will do well if it takes into consideration such complexities. The question must be asked as to what it means when Afrikaners retreat into secluded spaces, how sustainable such insularity is, and ultimately, how this influences their relationship with a wider South African society.

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