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South African Jazz Culture: Texts, Contexts, and Subtexts

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South African Jazz Culture: Texts, Contexts, and Subtexts

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Introduction: Discursive Flows in South African Jazz Studies—Texts, Contexts, and Subtexts

Nishlyn Ramanna

Abstract

This essay reviews a range of scholarly writings about South African jazz that have appeared as monographs, journal articles, and postgraduate dissertations over the past three decades. It identifies two main streams of research that are respectively contextual or textual in their focus: firstly, social histories of South African jazz culture and/or biographies of particular musicians that consider their lives in the light of these histories; secondly, close musical analyses of particular styles, compositions, and recorded improvisations, and literary analyses of journalistic and creative writings about South African jazz culture. It explains how the essays in this volume contribute to the discursive flows within and across these streams by explicitly and/or implicitly calling for a broadening, deepening, or redirecting of existing channels of inquiry.

The term "South African jazz" references a multidimensional social and sound world that exists simultaneously on multiple levels as: a field of production; a set of compositional, performance, listening, and other "musicking" practices; a body of compositions, recordings, writings, and images; a product of, and response to, race capitalism and its historical, political and social effects; a record of colonial and apartheid oppression and the resistance it engendered; a space of imagination, memory, and amnesia.

In popular and scholarly discourse in South Africa, the term "jazz" may reference a broad range of local urban black popular musics, from marabi to African jazz to kwela to jive, as well as international and U.S.-American styles such as swing, bebop, hard bop, Latin jazz, fusion, smooth jazz and even (albeit to a lesser extent) jazzy popular musics like R&B, soul, and funk. Common to the musical materiality of all these styles are (many if not all of) the following musical elements and approaches that Olly Wilson (1996) and others (Shepherd 1991; Berliner 1994; Kernfeld 1995; Ramanna 2005) have described as emblematic of African-American musical culture: heterogeneous and pliable timbral conceptions; stratified percussive musical textures; cyclical structures; dual accentuation schemes; inflected rhythms

and pitches; improvisation; signifying gestures, and participatory and communal musical conceptions. These musicking practices voice the double consciousness (Du Bois 2003 [1903]) of Black Atlantic culture (Gilroy 1993).

The term "South African jazz studies" references a much smaller intertextual domain constituted by half a dozen or so influential monographs and a few dozen scholarly articles and unpublished postgraduate dissertations. Most of these writings are rooted in social history. Concentrating on "contexts," they explore the social and historical dynamics that have shaped South African jazz culture. A significantly smaller number of these writings are rooted in literary or musical analysis. They explore the sonic and/or literary materiality of South African jazz culture's textual outputs in the form of close analyses of particular styles, songs, improvisations, poems, novels and other literary artefacts.

Examining the methodological underpinnings and empirical foci of a sample of these writings, this introductory essay surveys the flows within and across these respectively context- and text-oriented streams of inquiry. It positions the articles in this collection in relation to these streams and considers some of their implicit and explicit invitations to rethink some of the ways in which South African jazz studies studies South African jazz culture.

The writings considered include some well-known monographs by Ansell (2005), Ballantine (2012 [1993]), Coplan (2007 [1985]), Martin (2013), Muller & Benjamin (2011), and Titlestad (2004), as well as several journal articles and postgraduate dissertations that have proved important for South African jazz studies but are not necessarily very well known outside this field. Because the monographs discussed synthesize ideas first developed in their authors' journal articles, in most instances this essay discusses the monographs rather than those earlier publications. In all, 38 scholarly writings are surveyed: eight books, eleven dissertations, and nineteen journal articles. Of these, five are rooted in literary analysis (one book, one dissertation and three articles). While musical transcription and analysis appears in ten of the studies (one book, four dissertations, and five articles), it is in most instances a subsidiary component: in crude numeric terms, close musical analysis and transcription appears on 520 of these studies' 1480 pages, and in this sense, amounts to 35 % of those studies' overall page count. Biographical accounts are also relatively underrepresented: they are the focus of two books, two journal articles, three dissertation chapters and two book chapters. In short, the greater majority of scholarly writings on South African jazz culture concentrate on its historical and social contexts.

If social history is the predominant mode of South African jazz studies, it is because the dynamics of race, colonialism and capitalism have shaped South African society and cultural production so starkly and deeply. Moreover, the earliest research on South African jazz appeared at a time when progressive music studies were "getting out of analysis" (Kerman 1980; Agawu 2004) and starting to devote what was then long overdue attention to the larger contexts of its production and reception. Likewise, U.S.-American jazz studies was moving away from an earlier biographical and musical focus on "great" soloists to "new musicological" and ethnomusico-

logical accounts of the music (Tomlinson 1991; Walser 1993; Berliner 1994; Monson 1996) that give a more central place to culture, race, and meaning.

South African jazz studies thus differs from U.S.-American jazz studies in that it has focused (mostly) on culture, less so on musicians, and even less so on musical sound. This means that the "detail and particularity" (Agawu 2004:271) of South African jazz culture's musical utterances—and, to a lesser extent, the lives of its individual musicians—is significantly underrepresented in South African jazz studies. For this reason, when "commissioning" articles for this themed issue on studying South African jazz culture, I aimed to collate a set of essays that would focus attention on the creative work or lives of particular composers, performers, curators, and writers and feature the scholarly perspectives of jazz performers, analysts, historians, arts managers, and journalists.

Thus while the writings reviewed in this essay are representative of the scholarship on South African jazz culture, this essay does not attempt to survey the whole field of South African jazz studies. Rather it follows streams of inquiry initiated in earlier studies and advanced in later writings, that are channelled in particular ways in the essays in this collection. Four main developments are recognized: 1) a move from sweeping, general histories to increasingly textured accounts of particular times and situations; 2) a gradual shift from a focus on scenes to an increasing concentration on the stories and experiences of particular musicians and, to a lesser extent, listeners; 3) an emerging focus on musical sounds and their meanings; 4) a growing exploration of how local and Black Atlantic jazz culture is imagined and discursively constituted in local journalistic and creative writing about jazz.

Contextual Studies of South African Jazz Culture

David Coplan's 1985 *In Township Tonight!* tells a story of South Africa's urban black musics from their nineteenth-century beginnings to the 1980s (and, in the case of the revised and expanded 2007 second edition, the early 2000s). As the first social history of urban black performance culture in South Africa, the book radically redefined the discursive terrain of South African music studies, both empirically and epistemologically. Before this, studies of the region's musics mostly presented formalist analyses of the traditional musical practices of ethnically defined social groups. For Coplan, ethnomusicologists had largely ignored the country's black urban musics in the mistaken perception that these musical practices "are not authentically African, but rather the diluted, bastardised, commercial stepchildren of Western cultural colonization" (1985:3).

Eschewing this essentialist perspective, Coplan elegantly argues that these "modern urban forms are African because Africans have chosen to play them. They have composed and selected performance materials from diverse sources to express, celebrate, and comment upon their experience, needs, and aspirations in a world of insecurity and change" (ibid.). As a study that broke new ground, *In Township*

Tonight! was of necessity not comprehensive (Coplan 1985:6; 2007:2). Rather it cleared a space that subsequent scholars have explored, and continue to explore, in greater depth. As Lara Allen observes, the book "initiated a whole sub-discipline in Southern African musicology and ethnomusicology (…) [that] now dominates music research on the sub-continent in terms of quantity and quality" (Allen 2008:129).

Revisiting the discursive terrain opened up by *In Township Tonight!*, Christopher Ballantine's 1993 *Marabi Nights* presents a more empirically and chronologically focused social history of South Africa's vaudeville and jazzing traditions between the 1920s and the early 1940s (and, in the case of the revised and expanded 2012 second edition, the 1950s). Through the close analysis of a rich array of primary source materials—in particular, some seventy oral history interviews conducted mostly by the author—Ballantine provides compelling accounts of the spaces in which the music developed, its social and political meanings, the repressive forces that shaped its development, its imbrication in global and local circuits of consumption, and its gendered dimensions. Quoting liberally from his source materials, Ballantine creates an evocative, "polyvocal" text that—as Sibongile Khumalo puts it in her foreword—"captures beyond academic pursuance the 'feel' of how township jazz evolved" (Ballantine 2012:xv).

Applying the descriptive and analytical modes developed in these source texts to other aspects of South African jazz culture, successive scholars have paid closer attention to particular styles, locales, institutions, spaces, musicians, and texts. Lara Allen (1993) focuses on pennywhistle kwela of the 1950s and early 1960s, a musical style that Coplan describes as a "landmark development in the international history of black popular music and African jazz in South Africa" (2007:189). Interweaving social-historical and musicological epistemologies, Allen develops an insightful and comprehensive account of the music, its leading performers, the broader circumstances of its production and reception and its political meanings. Particularly significant for its equal focus on musical sounds *and* their social contexts, Allen's study "remains the most complete and definitive work on this classic style" (ibid.). It is one of very few studies that flow across both the context-focused and text-focused research streams described in this essay.

Valmont Layne's (1995) social history of jazz and dance band performance in 1930s–1960s Cape Town is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it critiqued and moved beyond the Johannesburg-centric portrayals of South African jazz culture developed by Coplan, Ballantine and Allen. As Layne explains, the Western Cape has a distinctive socioeconomic and political history that has in turn shaped a distinctive performance culture:

> Cape Town was unique with respect to Southern Africa's regional political economy. It had a small African population—not more than 10% of the total for most of the nineteenth century. It also experienced a tradition of nineteenth-century Cape Liberalism which influenced the texture of both White and Black politics into the following century. Cape Town also developed a separate economic path from that of the Witwatersrand. Situated at the tip of the African continent, it operated as a colonial port of call for passing ships, a market and shipping centre for the farming interior, and a site

> of merchant capitalist development. Unlike the Witwatersrand, the Western Cape did not undergo a direct mining revolution. The region lacked the direct developmental benefits of industrialization, as cheap African labour, machinery, markets and other resources became concentrated on the Witwatersrand. Cape Town's labouring classes therefore have a different genealogy and have different cultural traditions to that of their counterparts on the Witwatersrand. (1995:11–2)

Layne's study thus focuses attention on a distinctive array of sociocultural dynamics that have since been explored in greater detail by Denis-Constant Martin (2013) and Carol Muller and Sathima Bea Benjamin (2011) in their wider ranging studies of "Cape jazz." Moreover, Layne's critique of the Johannesburg-centricity of scholarship on jazz in South Africa remains pertinent: apart from a few short studies of jazz culture in Grahamstown (Baines 1996), Port Elizabeth (Goosen 1999), and Durban (Ramanna 2004; 2005:170–87; Duby 2013), most scholarship remains focused on jazz culture in Gauteng.

Secondly, while Layne—like Coplan, Ballantine, and Allen—crafts an account that foregrounds social groups, institutions and milieus (1995:25–130), he also tells part of his story from the distinctive perspective of an individual musical life (131–61). Recognising that "aspects of performance (…) are integrally both social and individual" (135), Layne chronicles the musical life of Jimmy Adams, a pioneering bandleader who "sought to blend American swing and African jazz (…) with traditional Coloured dance music" (132).[1] For Layne, Adams' work appeared to "prefigure the successes of the jazz aesthetes in the late 1950s and early 1960s, some of whom developed from being local Cape musicians to innovators of a broader South African jazz idiom" (ibid.).[2] As Layne explains, "biography can serve a valuable function in reconstructing the specific history of performance since it depicts relationships between broader social change and individual agency" (132–3). Layne's study is thus significant for drawing attention to the historical importance of lesser-known South African musicians, and for being the first to adopt an epistemological framework that increasingly informs scholarly writing about South African jazz (Szymczak 2006; Dlamini 2010:41–62; Muller and Benjamin 2011; Martin 2013:187–266).

Although not conceived as an academic study, Maxine McGregor's 1995 memoir *Chris McGregor and the Brotherhood of Breath: My life with a South African Jazz Pioneer* is an excellent example of the kind of phenomenological history that Layne argues for. As the blurb states, Maxine McGregor "was more than Chris McGregor's wife—at times she was road manager, booking agent, publicist and often sole support for the struggling musicians" (McGregor 1995). A journalist by profession, McGregor tells an enthralling story of Chris McGregor, his fellow musicians in the Blue Notes and the Brotherhood of Breath, and the many musical and social scenes that they traversed. Packed with rich descriptions, poignant insights, and germane inclusions from archival sources—notably Chris's diaries—her narrative makes intellectual and emotional sense of the messy sociality of musicking lives in ways that have wider implications for academic studies of South African jazz.[3]

If South African jazz studies can be said to have "begun" with *In Township Tonight!*, Lara Allen's 2000 PhD dissertation *Representation, Gender and Women in Black South African Popular Music*, 1948–1960 presently inhabits the midpoint of that thirty-year history. Allen historicises and critically analyses male representations of urban black women performers in contemporaneous journalistic discourse, in film, and on the stage, thereby "addressing a gender lacuna in South African popular music studies" (Allen 2000:6). Through oral history interviews, Allen also explores women musicians' experiences and the various forms of agency they were able to exercise, particularly as recording artists and stage performers. In her words:

> This is a story about stories and story telling; about voices, performance and myth-making. Its characters are divas and backing singers, stars and social outcasts: the women involved in the production of black South African urban popular music in the middle decades of the twentieth century. There are two levels in my narrative: the first is an exploration and documentation of the contribution to and experiences of women in urban black South African musical culture; the second is an examination of the process of representation that takes place when telling another person's story (Allen 2000:1).

Allen's (2000) study revisits aspects of the scholarship on urban black popular music and jazz that precedes it, but it also prefigures approaches developed in later studies. Like Coplan (1985), Ballantine (1993), and her own earlier (1993) study, Allen concentrates on jazz culture in Johannesburg, explaining that the city "was (and still is) the centre of the South African music industry; during the 1950s all the major recording studios, the fledgling film industry and the major pictorial magazines were based in the city" (2000:2). Like Layne, she considers the stories of stars as well as lesser-known musicians. While not conventionally "biographical," her chapter "Music, Movies and Magazines Featuring Dolly Rathebe" develops an analysis that centres around a particular musician and echoes Layne's call for histories written from the vantage point of individual musical lives.

Like its predecessors, Allen's study is rooted in the "theoretical paradigms and narrative modes of South African so-called 'revisionist' historiography" (Erlmann 1994:148). However, in making the politics of representation central to both *what* she writes and *how* she writes, Allen also takes guidance from feminist ethnography (Abu-Lughod 1990). Implicitly drawing on critical geographer David Harvey's (1990) insights, her analyses emphasise the ways in which gender and other power relations can be "spatialised" and play out differently in different social, commercial, and discursive spaces. Contesting the dominant views of earlier studies, her account of Dorothy Masuka and Troubadour Records (Allen 2000:121–32; 2003) nuances over-neat scholarly characterisations of race relations and political resistance in 1950s jazz culture, and reveals that commercial music spaces could inadvertently function as sites of political dissidence. In its phenomenological focus on personal experiences and particular individuals, its analytical sensitivity to the refracting effects of space, its theoretical heterogeneity, its scholarly reflexivity, and its overt and implicit invitations to rethink aspects of South African jazz history, Al-

len's work prefigures the tenor of a lot of later South African jazz scholarship (e. g. Lucia 2002; Allen 2002; Ramanna 2004; Ramanna 2005; Duby 2013; Pyper 2013; Dalamba 2013).

Into the 2000s, the empirical scope of South African jazz studies has widened considerably as scholars have addressed other aspects of South African jazz culture's early history, its exile histories, its histories outside Johannesburg, and its post-apartheid histories. Alongside this, there has also been a theoretical broadening as scholars have drawn on the thinking of prominent theorists rooted in various humanities and social science disciplines. Epistemologically, there has been a corresponding expansion as scholars have drawn on an increasingly heterogeneous mix of archival, (auto)ethnographic, and other phenomenological methodologies.

Extending the story that *Marabi Nights* tells into the 1950s, Ballantine (1999) focuses on the Manhattan Brothers, a close harmony vocal group that sang faithful covers of songs by groups like the Mills Brothers. He unravels the contradictory "modalities of globalisation" (Ballantine 1999:16) that underpinned the production and critical reception of the Manhattan Brothers' songs as they moved—at the instigation of their profit-seeking record company—from covering U.S.-American songs, to singing lyrically vernacularised versions, to producing original material that consciously evoked an African sound. Coming full circle, the group created English versions of this Africanised repertoire for international audiences. Addressing another dimension of 1950s jazz culture, Ballantine (2000) "considers the overlapping effects of race, class and gender oppression and the ways these multiply impacted on women performers" (Ramanna 2016:458). Versions of both these articles are incorporated into the revised 2012 edition of *Marabi Nights*.

Gwen Ansell's 2005 *Soweto Blues: Jazz, Popular Music and Politics in South Africa* offers a panoramic account of South African jazz that revisits the scenes described by Coplan (1985) and considers their more recent histories from the mid-1980s to the early 2000s. Despite the fame of jazz musicians like Abdullah Ibrahim and Hugh Masekela who went into exile, South Africa's exile jazz culture largely registers as an absence in earlier studies. In contrast, Ansell devotes an entire chapter to South African jazz abroad:

> There was another South Africa outside South Africa. It was composed of memories and dreams—sometimes prophetic visions—as much as realities. It was more effectively pan-African in vision and action than the geographical South Africa is, even today, after a decade of liberation. The huge diaspora of exiles, in America, Europe, and, very importantly, the rest of the African continent, was braided together by links of friendship and family and by the cultural structure and policies of the liberation movement. And it was to this South Africa that most of the musicians who left—consciously and explicitly—belonged. (Ansell 2005:221)

Originally conceived as an eight-part radio documentary—but substantially expanded—*Soweto Blues* pays scrupulous attention to the stories the musicians themselves have told of their lives in South Africa's jazz worlds. Ansell's writing reads

like jazz sounds, providing an aural history that resonates with the distinctive voices and narrative styles of her interviewees.

Adding to the aural richness of South African jazz studies, Chats Devroop and Chris Walton (2007) edited a collection of interviews—*Unsung: South African Jazz Musicians Under Apartheid*—with ten veteran jazz musicians: Johnny Mekoa, Johnny Fourie, Philip Tabane, Barney Rachabane, Robbie Jansen, Tony Schilder, Tete Mbambisa, Jasper Cook, Noel Stockton and Dave Galloway. For Lindelwa Dalamba, "the strength of *Unsung* lies in its presentation of the stories of musicians whose personal testimonies are rarely heard, although other scholars have expertly documented the contexts in which they made music" (2007:76). The interviewers' dogged adherence to a restrictive interview schedule limits the richness of the data that is elicited, but nevertheless some "great stories leak through" (Dalamba 2007:77).

Such stories, like those of Denis-Constant Martin's interviewees Vincent Kolbe, Chris McGregor, and Rashid Vally convey the grain of the musicking experience under apartheid with an acuity that academic paraphrase can seldom attain:

> At that time the government was fascist (…) one has to realise, and all cultural happenings were closely surveyed. I remember concerts where, on lifting my head from the piano, I became aware of a row of policemen behind the audience. As we were separated from these policemen by several hundred enthusiastic spectators the risks were limited—the police were aware that if they had stopped us from playing at this point they would have had a riot on their hands. At the end of the concert while they discussed what action to take, we had time to rush to our bus for the next lap of our trip. We had to become specialists in dodging and camouflage. Always having to prepare ourselves in these precautionary ways was exhausting; there was nowhere where we could ever really relax. (Chris McGregor, quoted in Martin 2013:260)

The interview transcripts mentioned above are included in Martin's (2013) wide-ranging social history of the urban popular musics of the Western Cape. They are presented as three "interludes" (Martin 2013: 188–207; 259–61; 264–65) interspersed with historical contextualisation and analysis by the author (187–8; 209–57). This part of Martin's narrative echoes the textual organisation of Carol Muller's and Sathima Benjamin's innovative social history/(auto)biography of Benjamin's life in South African jazz (Muller & Benjamin 2011), which is discussed in greater detail later in this essay. Christopher Ballantine has recently published transcripts of his interviews with Chris McGregor (2013) and Peter Rezant, "doyen of South African jazz band leaders" (2016). As with many of the interview transcripts referred to above, these transcripts draw attention to the details, particularities, and qualia of South African jazz culture and plunge readers into its rich sociality.

Drawing on archival sources rather than oral history, scholars like Allen (2003; 2004a), Rob Allingham (2009), and Lindelwa Dalamba (2013; 2014) have begun to enrich the historical narratives sketched out by Coplan (2007 [1985]) and Ansell (2005) by describing particular episodes in South African jazz history in greater detail. Allen's 2003 study of Dorothy Masuka and Troubadour Records is described above. In her 2004 study, Allen builds on this analysis by considering the gangster culture of Sophiatown with particular reference to its representation on film. Devel-

oping an analysis that draws on Lacanian thought, rather than the Marxist historical analysis that has generally informed scholarly writing about South African jazz culture, Allen "critiques the commonplace interpretation of the period's black urban culture as *intentional resistance* against apartheid" (2004a:19).

Apart from Allen (2002) and Lucia (2002), which are discussed in the next section on text-focused studies of South African jazz culture, very little scholarly attention has been devoted to iconic compositions. Addressing this gap, Allingham (2009) considers the complex history of the hit tune "Pata Pata" and reveals that it is actually an amalgamation of two melodies by two different composers, Alson Mkhize and Reggie Msomi. He traces how the copyright became the property of Miriam Makeba, record producer Jerry Ragovoy, and a German music publishing company, noting that the song "continues to generate fairly significant income from both mechanical and performance royalties in addition to synchronization licensing" (Allingham 2009:129).

Dalamba (2013) inverts the typical focus of earlier historical accounts by making the apartheid state itself her primary object of analysis. She details its inconsistent responses to the *King Kong* cast's various applications to travel out of South Africa.[4] Dalamba positions this inconsistency in relation to the rapid political shifts of the late 1950s into the early 1960s, and reveals how these vacillations reflected the "ambivalent positions" of both African jazz and the early apartheid state "in the cultural politics of the Cold War" (Dalamba 2013:81). In her doctoral research, Dalamba (2014) provides a nuanced account of the social and musical dynamics of South African jazz in Britain between 1961 and 1973.

In his doctoral study of the Blue Notes, performer/musicologist Sazi Dlamini (2010) revisits the musical and historical terrain covered in Maxine McGregor's memoir. He develops a comprehensive account of this remarkable group, that considers its individual members' musical biographies, the music's status as a site of Pan-Africanist "triple-consciousness" and the complex politics of the band's critical reception, both in South Africa and in exile in Britain and continental Europe. Dlamini's study, like Allen's (1993), is significant for the close attention it pays to both the musical sounds and the wider social and political contexts that the Blue Notes inhabited. In this sense Allen's (1993) and Dlamini's (2010) studies flow across the contextual and textual streams of inquiry described at the beginning of this essay.

Offering insider accounts of South African jazz culture, other jazz scholars have focused on its more recent histories often drawing on their personal experiences as participants within some of the late apartheid and post-apartheid jazz scenes. In my research on jazz in post-apartheid Durban and Johannesburg (Ramanna 2004; 2005) I consider how the different jazz cultures of those cities have been shaped by their distinctive political, economic, and racial geographies. For example, I propose that Durban's compact topography made it unfeasible for the apartheid state to separate white residential areas from African, coloured, and Indian residential areas by siting them tens of kilometres apart, as was the case in a city like Johannesburg. This resulted in higher levels of interracial awareness and interaction in Durban than was

customary in cities like apartheid-era Johannesburg. The musicians I interviewed felt that this in turn had facilitated the kinds of interracial musicking that characterised the jazz scenes of late-apartheid and early post-apartheid Durban.

Marc Duby (2013) presents a complementary perspective in his autobiographical account of 1980s jazz culture in Durban. He describe his experiences of performing at the Rainbow Restaurant, a legendary jazz club where jazz musicians and fans of all races were able to mix and musick together. The club was in a part of the city where a white area and a black area were in close proximity to one another, and was accordingly designated a "grey area" by the apartheid authorities in the 1980s. This meant that the restaurant/bar was legally allowed to serve a multiracial clientele, and thanks to its jazz-loving owner it became the premier jazz venue in the city. During the 1980s' many "states of emergency," gigs happened under the watchful eye of the security police whom the owner and MC would ironically welcome as "our uninvited guests" (89; Ansell 2010:210) when he introduced bands.

In one of the earliest critical accounts of post-apartheid jazz culture, Allen (2004b) considers its sometimes-opportunistic identity politics and its diminished relevance as a locus of political critique as the preferred music of the new regime's elites. Affirming Allen's appraisal, I consider jazz's interpellation by corporate interests and its inadvertent complicity with neoliberal agendas underlying the discourses of the Rainbow Nation and the African Renaissance (Ramanna 2005; 2013). Brett Pyper (2013) both agrees and disagrees with these appraisals. Drawing on his dual experiences of participant-observation research with township jazz appreciation societies and his role as artistic director of a major national arts festival, Pyper argues that it is not appropriate to think of post-apartheid jazz culture in unitary terms; rather, there are multiple South African jazz cultures that reflect the multiple class positions of their listeners.

In an insider ethnography that builds on Allen's (2000) work, Ceri Moelwyn-Hughes (2013) considers the experiences of 28 professional women musicians based in Gauteng and explores how their gender impacts their careers. In a much smaller and more focused study that draws directly on Moelwyn-Hughes' work, Keamogetswe Mosiane (2015) considers how dynamics of musical and social space, as well as class, race and sexuality, have shaped the professional experiences of three women bass players active on the jazz scenes of post-apartheid South Africa. Mosiane's study includes full transcripts of her interviews with the bassists, whose testimony reveals the richness and complexity of gender relations in contemporary South African jazz culture and the sometimes surprising ways these are multiply refracted by race, class, and sexuality.

Since the later 2000s, scholars writing from the discipline of heritage studies have begun paying close attention to the political economies of jazz's production and reception in post-apartheid South Africa. Thomas Dancer (2009) investigates the construction and programming of the Standard Bank Joy of Jazz Festival and the competing imperatives of profit-making and "safeguarding" jazz as a form of intangible heritage. In an interview-based study, William Masemola (2011) traces

how these sometimes but not always competing imperatives have shaped the experiences of a small sample of emerging and established musicians who have performed on the Festival's "developmental" and "main" stages. In another interview-based study, Akhona Ndzuta (2013) investigates the ways in which prominent contemporary jazz musicians like Concord Nkabinde, Marcus Wyatt and Siya Makuzeni have learned to act as one-person businesses, manage their own careers and earn livings within the harsh "gig economies" of neoliberal South Africa's arts and culture sectors. Gwen Ansell and Helena Barnard (2013) explore these dynamics from a business studies perspective. They argue:

> Policy interventions exclusively focused on fixed infrastructure neither build on the existing strengths of South African jazz nor address the rapidly changing business climate. They derive from the misguided goal of "ordering the chaos" of the industry, based on media and fictional stereotypes of the creative, but disordered, disorganized jazzman. Yet the industry's strengths and its innovative edge (the strength and creativity of individual musicians) are founded on, and derived from, volatility, adaptivity and fluid but strong personal relations. Policy interventions need to address these characteristics supportively, through investment in digital readiness as a priority. (Ansell and Barnard 2013:27)

Carol Muller and Sathima Bea Benjamin's *Musical Echoes: South African Women Thinking in Jazz* (2011) flows across several of the research streams described above. At once a work of (auto)biography, (auto)ethnography, and social history, the book chronicles the life of Cape Town born jazz singer Sathima Bea Benjamin, who married Abdullah Ibrahim, went into exile with him in Europe and the United States, and built an independent career as an uncompromisingly original performer and composer. It also explores "the pertinence of [Sathima's] stories to larger scholarly discussions about race, gender, exile and jazz historiography" (Ramanna 2012:1014). Amplifying Coplan's original project, the book resists received and essentialist notions of "African" music and "jazz." It also converges with Layne's and Martin's social histories of the jazz cultures of the Western Cape, and their focus on individual musical lives. It resonates with McGregor's and Ansell's explorations of exile jazz, and along with Dalamba's and Dlamini's studies, offers thought-provoking theoretical analyses of this aspect of South African jazz culture. It adds empirical, methodological and theoretical weight to Allen's and later authors' work on jazz and gender, and—because Benjamin also managed her own record company—also brings a feminist perspective to more recent work on the political economy of South African jazz.

As a history, *Musical Echoes* develops an evocative account of musical life in the Western Cape, in Europe and in the United States, but from the perspective of an individual musician's life. As an (auto)biography, it eschews the depersonalised modes of social history and captures the emotional richness of an individual's life in music, particularly for a black female musician living far from her geographical, social, and creative homeland. As a scholarly work, it critiques the nationalist and patriarchal narratives that still dominate jazz scholarship, and invites scholars

to write about jazz in more daring ways. The book is weaker in its explorations of the sonic materiality of Benjamin's art but—as the next section on textual studies of South African jazz culture demonstrates—this underrepresentation of close musical analysis is characteristic of South African jazz studies as a whole.

Textual Studies of South African Jazz Culture

That said, many of the studies described above do address aspects of South African jazz's sonic materiality, albeit briefly in most instances. Coplan (1985:258–63; 2007:432–7) provides a transcription and analysis of a solo piano piece in the marabi tradition "Highbreaks" as played by Aaron Lebona. He considers how the short I-IV-Ic-V cycles may be rooted in indigenous musical traditions, but notes that while that exact root progression "does not occur in traditional South African music (...) the two-, four- or six-bar recurrent root sequence is fundamental to it" (2007:433). Christopher Ballantine (2012 [1993]) offers no close musical analyses, but—at least for this reader/listener—tracks 3, 5, 12, 22 and 23 on the *Marabi Nights* CD present sonic clues to possible ways in which "the South African jazz sound" may be rooted in older indigenous musical practices.

As mentioned, Allen's (1993) work is exemplary for the close attention it pays to the musical sounds themselves, and throughout the work discussions of social contexts are interspersed with closer musical descriptions. Drawing on an analysis of over 250 kwela songs, Allen (1993:58–130) provides a detailed description of the kwela sound that identifies its characteristic formal, melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and textural properties. Kevin Davidson (2012) presents two transcriptions and a brief analysis of the internal construction of two of saxophonist Barney Rachabane's improvisations on his 1989 album *Barney's Way*. Shaun Johannes (2010) analyses the development of the bass guitar in the musical genres of mbaqanga and ghoema in Cape Town and considers the techniques of two of its most prolific bassists, Spencer Mbadu and Gary Kriel. The study includes several transcriptions of their solos as well as full transcriptions of his lengthy interviews with them.

In studies that synthesise textual and contextual approaches, Allen (2002), Lucia (2002), Ramanna (2005), Dlamini (2010), and Washington (2012) home in on particular compositions or recorded performances or particular moments within them, and consider how some of South African jazz's textual instances index wider social and political fields of meaning. These analyses draw on different hermeneutic techniques, but they all implicitly rely on a conception of musical sound as an index and icon.[5]

Drawing on notions of "addressivity," Allen (2002) considers the many meanings of the popular songs "Lakutshon' Ilanga" (by Mackay Davashe) and "Into Yam" (by Dorothy Masuka) by exploring their musical structure and their various recorded performances—most notably by Miriam Makeba in a shebeen scene in *Come Back, Africa*, a 1959 documentary drama on the harsh impact of apartheid on the every-

day lives of African people. Developing an account of music as a locus of memory, Christine Lucia (2002) offers a close reading of Abdullah Ibrahim's composition "Mamma" (Brand 1973; 1979) that considers how aspects of its harmonic and rhythmic language invoke "a *climate* of memory" (Lucia 2002:128) that both yearns for an imagined and idealised past and dreams of a utopian future beyond apartheid.

Through interview research and close musical analysis, I contemplate the experiences of sixteen musicians active on the jazz scenes of post-apartheid Durban and Johannesburg (Ramanna 2005). I explore how these musicians actively make meaning and "say" things about their wider experiences by consciously and/or intuitively harnessing the affective and connotative power of particular sounds and arrangements of sounds in their compositions and improvisations. Sazi Dlamini (2010: 285–314) explores how various narratives of identity find sonic expression in Johnny Dyani's and Mongezi Feza's music. In a subsequent chapter (324–56), he considers musical articulations of death and exile on the Blue Notes' album *Blue Notes for Mongezi* (1976). A tribute to trumpeter Mongezi Feza, who died in London at the age of 30 on 14 December 1975, the album is a free improvisation recorded by the remaining Blue Notes on 23 December 1975, just hours after Feza's memorial service in London.

Through a related analysis of selected commercial recordings by Chris McGregor and the Brotherhood of Breath and Winston "Mankunku" Ngozi, Salim Washington (2012) explores continuities and divergences in the musical aesthetics of South African jazz musicians who went into exile and the music of "inxile" musicians who remained behind. In both traditions he hears over time an increasing concentration on indigenous musical sensibilities and sounds. In the inxile tradition he notes a rootedness in an earlier tradition of African-American musicking, while in the exile tradition he hears evocations of the post-Coltranian avant-garde. The neologism "inxile" emphasizes the alienation that black musicians who remained in South Africa had to endure despite living in a country that they and their forebears had inhabited for several centuries.

In research that spans jazz and literary studies, Michael Titlestad (2003a; 2003b; 2004; 2005; 2007), Lindelwa Dalamba (2003; 2006; 2008) and Salim Washington (2015) investigate the literary materiality and discursive constitution of journalistic and creative writing about South African jazz music. By probing their authors' narrative and textual strategies, Dalamba (2008) explores how the autobiographies of Miriam Makeba (1988; 2004), Joe Mogotsi (2002) and Hugh Masekela (2004) "both inhabit history and help to construct it" (Dalamba 2008:55). Sam Raditlhalo (2009) develops a related critique of Masekela's autobiography, while Washington (2015) considers how jazz comes to function as a character in Mongane Wally Serote's novel *To Every Birth Its Blood* (2004 [1981]). Washington explores how the book, like the South African and African-American jazz it references, both inhabits and constructs a transnational Black Atlantic history (Gilroy 1993). Exploring similar concerns in his writings on South African jazz, Titlestad (2007) explains that his 2004 book *Making the Changes: Jazz in South African Literature and Reportage*

grew out of a fascination with the "multiple ways in which African-American music, culture, and politics [is] invoked, cited, addressed, or challenged in the discursive life of South African jazz" (Titlestad 2007:75).

To date, very little research has focused on album covers, posters, fashions; in short, the visual-textual practices that constitute South African jazz culture. However, work has begun. The photograph on the cover of Muller and Benjamin's book shows a 26 year-old Benjamin opposite Duke Ellington. This picture, thought to be lost for over 30 years, was part of a series from a recording session that Benjamin had done with Ellington, Billy Strayhorn, Abdullah Ibrahim, Johnny Gertze, Svend Asmussen and Makaya Ntshoko in Paris in 1963. The tapes from that historic session were also thought to be lost, but following their rediscovery the album *A Morning in Paris* was released in 1997.

On p. xii of their book (Muller and Benjamin 2011), Muller provides a poignant description of the album's cover photograph that points to the ways in which jazz culture's visual texts can be rich repositories of social, historical, and emotional meaning. Such meanings are explored in Niklas Zimmer's (2012) examination of the "jazz photography" of Basil Breakey. However, the images of other photographers like George Hallet, Jurgen Schadeberg, Rashid Lombard, Rafique "Rafs" Mayet or Ranjit Kally, while revered in South African jazz circles, still await scholarly attention.

While many of the studies cited in this introduction include reproductions of posters, album covers, and archival photographs, few devote any close analytical attention to them. But if scholars have ignored what's under their noses, it's because disciplines, as discourses, are regimes of truth. Their epistemologies are productively disciplining, but they also emphasize particular lines of inquiry and implicitly close off others because they make ontological assumptions about their objects of study. When engaging an ontologically multiplex phenomenon like music, scholars typically are obliged to make hard choices: musical *or* literary analysis; communities *or* individuals; a focus on cultures *or* texts, and so on.

To date, exceptions notwithstanding, South African jazz studies has largely focused on South African jazz as a sociocultural discourse. Its primary unit of analysis has been the jazz scene, and its primary methodology has been oral history. The essays in this volume retain these understandings of jazz as social fact, but they emphasise its individual and particular dimensions by concentrating on the analysis of particular performers, composers, writers, and arts managers. Moving beyond the field's concentration on contexts, the essays develop detailed accounts of particular texts by drawing on various musical-analytical, historical-archival, and literary-theoretical methodologies.

The Essays in this Collection

Through transcription and close musical analysis, composer/alto saxophonist Chris Merz considers the musical idiolects of five influential South African jazz alto saxophonists: Kippie Moeketsi, Barney Rachabane, Robbie Jansen, Dudu Pukwana, and Ntemi Piliso. Building directly on Allen's (1993) musical analyses of kwela, Merz offers a "musicianly" account of these players' respective styles—an embodied understanding of their sonic materiality and physicality—that invites the reader to listen closely to their harmonic and rhythmic vocabularies and the nuances of timbre, phrasing, articulation, and rhythmic feel that define their distinctive voices on the instrument. By exploring the ways the different players code-switch between South African and U.S.-American jazz "accents" and "dialects," Merz implicitly traces sonic connections across the Black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993). The essay was originally written as a conference paper in 1993 while Merz (now based in the U.S.) was living in South Africa and teaching at the former University of Natal in Durban. In all that time, the scholarly space that the essay started to fill has narrowed only minutely. For this reason, barring minor revisions called for during the review process, the essay has been left in its original form, a statement written in the context of a past disciplinary moment that nevertheless remains very relevant to the present one.

Jeffrey Brukman considers another aspect of South African jazz culture that is relatively neglected in the literature: close analysis of its compositions. He explores aspects of the internal structure and intertextual references at play in Paul Hanmer's *Nachtroep*, a triple concerto for violin, piano and trumpet/flugelhorn. Best known among South African jazz fans for his work with Miriam Makeba on her return to South Africa in the 1990s (Ansell 2005:309) and as pianist/composer/leader on several albums including *Trains to Taung* (1997) and *Windows to Elsewhere* (2002) Hanmer also composes larger scale through-composed works that draw on the art music traditions of seventeenth- to twentieth-century Europe. *Nachtroep* is a productive object of analysis because it conceptually and sonically references the Kaapse Klopse minstrel festival, a cultural event that has attracted much popular and scholarly attention, both locally and internationally (Martin 1999; Oliphant 2013; Davids 2013). In focusing analytical attention on *Nachtroep*, Brukman implicitly invites future jazz scholars to explore large-scale, cross-genre works by other South African "jazz" composers.

Lindelwa Dalamba observes that South African jazz history has largely been told from the perspective of its iconic musicians. Through patient archival research and analysis of recordings and their paratexts, she traces the story of bandleader/alto saxophonist Gwigwi Mrwebi (1919 to 1973), a somewhat elusive and neglected figure in historical writings about South African jazz whose professional life nevertheless traversed most of the key moments in the history of this music. As Dalamba observes, "His few noted recordings in South Africa happened in crucial years of South African jazz's history: at the vanguard of African jazz's birth, to when it segued into commercial popular music. His liminal existence in Britain's live music

scenes enabled (or required) him to collaborate with a variety of musicians, and tells us more about South Africans' ordinary musical lives in Britain as a result." Exploring South African jazz history from the perspective of a lesser-known musician enables Dalamba to disrupt some of this history's dominant narratives and present a more nuanced and textured account of South African jazz's development within and beyond South Africa.

Salim Washington's essay focuses on various intertextual dialogues (between jazz and literature), and sociohistorical and political dialogues (between black South Africa and African-America) at play in Mandla Langa's jazz novel, *A Rainbow on the Paper Sky*. As with his 2015 analysis of Mongane Wally Serote's *To Every Birth its Blood*, Washington considers how the book, like the South African and African-American jazz it references, both inhabits and constructs a transnational Black Atlantic history (Gilroy 1993). For Washington, as for Langa, Serote, the fictional characters they create, and the urban black South African jazz aficionados these characters evoke, jazz is a form of consciousness: an imaginary, feelingful, liberating realm. For many urban black South Africans, jazz like other Black Atlantic musics may be said to express an "obstinate and consistent commitment to the idea of a better future" (Gilroy 1993:36), offering "commentary on the systematic and pervasive relations of domination that supply its conditions of existence" (Ibid:38). Washington's essay forms part of a larger research project that considers how this consciousness finds expression in the jazz novels of other black South African writers. In turn these explorations of South African jazz culture's jazz consciousness can feed back into social-historical and musical-analytical streams of inquiry, and thereby deepen them.

Brett Pyper offers a historical account of the festival sphere that has been and continues to be a vital aspect of South African jazz culture. Focusing in on this sphere's more recent post-apartheid history and drawing on an interview with Rashid Lombard, the director of the highly successful Cape Town Jazz Festival, he considers the competing demands of heritage and commerce that arts managers have to juggle. Factoring into these considerations the geographical, spatial, and economic conditions explored in his earlier work (Pyper 2013), as well as work by Layne (1995), Ramanna (2004) Dancer (2009), Masemola (2011), and Ansell and Barnard (2013), Pyper develops an insider account of a relatively concealed musicking practice that nevertheless profoundly shapes the musical landscapes of South African jazz culture.

Gwen Ansell offers a journalist's perspective on writings about South African jazz that interrogates the musician/scholar's perspective developed in this essay. She considers the insights and essentialisms that characterize a range of scholarly and journalistic writings about South African jazz and highlights the intellectual and scholarly value of perspectives from beyond the academy; in particular, Ansell considers the varying ways in which apartheid-era academic prejudice frequently discounted the serious consideration of South African jazz. Building on Pyper's notion of many South African jazzes, and introducing the useful notion of "organic musicologists," Ansell traces how a substantial amount of the surviving knowledge of

South African jazz during apartheid can be attributed to the work of journalists, writers, photographers and enthusiasts who operated outside the academy. Ansell argues that this work continues to provide valuable insight and nuance to the subsequently established scholarly narrative, and surveys the work of present-day organic musicologists whose work continues to shape thinking about South African jazz culture beyond the domesticated perspectives of the academy.

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Notes

1 Mohamed Adhikari (2006:468–9) explains: "Contrary to (now perhaps increasingly outmoded) international usage, in South Africa the term 'coloured' does not refer to black people in general. It instead alludes to a phenotypically diverse group of people descended largely from Cape slaves, the indigenous Khoisan population and other people of African and Asian descent who had been assimilated into Cape colonial society by the late nineteenth century. Being also partly descended from European settlers, coloured people have popularly been regarded as being of 'mixed race' and have held an intermediate status in the South African racial hierarchy, distinct from the historically dominant white minority and the numerically preponderant African population. There are approximately three-and-a-half million coloured people in South Africa today. Constituting no more than 9 per cent of the population throughout the twentieth century and lacking significant political or economic power, coloured people have always formed a marginal group in South African society."

2 Notably Abdullah Ibrahim, previously known as Dollar Brand.

3 As explained later in this essay, Muller and Benjamin's *Musical Echoes:South African Women Thinking in Jazz* (2011) interweaves both personal and academic/analytical modes of description. The former are presented in "call" sections that focus on Benjamin's stories while the academic analyses are presented in "response" sections that consider the pertinence of these stories to wider academic discussions about place, race, diaspora, and jazz historiography.

4 For a comprehensive account of *King Kong*, see Tyler Fleming's (2009) history of the musical from its genesis in the 1950s to its later restaging in 1979.

5 For a rich discussion of music's indexical and iconic properties, see Thomas Turino (1999; 2014), who argues persuasively for the relevance of Peircean semiotics to phenomenological strands of musical analysis.

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