

**DECONSTRUCTING “THE SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ FEEL”: ROOTS, RHYTHMS
AND FEATURES OF SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ**

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment (40%) of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

in the

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC AND MUSICOLOGY

at

RHODES UNIVERSITY

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JUNE 2018

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ABSTRACT

South African jazz has established itself as a distinct and influential genre in modern popular music that merges musical elements from traditional South African musics with influences from U.S.-American jazz. Formed during a time of extreme social inequality in a divided country, South African jazz became the soundtrack of the struggle against social injustice and racial oppression, and was brought to international attention by artists such as Hugh Masekela, Miriam Makeba, and Abdullah Ibrahim who gave poignant musical expression to the hardships of the time. South African jazz is celebrated for its unique sound, original catalogue and all-important “feel”. To many listeners, performers and musicologists, it is this concept of feel that makes South African jazz so distinctive and inimitable. To date, however, much of the scholarly and popular literature on South African jazz has centred on the historical, social and political aspects of the music, with less attention given to close musical-textual analysis. A few studies have considered the melodic and harmonic language of iconic saxophonists and bass players but there are – to date – no close studies of rhythm and feel in South African jazz. Beginning to address this gap in the literature, this study uncovers some of the elements that constitute the South African jazz feel through close rhythmic and more general musical analyses of a selection of South African jazz recordings.

NOTES

- This mini-dissertation forms part of an MMus in Jazz Performance (drumkit) degree. The dissertation comprises 40% of the overall mark, while 60% is assigned to the two recitals.

My recitals were performed in December 2017. The first recital featured a range of modern jazz from the post-bebop era, including pieces from well-known composers such as Chick Corea, Wayne Shorter, Miles Davis and Michael Brecker to rhythmically intriguing compositions by drum virtuosos Dave Weckl and Mark Guiliana. The recital included compositions covering various stages in the development of modern jazz from 1954 to 2015, tied together by a focus on interesting and innovative use of rhythm. The second recital showcased the original compositions of band members Nishlyn Ramanna and Kingsley Buitendag. The music spanned a variety of musical influences centred on the composers' individual interpretations of the modern jazz and South African jazz traditions.

- A CD containing the music analysed in this dissertation is enclosed with the hard copy. These tracks can also be accessed on Google Drive at the following link: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ATtYZrGCGHh6gP-8d-nliLvke3HuhHK3>
- This dissertation makes use of the Chicago referencing style.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks to:

- The Raymond Pullen Bursary Fund and SAMRO for their generous contributions toward my Masters studies.
- Dr Nishlyn Ramanna for his excellent supervision of my thesis as well as the significant role he played in my recital performances. I really appreciate all the time and care he put into my Masters project.
- The Department of Music and Musicology, Rhodes University
- Prof Andrew Tracey for his generous insights.
- Dr Lindelwa Dalamba for drawing my attention to the *King Kong* materials and including me in fascinating broader research efforts into the works of Todd Matshikiza.
- My parents, Charlotte and Robert Thorpe, for their constant love and support.
- My brother, Bob Thorpe, for his invaluable input and exceptional live sound and recording of my recitals.
- My incredible wife, Andrea Thorpe, for always supporting me and encouraging my musical endeavours.
- The musicians who performed at my recitals: Kingsley Buitendag, Justin Bellairs and Dr Nishlyn Ramanna. I couldn't have asked for a better band to work with.

Introduction

Renowned South African jazz trombonist, Jonas Gwangwa, once referred to South African jazz as “jazz with an accent” (Quoted in Bernstein 1994, 339). The notion of an accent suggests that there is a particular element within the sound of South African jazz that characterizes it as distinct from other forms of jazz. Exactly what this element is continues to be the subject of much debate amongst South African jazz musicians, fans and scholars alike. A commonly held view that has permeated this subject for many years is that South African jazz is defined by its rhythm. This notion has surfaced consistently in both academic and public discourse regarding South African jazz and was pointedly addressed by South African jazz pianist and composer, Todd Matshikiza in 1961. Speaking to a reporter from the London *Daily Mail* newspaper about the upcoming UK premier of the South African jazz musical *King Kong*, Matshikiza said “I hope to show you too that a black composer in South Africa can rise above tribal drums and tom toms” (Quoted in Fleming 2009, 177).

While discourse around jazz has moved on from exoticised ideas about “tribal drums”, an emphasis on rhythm persists in current thinking around South African jazz. In an interview with Chatradari Devroop, veteran South African trombonist Jasper Cook emphasises the “throbbing” rhythm of South African jazz over its other characteristics, specifically mentioning the “driving rhythm” in works by artists such as Abdullah Ibrahim and describing the “wonderful heritage of rhythm” in South Africa, which he says is not “borrowed from the West” (Quoted in Devroop and Walton 2007, 72). Even more strikingly, when interviewed by Gwen Ansell about jazz pedagogy in South Africa, jazz educator and saxophonist Salim Washington referred to the drum as “a sacred instrument” which is “the conductor of black popular music and of jazz”. He suggested that “the most sublime aspects of the music are most often created with the drums” (Quoted in Ansell 2016).

It can be said that the idea of South African jazz being defined by “driving rhythm” or “the drums” may stem from the historical characterization of American jazz as primarily a rhythmic music. The notion that jazz is the sum of European harmony and “African rhythm” is an idea that has been espoused by jazz enthusiasts and scholars since the earliest forms of jazz began to captivate the attention of western listeners. For instance, in 1948 Richard Waterman wrote, “Those who have had opportunity to listen to Negro music in Africa or the

New World have been almost unanimous in agreeing that its most striking aspect is its rhythm” (Waterman 1948, 24). Taking the element of rhythm as a point of departure, this dissertation sets out to investigate such essentialist assertions about jazz in general and specifically aims to define what unique features constitute the “accent” or “feel” of South African jazz. This investigation will involve the analysis of past and current literature pertaining to the subject, as well as close musical analysis of various examples of South African jazz by some of the genre’s most esteemed musicians. An emphasis will be placed on the element of rhythm and its place in the hierarchy of the musical elements that constitute the sound of South African jazz.

This study intends to explore the topic of the South African jazz sound in the following manner: In the first chapter, I aim to trace the roots of the rhythmic elements of the two primary influences on South African jazz; namely U.S.-American jazz and traditional South African musics. By examining the rhythmic elements of these influences I aim to isolate any clear rhythmic connections between South African jazz and South African and other African traditional music and American jazz. In Chapter Two, through in-depth analysis of the music of five South African artists who represent different genres within South African jazz, I will describe some distinct stylistic traits that contribute to the unique feel of their music. In the final chapter, I look at the reworking of the music of composer Todd Matshikiza as a case study to highlight the stylistic features of South African jazz by exploring the creation and suppression of such traits in his music. I will discuss, through close musical analysis of the reworkings of his music, what makes Matshikiza’s music sound South African and how the history and music of South African jazz has been moulded and mediated by other forces.

In undertaking this research, I aim to deconstruct the style of South African jazz from a musical perspective, by analysing the specific musical elements and unique stylistic traits that contribute to its unique sound and which distinguish it from other forms of jazz and neo-traditional African musics.

As this study will show, the South African jazz sound can generally be defined as a specific set of traits and techniques found across the various interrelated sub-genres of the style. These can be classified as the following:

1. Repetition
2. Cyclical two or four-bar harmonic progressions, often comprising the primary chords
3. Short melodic motifs (often overlapping in a call-and-response style)
4. Emphasis on diatonic, melodic improvisation and melodic development as opposed to chromaticism and complex implied harmony
5. Use of extended tonic and dominant pedal points
6. Behind the beat feel
7. Rhythmic emphasis on upbeats
8. Mixing of straight and swung rhythmic textures
9. Polymetric phrasing
10. Repetitive arpeggiated motifs
11. Focus on timbre and tonal inflection
12. Style of articulation involving extreme staccato
13. Generous use of expressive devices such as tonal smears, scoops and fall-offs.

Although many of these tropes can also be found in other styles of jazz and are by no means unique to South African jazz alone, it is the frequency with which they are regularly employed across the various genres of South African jazz that makes them defining qualities of the music. Furthermore, the fact that most South African jazz musicians know when and how to use these techniques without instruction or any formalised training in the genre suggests a collective understanding of the South African sound in relation to that of the other jazz styles. My study will identify these musical tropes in selected works of South African jazz and will specifically focus on the interaction between rhythmic elements and the other above-mentioned musical traits. In doing so, I hope to address some of the myths and misconceptions surrounding the music of South African jazz and the concept of “the South African feel”, as well as notions of the style being defined primarily by its rhythmic features.

Theoretical Context

Due to the turbulent social and political history surrounding the development of South African jazz, the bulk of the literature on the subject tends to centre on the cultural and social aspects and origins of the music (See Ansell 2004, Ballantine 1993 & 2012, Coplan 1985 & 2008) and the role of women in South African jazz (See Allen 2000, Muller 2011).

Comparatively, there are very few studies that focus on dissecting and evaluating the actual music in terms of its musical elements, and regarding the element of rhythm and the role of

the drum kit it can be said that there is even less of this type of material research available. However, it can be argued that the analysis of the musical elements is just as crucial in accurately preserving the legacy of the music by developing a body of theoretical knowledge to contribute to the understanding, survival and further development of its unique qualities. In view of this, my study will be situated theoretically within the existing body of work on South African jazz, but will aim to view the complex social, cultural and political context of the music through the lens of close musical analysis rather than providing an extensive historical account.

Possible exceptions who have published detailed music-focussed analyses of South African jazz would include scholars such as Nishlyn Ramanna, Christine Lucia, Kevin Davidson, Chris Merz, Shaun Johannes and Lara Allen. Ramanna (2005) provides a general parametric analysis of the music played by three bands working in post-apartheid Durban and Johannesburg but pays closer attention to how the music relates to U.S.-American jazz as opposed to its specifically South African qualities. Lucia (2002) focusses on Abdullah Ibrahim's composition 'Mamma' and the way in which the musical tropes he uses invoke a "climate of memory". Davidson (2012) provides a detailed analysis of two improvisations by saxophonist Barney Rachabane. Davidson's work is very useful in terms of its harmonic analysis, although due to its brevity and specific focus on saxophone improvisational techniques, it can be said that there are elements of rhythm, compositional devices and stylistic traits of other instruments that call for more detailed elaboration. Similarly, Merz's (2016) study of the development of the South African alto saxophone style, which features transcriptions and analyses of well-known South African jazz saxophonists Kippie Moeketsi, Barney Rachabane, Robbie Jansen, Dudu Pukwana, and Ntemi Piliso, is most useful in providing insights into the use of harmony, tone and melodic devices in South African jazz, particularly in relation to saxophone improvisation, but it does not outline a wide range of unique stylistic features apparent in the music. Johannes (2010) highlights certain tropes of the South African jazz sound but focusses primarily on the role of the bass guitar in the performance of mbaqanga and ghoema music in Cape Town. The specific focus of his thesis creates space for further analysis of other genres of South African jazz and the roles of other instruments associated with the music. Allen's (1993) dissertation is a musical and historical analysis of the pennywhistle in black South African popular music, specifically kwela, and provides one of the most comprehensive analyses of the early styles of South African jazz. However, Allen's focus is primarily centred on the instruments and stylistic traits relating to

kwela music, with specific attention paid to the role of the pennywhistle. Although the study does include a brief overview of the styles that preceded kwela, it does not fully address the stylistic tropes of those equally important genres of South African jazz, nor their rhythmic characteristics. Furthermore, due to the particular focus of her study, she does not address the role of influential rhythmic instruments such as the drum kit and the bass guitar in the other genres of South Africa jazz.

As the parameters of this dissertation do not allow for an extensive review of every sub-genre of South African jazz, I will aim to identify the traits of selected key styles that have been most influential in establishing South African jazz as a distinct musical genre. The analyses presented in this study will focus largely on the element of rhythm and will draw on the work of Allen and Davidson in particular. As the subject matter of this study navigates much uncharted terrain in jazz scholarship, it will include a wide variety of observations related to the specific focus of the dissertation that could serve as areas for further study.

Methodology

The detailed, musical-textual research presented in this dissertation will not be isolated from its broader social and political context. In my analysis I will pay attention to the migration of musical genres across the Atlantic Ocean, which Paul Gilroy explores in *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993). David Coplan suggests that South African performers search out “varying combinations of elements from indigenous, Euro-North American, other African, and New World African forms as a way of inserting local currents into global stylistic streams” (Coplan 2008, 355). He argues that it is worth attempting to “identify and distinguish local historical elements, forms and processes from imported ones in the volatile creative mix that defines South African culture” (Coplan 2008, 355).

Therefore, the analyses presented in this study will be informed by the concept of the black Atlantic and its links to the sound and history of South African jazz.

Taking as a point of departure Coplan’s suggestion of the value of isolating local influences in South African jazz from imported ones, this study will explore the extent to which the element of rhythm contributes in any unique way to creating the South African feel. Special attention will be placed on the musical contribution of the drummer and how he/she interacts with the rhythm section and the rest of the ensemble to evoke a South African jazz sound. The analysis will take the form of transcribing and analysing selected rhythms, drum grooves,

basslines, harmonic progressions and melodic excerpts from iconic South African jazz recordings by artists such as The African Jazz Pioneers (1989), Hugh Masekela (1968), Barney Rachabane (1989), Brian Thusi (2009) and Todd Matshikiza (1959 and 1961) in an effort to isolate the unique elements of the key styles within South African jazz.

By comparing and contrasting the individual styles of South African jazz with each other, as well as with Black Atlantic musical influences and traditional and neo-traditional music from across Africa, this study will aim to address the question of what common rhythmic features can be found in the selected examples of South African jazz, and to what extent these rhythmic elements can be said to influence the notion of the South African feel. In order to highlight this, I have chosen to focus on examples of the most archetypal forms of South African jazz which are built on the distinctive harmonic cycles of the primary chords (I, IV, V) that have come to define the sound. I therefore deliberately exclude the more modern styles and interpretations of the music. As modern South African jazz grew out of the post-apartheid era, it has subsequently drawn its influences not only from the original forms of the music but also from a wide variety of other African and international music genres. This in turn presents an extremely diverse assortment of musical elements to be analysed that falls outside the scope of this particular study.

The methodology of this study will draw on Charles Keil's concept of "participatory discrepancies", which refers to "the little discrepancies between hands and feet within a jazz drummer's beat, between bass and drums, between rhythm section and soloist, that create the groove and invite us to participate" (Keil 1994, 98). Keil suggests that the analyst listens for these crucial discrepancies in the "process and texture of a music and in its wider contexts" (1994, 101). Careful listening is therefore foregrounded in Keil's approach. Similarly, my analyses will also be informed by George Perle's criticism of Allen Forte's complex system of musical analysis. Perle argues against an approach of "analytical scrutiny" that is far removed from one's "intuitive experience as a listener or as a composer" – or, one might add, as a performer (Perle 1990, 168). In other words, listening is as important, or in many cases, more important than an artificial analytical model imposed on the music. Furthermore, analysis can be said to be inherently subjective as each analyst hears and studies music according to his/her own experience. Thus, my analysis will not be based on any one particular type of analytical model imposed upon the music, but will be based on my "intuitive experience" as a listener and performer.

As Keil suggests, “participatory discrepancies” make up what could be called “groove”. Musicologist Lawrence Zbikowski calls groove “a quicksilver thing as changeable as music itself” (Zbikowski 2004, 297). Levitin adds to this in his definition of groove as “that quality that moves the song forward, the musical equivalent to a book that you can’t put down. When a song has a good groove it invites us into a sonic world that we don’t want to leave” (Levitin 2008, 170). Zbikowski recognises that, despite its apparent inscrutability, “groove” is still a concept that is somewhat knowable and quantifiable:

[M]usicians must still have a conception of the basic framework which provides an opportunity for the creation of this sort of feel, a framework that includes knowledge about how rhythmic and pitch materials are organized and how members of a musical ensemble will realize this organization. (Zbikowski 2004, 297)

However, Steven Feld proposes a more intuitive approach to groove and stresses the subtle inflections that create it, suggesting that ““groove” refers to an intuitive sense of style as process, a perception of a cycle in motion, a form or organizing pattern being revealed, a recurrent clustering of elements through time” (Feld 1994, 109). Feld’s approach to “groove” emphasizes its socialised dimensions: a listener well-versed in a certain style of music anticipates certain patterns and therefore notices nuanced “subtleties” within its expected “regularities” (Feld 1994, 111). Therefore, while my method of analysis will be somewhat intuitive, it will also be based on an embedded framework of knowledge in which specific patterns and elements in the music can be evaluated. Recognizing that the concept of groove is both quantifiable and intuitive, my analysis will be informed by intuitive listening as well as my knowledge of the organization of the musical elements that comprise the style, just as the musicians creating the music on the recordings both play intuitively and draw on a framework of musical knowledge. Thus, my analysis will draw on my experience as a jazz drummer who regularly performs both U.S-American and South African jazz.

As Zbikowski suggests in his description of groove as “a sort of feel”, the two concepts are closely related. “Feel” is often treated in a similarly mystical way to groove and approached with an attitude of exclusivity amongst musicians, frequently echoing that common phrase “You either have it or you don’t”. It is a commonly held view amongst musicians that this elusive “X-factor” called “feel” is deemed necessary for the correct performance of certain styles of music and is often attributed to factors ranging from upbringing, cultural heritage and “race” to gender, economic background and the notion of “natural talent”. Although the influence of such factors on musical performance could be explored in a longer study rooted

in phenomenology and ethnography, the intention of this mini-dissertation is to draw on musical analysis to explore how certain feels find expression at the level of fine musical details. Therefore, it is the aim of this study to demystify the “feel” of South African jazz by identifying common musical traits evident in the performance, composition and improvisation¹ of the various styles of the music in order to define what it is that constitutes ‘the South African feel’ from a musical analysis perspective.

In adopting an analytical approach based on close listening, I also follow the lead of Martin Scherzinger, who proposes that a “close analysis” of African music “better approximates the specifics of its unique and multifaceted music character” and furthermore suggests the importance of being open to intuitive and diverse analyses, arguing that, “As long as the analysis is framed in terms that suggest possible ways of hearing, instead of actual ones, it can begin to open up new perspectives of what might count as an actual hearing of the music” (Scherzinger 2001, 22).

Furthermore, my methodology is informed by recent developments in the study of “African” musics that move away from ethnographic methods to close musical analyses. Tony Lewis traces how a group of African scholars including Kofi Agawu argue that “to deny African music the right to analysis... is to deny it the right to legitimacy” (2016, 1). Significantly, Lewis contrasts the outsider perspective of the ethnomusicologist with the perspective of the “performer-researcher” who “understands very well the necessity of theory and analysis; the latter are central to the performer’s ability to develop the cognitive structures that are essential to coherent performance” (Lewis 2016: 9). As a performer, I agree that intuitive listening and analysis is an important part of my approach to music, alongside an awareness of the socio-historical context.

While I will use methods of transcription and analysis in my study that were originally developed for the study of European art musics, I do not see this as problematic. Scherzinger argues that, “Construing certain Western theories of rhythm and meter as Eurocentric impositions risks dichotomizing African and European musical perceptions on false grounds” (Scherzinger 2010, 4) since this suggests that such theories accurately capture the

¹ See Ingrid Monson’s *Saying Something* (1996) for a detailed discussion of the role of interactive improvisation in jazz music.

“experience” of western music in its entirety, whilst being incapable of capturing the “experience of African music” (Scherzinger 2010, 4).

Moreover, when studying South African jazz in particular, it is worth bearing in mind Scherzinger’s emphasis on the hybrid nature of all African musics. Because of Africa’s colonial history, he argues, the “ethnomusicological idea that Western models of music analysis are somehow inherently opposed to the social cause of African music is mistaken”, since “the practice of borrowing ostensibly ‘foreign’ resources to creatively transform society has a lengthy tradition in most parts of Africa” (2001, 39). This is even more relevant when discussing South African jazz, which consciously drew from U.S.-American genres. Scherzinger insists that “African music should be considered as nerve and fiber of global modernity and should not be located in some remote and impenetrable terrain” (2001, 20). Not only does this idea influence my analytical methodology, but it also guides my treatment of “rhythm” in South African jazz in particular, given that rhythm has arguably been presented as the most “impenetrable” and mystified element of the music. In the midst of such misconceptions, Kofi Agawu argues persuasively that all methods of analysis of African musics have value:

How not to analyze African music? There is obviously no way not to analyze African music. Any and all ways are acceptable. An analysis that lacks value does not yet exist...We must therefore reject all ethnomusicological cautions about analysis because their aim is not to empower African scholars and musicians but to reinforce certain metropolitan privileges. Analysis matters because, through it, we observe at close range the workings of African musical minds. (Agawu 2003, 196)

In this study, therefore, I will explore in detail the rhythmic elements of a number of South African jazz recordings, focussing on the rhythmic interplay within the ensemble and any apparent participatory discrepancies that contribute to the “feel” and groove of the music. Along with these analyses, I will include transcriptions, showing not only the drum parts, but in certain cases how the rest of the instruments in the ensemble also reflect particular stylistic features unique to South African jazz. I hope that these transcriptions, as well as assisting in my research and helping to underscore my argument, would be a valuable resource for musicians, musicologists, and jazz educators alike.

Chapter One: Rhythmic Influences on South African Jazz

In order to deconstruct the feel of South African jazz, it is necessary to first look at the rhythmic elements of the two main influences on the genre: traditional South African music and U.S.-American jazz. This chapter will undertake an examination of these genres with a particular focus on their roots and links to certain elements of traditional music from across the African continent.

Beginning with an evaluation of the European and African influences on the rhythmic quality of jazz, this chapter will focus on the role of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the transferral of rhythmic concepts of traditional African musics to U.S.-American jazz. In addition, it will examine how African instruments and the particular approach to timbre found in African music influenced the sound of jazz. I will then look at the link between rhythm and language in the traditional music found across Africa, and specifically in South Africa. The second part of the chapter will explore how these rhythmic concepts have influenced South African jazz in regard to some of the key styles, namely, marabi, African jazz and kwela. Lastly, I will highlight the notable influence of U.S.-American jazz on the development of the South African sound and discuss elements of political interference in the development of South African jazz as an art form. In addition to the focus on rhythm throughout the chapter, I will also make brief mention of certain important traits related to other musical elements such as harmony, melody, timbre, texture and form and so on.

As of yet, the most comprehensive musical analysis of the early forms of South African jazz is Lara Allen's *Pennywhistle Kwela: A Musical, Historical and Socio-Political Analysis* (1993). For this reason, this chapter and the analysis presented in the following chapter will draw on Allen's work and evaluate her findings alongside my own and those of other researchers and theorists.

Jazz in U.S.-America: African and European Influence on Jazz Rhythm

In the area of rhythmic nuance, jazz regularly achieves a richness, complexity, subtlety, and depth that are profound. Such nuances involve microscopic variation in placing a melody against a steady beat, unpredictable syncopation, the superimposition of a new meter upon a prevailing meter, and freedom from conventional tempo, beat, and meter. (Kernfeld 1995, 24)

Due to the lack of written and recorded audio evidence of the early forms of jazz, and its predecessors, blues and ragtime, as well as the unbalanced and ill-informed accounts of those who witnessed the birth of the music in the United States, there continues to be much debate on the origins of the elements of jazz. Gunther Schuller (1968) warns of the dangers and prevalence of oversimplified theories about the origins of jazz, in which jazz rhythm is said to have come from Africa and the harmony credited solely to European influences. He attributes this polarised view of jazz history to a lack of accurate analysis of the music, which he credits in part to technological limitations in recording and analysing the music, but also an abundance of well-meaning but amateur jazz criticism (Schuller 1968, 4). Schuller avoids such oversimplified paradigms by analysing the roots of the musical elements of the genre in great detail and explaining the intertwined African and European origins of each element from a historical viewpoint that sees jazz as “a hybrid that evolved through many stages of cross-fertilization over a period of more than a century” (Schuller 1968, 4).

Mark C. Gridley (1999) echoes this statement by suggesting that it is impossible to isolate distinct African and European influences in the development of jazz as both contain so many common elements, and both were present as models to draw from during the time that jazz was developing in U.S.-America (Gridley 1999, 39-40). Schuller and Gridley go on to analyse in great detail the possible African and European origins of each element of the music including harmony, melody, rhythm, form, timbre, instrumentation, improvisation, repetition and call-and-response, often revealing traces of various musical practices from both Africa and Europe in many of the elements. In this study I will consider each of these musical elements, but will focus largely on the element of rhythm, as I aim to trace the particular “African-ness” in the rhythms of jazz and subsequently the possible “South African-ness” of the rhythms of South African jazz. Before continuing with the discussion of the roots of jazz and any assertion of European or African connections, an important clarification needs to be made regarding the concept and term “African music” and its supposedly defining feature, “African rhythm”. The following section will discuss the problematic nature of these terms with particular reference to the work of Kofi Agawu.

“African Music” and “African Rhythm”

...there is no African music, rather many types of African music. (Kubik in Gerard 2001, 53)

A common misconception evident in much of the writing on the origins of jazz is the way in which Africa is often treated as one, unified country as opposed to a continent comprising a vast number of distinctly different cultures, languages and musical traditions. As many people from various parts of the continent were taken from Africa to America during the 150-year process of the slave trade, there was no singular language or musical tradition common to the groups of African people assembled in the United States. Therefore, the use of the term “African music” becomes problematic when referring to various musics from the African continent, as certain important distinctions between the styles from different areas are overlooked and incorrectly portrayed. Consequently, this results in generalisations about all music from Africa that are often incorrect and misleading. Furthermore, such concepts spawn additional problematic terms such as “African rhythm”, which suggests that all music across the entire continent is primarily rhythm-centred and rhythmically similar.

Kofi Agawu refers to this common amalgamation of the individual countries in Africa as an “error of unanimism” and states that the resulting myths evident in African music discourse are propagated by the continued use of the term “African music” itself (Agawu 1995, 385). He believes this view of African music as a “homogenous body of music” is derived from “European and post-colonial discourse” (385) and leads to a number of related fallacies including the notion that “African rhythms are complex, that Africans are essentially rhythmic people, and that Africans are different from ‘us’ – from Euro-Americans” (380). Agawu believes the term “African music” was invented in the 1950s and can be attributed to the research of scholars who essentialised the music deriving from Africa as a primarily rhythmic genre (Agawu 1995, 395). He states that this problem of assigning certain characteristics to certain groups of people across Africa, alongside the idea of African rhythm as “complex, superior, but ultimately incomprehensible”, is evident in much of the writing on music from African countries, and is promulgated by both western and African scholars (Agawu 1995, 380).² Among the examples given are the statements of western scholars A.M.

² Agawu clarifies that these misconceptions are influenced by the various political and economic factors that play out in the realities of scholars operating in “an intellectual space defined by Euro-American traditions of ordering knowledge” (Agawu 1995, 383).

Jones that "the African is far more skilled at drumming rhythms than we are – in fact our banal pom, pom, pom on the drums is mere child's play compared with the complicated and delicate interplay of rhythms in African drumming" (Quoted in Agawu 1995, 381) and W.E.F. Ward's assertion that "Africans have not merely cultivated their sense of rhythm far beyond ours, but must have started with a superior sense of rhythm" (Quoted in Agawu 1995, 381). The list of African scholars he quotes includes Philip Gbeho who, like Ward, asserts that "where rhythm is concerned, the African is ahead of the European" (Quoted in Agawu 1995, 382) and Kwabena Nketia who explains the supposed lack of sophisticated melodic and harmonic content of African music by saying that, "Since African music is predisposed towards percussion and percussive textures, there is an understandable emphasis on rhythm, for rhythmic interest often compensates for the absence of melody or the lack of melodic sophistication" (Quoted in Agawu 1995, 383).

The second pitfall that Agawu highlights regarding the discourse surrounding African music is what he terms "the retreat from comparison" (Agawu, 1995, 385). Citing again the work of A.M. Jones, Agawu states that to isolate the whole of Africa as a musical culture defined by the element of rhythm invokes the view of other musical cultures as having less emphasis on rhythm, thus leading to misinformed assumptions, such as harmony being associated with European music and complex melody belonging to Asian music (Agawu, 1995, 385). Agawu believes the basis of Jones's study of the rhythmic structures of African music in his *Studies in African Music* (1959) is rooted in such polarised views of Western and African music in which the traits of each are viewed as comparable but never compatible:

Having sensed the importance of polyrhythm, polymeter, syncopation, and cross-rhythm in African music, and having refused either to acknowledge the incidence of such techniques in "Western music" or to bring Western usages into direct confrontation with African ones, Jones produced a view of African music that confirmed his initial prejudice that the complexity of African rhythm is emblematic of the otherness of African peoples, their essential difference from us. (Agawu 1995, 389)

Agawu argues that "'African rhythm' is...an invention, a construction, a fiction, a myth, ultimately a lie" (Agawu 1995, 387). He believes this invention is a result of three things. Firstly, he points to the lexical gap. Drawing on various anthropological and musicological studies Agawu makes the point that amongst the vocabularies used for speaking about music in West Africa there is no single word for "rhythm". This, he states, is true of the Ewe, Tiv, and Vai languages of West Africa (Agawu 1995, 388). Citing the work of David Ames and

Anthony King on Hausa, the most widely spoken language in Sub-Saharan Africa, Agawu notes that they produced no equivalent entry for the word “rhythm”, and similarly, Eric Charry’s writings about the Mande³ in *Musical Thought, History and Practice among the Mande of West Africa* (1992), affirm no findings of any extensive vocabulary related to rhythm (Agawu 1995, 388). Agawu notes that although an exact equivalent for ‘rhythm’ is often absent in these languages, the Ewe language, for instance, does contain words for “related concepts of stress, duration and periodicity” (Agawu 1995, 388). He believes this suggests that the terminology of rhythm in these areas is a broader and “asymmetrically distributed” concept interwoven into mechanical elements such as language, movement and gesture rather than “a single, unified, or coherent field” (Agawu 1995, 388). This lexical gap, Agawu argues, leads to a focus on assumed differences between Western music and African music rather than acknowledging that there are any similarities between the two. This “retreat from comparison” (Agawu 1995, 385) entails the assumption that African musics require different parameters of analysis from Western music.

The second factor that Agawu believes contributes to the fallacy of “African rhythm” is what he calls the “politics of notating African rhythm” (Agawu 1995, 390). This centres on the technical task of transcription. Agawu states that early researchers such as James Koetting and Hewitt Panteleoni who proposed alternative methods of transcribing African music were motivated by the assumption that Western music is so profoundly different from African music that it is therefore unsuitable to use the western method of staff notation to transcribe it. Agawu believes that such endeavours only serve to further portray African music as the exotic other in relation to Western music and keep it from ever achieving equal footing with Western music in the realm of analysis. Furthermore, he states that the problems these researchers were trying to correct, such as correctly indicating timbre or playing technique, or nullifying the downbeat emphasis, are not unique to African music and pose the same challenges to the accurate transcription of Western music (Agawu 1995, 390).

The third element Agawu identifies as contributing to the myth of “African rhythm” is when African voices are drawn on to perpetuate the stereotyped use of such terms. This is achieved either directly or indirectly by presenting the perspective of the African subject as an insider

³ Mande refers to a family of ethnic and linguistic groups in Africa found in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Chad, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

view of the topic, as opposed to a western outsider view (Agawu 1995, 393). As Agawu states, this has become an increasingly popular approach as it appeases certain ethical problems that arise in theorising the knowledge of others (Agawu 1995, 393). However, the task of accurately translating into Western musical terminology concepts and directions that do not have exact linguistic equivalents for phrases as ‘rhythm’, ‘time-signature’ or ‘meter’ presents the researcher with numerous problems of supposition and interpretation (Agawu 1995, 393). Agawu adds:

Moreover, the question of who orchestrates the dialogue, who owns or signs the text, and in some cases who gets paid for it: these are troubling questions that may not be facily consigned to the margins of our theorizing, especially when such theorizing results in confident claims about our knowledge of other (living) human beings. (Agawu 1995, 395)

Bearing in mind the problematic nature of and associated generalisations attached to the term “African music”, as well as the common over-emphasis on rhythm in much of the research on traditional and neo-traditional music in Africa, it is difficult to find in the limited amount of musical analysis published on the topic of rhythm in jazz and especially South African jazz much research that does not contain these misconceptions. For this reason, the following sections of this chapter will discuss certain scholarship that can be said to be problematic, but which nevertheless offers some useful interventions. I am also interested in critiquing and re-evaluating these sources as I make my own conclusions. I will keep the same critical approach in mind while examining a few common theories related to the origins of the elements of U.S.-American jazz.

African Roots and the Slave Trade

It is a commonplace understanding that the history of U.S.-American jazz begins in the era of the transatlantic slave trade of the 18th and 19th centuries, as slaves from all over western and central Africa brought their musics to America. But these musical routes are not so easily traceable as might be imagined. Although many theories have been presented on the subject, it seems that no particular element of jazz has been definitively proven to originate from any single region in Africa or one distinct style of traditional African music. Various key elements of jazz can be found in much of the traditional music across the continent and therefore any attempt to trace a direct link to a particular area becomes quite difficult. This problem is further compounded by the several factors. Firstly, the variety of territories in Africa from which people were enslaved provides an extremely broad range of differing

musical traditions. This was exacerbated by the fact that people from one particular region, village or family were deliberately separated when sold to slave owners to avoid any possible organized resistance. Secondly, the prolonged time-period over which the slave trade occurred allows for variations in the generations of people that arrived in America and any possible developments in their traditional music that could have resulted from other African or global musical influences. Thirdly, those brought over to America as slaves were either not allowed to bring their musical instruments with them or take them into the country once they arrived. Scholars are still divided on the question of whether those sold into slavery were allowed to bring instruments such as drums with them on the slave ships at all. Charley Gerard states that due to the high mortality rates on the slave ships, instruments were collected before departing for the United States to be used by the slaves on board for dancing as a means of exercise (Gerard 2001, 43). He adds, however, that upon arrival in the United States a strict ban on such instruments was enforced. This left them with only their musical tastes as a guide to preserving their particular traditions and finding new ways of mimicking their preferred sounds, rhythms and tones through new instruments and ensemble configurations. The resulting mix of often distinctly different cultures and musical traditions imported from around the continent of Africa forced into an environment full of European musical forms such as church hymns, dances and folk songs, resulted in a crucible from which something completely new and uniquely hybridized could emerge. This melting pot would eventually produce the music we now identify as jazz.

Charles Gerard contributes to our understanding of the hybridity of jazz by highlighting the distinction made in recent scholarship between the contributions made from West Africa and Central Africa to the development of African-American music. He stresses the importance of this distinction in gaining a better appreciation of the music (Gerard 2001, 45). Citing *The Origins of African-American Culture* (1990) by Joseph Holloway, he examines Holloway's assertion that slaves brought from West Africa had a vastly different cultural background and skill set from those of Central African origin. Consequently, Holloway states that those from West Africa were often given skilled work as house servants, artisans, cattlemen, and cultivators of corn, rice and millet, while those from Central Africa were generally put to work in the fields (Gerard 2001, 44, 45). For this reason, Gerard proposes that in these different environments both groups developed their different traditional music styles into different forms of African-American music. Those who worked in the fields conceived the field holler, spirituals, and the blues, while those who worked in the house in close proximity

to white Americans developed banjo music, which Gerard notes was derived from the music of the Wolof people of West Africa (generally originating from the areas of Senegal and The Gambia) played on their own lute-like five-string predecessor of the banjo called the xalam (Gerard 2001, 45).

Gridley explains this murky genesis of the new music, stating that “jazz did not derive its similarities to African music from direct contact with African music. It acquired these characteristics second-hand, through other music that had developed by contact with African musical practices in the New World” (Gridley 1999, 32). In summary, he argues that within jazz there are certain qualities that reveal a variety of African musical traits that were preserved in the resulting African-American music. These include a number of characteristic elements such as polyrhythms, syncopation, improvisation, rough timbres, overlapping call-and-response techniques and the “extensive repetition of brief patterns” (Gridley 1999, 51). Gerard adds to this list the tendency for African-American singers and instrumentalists to seemingly avoid exact pitches by swooping up or down when approaching certain notes - a technique which has become a defining element of jazz and blues performance. Additionally, Gerard identifies off-beat phrasing and polymetric rhythmic devices, which he highlights as the main feature of the music in which African musical traditions are seen to have survived (Gerard 2001, 46).

Schuller explains the development of jazz as “a steady process of musical assimilation”, noting that particularly in the post-Emancipation era certain social reforms allowed for more integration in entertainment as well as social and religious rituals (Schuller 1968, 18). For instance, he explains that certain practices blended easily together, such as the marching-band tradition of German and Italian immigrants with African funeral processions; Anglo-American hymns with African monadic and dyadic singing, resulting in the spiritual and the blues; and European popular musical forms such as polkas, quadrilles, marches, and jigs mixing with the syncopated music of the African participants of the minstrel show, leading to the influential piano style of ragtime (Schuller 1968, 18). These examples demonstrate how jazz in U.S.-America evolved from the encounters between various cultures and musics. As I will show in my analysis chapter, this hybridity is also evident in South African jazz which formed out of the confluence of different styles and the intersections between diverse South African and global influences.

African Rhythms in U.S.-American Jazz


Polyrhythms and Polymeter

Two rhythmic concepts that have come to define much of the rhythmic quality of jazz are polyrhythm and polymeter. These techniques can be found in much of the traditional musics across Africa, but most especially in those of West and Central Africa. Schuller's discussion of these rhythmic concepts uses the problematic umbrella term "African music", and cites English musicologist, A.M. Jones, who was criticised by Agawu for his essentialism. He writes that: "African music, including its drumming, is wholly contrapuntal and basically conceived in terms of polymetric and polyrhythmic time relationships" (Schuller 1968, 11). Although these views are based on a problematic portrayal of all traditional music from Africa as one monolithic, rhythmic-centred style, they do provide useful commentary on the use of polyrhythms and polymeter in African musics. Schuller differentiates between the western and African understandings of polyrhythmic playing by stating that western musicians generally see polyrhythm as two or more rhythmic patterns played simultaneously but always resolving or meeting at the start and ending of phrases, bar lines and other central points in the music. In contrast, "African music" reveals a far more intricate, extended, "polymetrically organized" understanding of polyrhythms, in which the individual rhythmic phrases hardly ever, and sometimes never coincide vertically (Schuller 1968, 11). These two interpretations of polyrhythm are apparent in much U.S.-American jazz and can be seen to shift closer to the African approach in the later styles of jazz through the rhythmic contributions of musicians such as John Coltrane, Tony Williams and Miles Davis. Keith Waters states that polyrhythm and polymeter, which he terms "metrical conflict", were a key feature of music performed and recorded by the Miles Davis Quintet from 1965 to 1968 (Waters 2011, 68).

In terms of the use of polyrhythm in Western music from the pre-jazz era, Schuller cites Charles Ives as the only European composer who experimented with polymetric and polyrhythmic structures, stating as an example Ives's Fourth Symphony. Gridley deviates from Schuller by suggesting that polyrhythms were used in European folk and concert music in America for a long time before the jazz era came about but were not as prominent as in African music (Gridley 1999, 45). He acknowledges the African ancestry of polyrhythms as originating from combinations of rhythms which can be heard in ragtime music. He defines polyrhythms as "the sounding of some rhythms that have a basis of two pulses while

sounding other rhythms that have a basis of three pulses” and recognizes the contribution of polyrhythms to the swing feel and the “rhythmic excitement of jazz” by creating tensions within the listener who can neither resist following either division of pulses nor reconcile the two” (Gridley 1999, 45).

In his analysis of the elements of jazz, Barry Kernfeld (1995) also credits ragtime as the earliest form of jazz in which African practices of polyrhythmic phrasing and polymetric time manipulation can be heard. Kernfeld states that the concept of superimposing another meter on common time began to be used by ragtime composers around 1905 when they started crafting melodies in three-note groups of eighth notes, creating the effect of 3/8 time over 4/4 time. Recorded evidence of this technique can be found as early as 1926 in the banjo solo of Johnny St. Cyr on Jelly Roll Morton’s “Black Bottom Stomp” (Kernfeld 1995, 31). Kernfeld notes, however, that by that time this particular rhythmic superimposition had become a conventional device in ragtime and jazz, as well as popular songs and novelty piano pieces (Kernfeld 1995, 31). This technique became known as “secondary rag” and eventually led to further, more advanced superimpositions in jazz such as 3/4 on 4/4 time, heard in Louis Armstrong’s scat-singing solo on “Hotter Than That” and Sonny Rollins’ solo on “St Thomas” (Kernfeld 1995, 32). A later example of the more complex, collective use of this device can be heard in the rhythm section of Ron Carter (bass) and Tony Williams (drums) creating a waltz effect in 4/4 time during Herbie Hancock’s piano solo on the recording of Hancock’s composition “Maiden Voyage” (Kernfeld 1995, 33).

Schuller demonstrates how over time polyrhythmic and polymetric African rhythmic concepts and patterns were slowly assimilated into European structures and transformed into the rhythmic patterns of early jazz. Using an excerpt from A.M. Jones’s transcription of a traditional Ghanaian song entitled “Savou Dance”, he demonstrates in music notation that when a number of the original rhythms and melodies heard in the Ghanaian ensemble are replaced with the standard European “jazz band” instrumentation and modified slightly to fit into a 4/4 European metric structure, the resulting sound is that of a typical 1920s jazz band. He also highlights the connection to other musical styles from around the world noting that the rhythm played by the Gankogui (a bell-like instrument that commonly plays an essential underlying rhythm: ) is identical to the rhythm that characterizes South American samba music. Schuller points out that this particular rhythm which is especially common in African musics can also be found in U.S.-American ragtime and is the main

rhythmic element of the popular 1923 song and subsequent dance style, “The Charleston” (Schuller 1968, 19-20). In South African jazz this exact rhythm forms the basis of the ghoema style of the Western Cape and the rhythms of Zulu mbaqanga music. These connections will be expanded on in Chapter Two through the analysis of the influence of Latin rhythms on the South African styles of jazz.

While extensive use of polyrhythms and polymeter is not a major feature of the styles of South African jazz that my study focusses on, subtle use of these rhythmic techniques is evident in some of my case studies, as will be discussed in detail. Furthermore, polyrhythms and polymeter are particularly present in more experimental South African compositions. In an article on jazz in exile published in 1966, *Drum* magazine writer Lewis Nkosi highlighted how certain “tendencies of African music”, including polyrhythms and polymeter, are evident in works by South African composers such as Chris McGregor:

These are a constant repetition of themes, a harmonic tension based on the overlapping of solo and chorus lines which may lead to the singing of two melodic lines simultaneously, and a very complex metric organisation in which some beats are longer than others and accent is constantly being shifted, thus bringing about an element of frequent surprises for both players and dancers. For instance a song played in 4/4 time may suddenly seem to have shifted into 6/8 or 3/4. A number of South African jazz musicians are now going back to this African heritage for new ideas. (Nkosi 1966, 24).

Syncopation and Swing

Of the rhythmic elements that contribute to the sound and feel of jazz, the most distinctive can be said to be syncopation. Kernfeld asserts that syncopation is “the cornerstone” of ragtime melody, which he argues is one of the primary sources of jazz rhythm. (Kernfeld 1995, 29). Schuller explains the concept of jazz rhythm as being derived primarily from two components: what jazz musicians call “swing”, and what he calls “the consistent ‘democratization’ of rhythmic values”, which means that the weak beats in a bar are given as much or more emphasis than the strong beats (Schuller 1968, 6-8). Regarding the notion of swing, he identifies two defining characteristics which are rarely found in European classical music:

...a specific type of accentuation and inflection with which notes are played or sung, and the continuity – the forward propelling directionality with which individual notes are linked together. (Schuller 1968, 6)

Schuller suggests that jazz inflection and syncopation are not commonly found in European “art music” (Schuller 1968, 13). Citing Dvorak’s “New World” Symphony and Debussy’s “Golliwog’s Cakewalk” as rare examples, he states that the syncopation found in these works is comparatively rudimentary and adopted from simplifications of the African rhythmic influence evident in American popular music in the late nineteenth century (Schuller 1968, 15).

But until now we have lacked musically documented proof of the fact that the syncopation of jazz is no more than an idiomatic corruption, a flattened-out mutation of what was once the true polyrhythmic character of African music. (Schuller 1968, 15)

Gridley, however, argues that the concept of syncopation can be found in both African and European music, although, he notes that African musics are known to be highly syncopated (Gridley 1999, 42). He also states that the syncopation found in jazz has its origins in African-American banjo music and ragtime.

Schuller views syncopation as a kind of modification African-Americans made to European music in order to keep some of the characteristic polyrhythmic character of traditional African music. He states that over the 150-year period in which African slaves were brought to America, they made numerous amendments to Euro-American social and cultural patterns (Schuller 1968, 15). In terms of musical adjustments, the “polymetric and polyrhythmic points of emphasis” were translated into the “monometric and monorhythmic structure of European music”, resulting in the compromise of syncopation “preceding or following the main beats” (Schuller 1968, 15). Schuller goes on to explain that by changing the consistent against-the-beat accentuation to syncopation the early African slave musicians were able to achieve three things. Firstly, the element of rhythm was elevated to the top of the hierarchy of musical elements, thus differentiating the music from the European Classical model in which melody and pitch are paramount. Secondly, according to Schuller, a way was found to retain “the equality or ‘democratization’ of rhythmic impulses” – an important trait in much traditional music from Africa. Thirdly, Schuller notes that by merging this prioritisation of rhythm and the focus on the ‘democratization’ of beats with a perception of rhythms as ‘rhythmicized melodies’, the resulting characteristic of the music was what he calls an “internally self-propelling continuum” (Schuller 1968, 16). This forward propelling motion is often cited as a key feature of the jazz feel.

Schuller also makes an important distinction between the concept of syncopation and the polymetric structures of much traditional African music. He states that syncopation supports the dominance of the strong beat as it is essentially an alteration or embellishment of that beat as opposed to being independent of it, whereas in African music the polymetric constructions allow for all accented notes to operate with “a basic equality and autonomy” (Schuller 1968, 15). He adds that “syncopation in the European sense is extremely rare in African music, and occurs only in the smallest rhythmic values (sixteenths)” (Schuller 1968, 15).

“Behind the Beat” Feel

Another key rhythmic feature of certain styles of traditional African musics that has survived in the feel of U.S.-American jazz is what musicians have termed the ‘behind the beat’ feel. The phenomenon of phrasing and accenting consistently behind the metronomic pulse of the music has become a key feature of jazz and is often a yard-stick by which performers are measured in terms of their success in attaining the correct feel of the music. This technique is not heard in much Western music and is said to have fascinated the American slave owners who heard it in the songs of their workers. One such account, recorded in *Slave Songs of the United States* (1867)⁴ by co-editor of the collection and plantation owner Charles P. Ware, tells of the work songs of the boatmen who ferried passengers up and down the rivers in Georgia. Describing the boatmen’s songs as comprising two measures being sung to the time of each stroke of the oar, Ware observes “one noticeable thing about their boat songs was that they seemed often to be sung just a trifle behind time.” (Charles P. Ware in Schuller 1968, 17). In the footnote to another slave song appearing in *Slave Songs of the United States*, “God Got Plenty o’ Room”, co-editor William Allen notes the seeming irregularity of meter in the song. He identifies three apparent time signatures, 2/8 to 3/8 and 2/4 time, and attributes the changes between these to the omission of rests, highlighting this particular song with its metric irregularity as a typical example of African slave singing (Schuller 1968, 17).

The Role of African Sonorities and Rhythmic Concepts in Jazz

In addition to rhythmic concepts, the influence of African styles of music on American jazz also encompasses the types of instruments and approach to playing these instruments. Gridley notes that although the drums that appear in the early forms of jazz came from European-

⁴ *Slave Songs of the United States* is the first collection of transcriptions of the songs sung by plantation slaves in the Southern territories of the United States, published in 1867 and edited by abolitionists William Francis Allen, Lucy McKim Garrison, and Charles Pickard Ware.

style brass bands, the wood-block and the cowbell, often used in the earliest recordings of the music, are believed to have originated from Africa. However, he notes that similar precursors of these instruments found in the United States also came from China and Turkey.

Furthermore, Gridley notes that the manner in which the ride cymbal (the most important part of the drum set in jazz music) is played in jazz is remarkably similar to the way the atoke or karinyan (a small iron bell-like instrument) is played in traditional West African music (Gridley 1999, 42). Regarding the drum kit, Gridley notes that historically it was the drums that when added to a dance band gave them a “jazz sound”, as dancing to certain European styles such as quadrilles did not call for percussion (Gridley 1999, 43).

Gridley also stresses that the way in which melodic instruments in a jazz ensemble are often played in a more rhythmic and percussive manner bears resemblance to the way in which melodic instruments are utilized in much African music (Gridley 1999, 43). This can also be said to be true of certain traditional South African music. For example, the bow music played by the AmaXhosa people of the Eastern Cape province in South Africa features a single-stringed bow instrument known as the uhadi which is hit percussively with a thin stick. Similarly, the marimba music prevalent in different parts of Africa, particularly Southern Africa, involves a set of wooden bars that are hit with mallets to produce pitches. Below each wooden bar in a traditional marimba is a gourd with a membrane that adds resonance but also a buzzing, distorted character to the tone of each note. As Gridley points out, such techniques of creating rougher, earthier sounds, and ringing and buzzing noises are common to many African musics and have remained in the tonal approaches of many jazz musicians such as John Coltrane. Furthermore, this predilection for unique, distorted tones can be heard in the deliberate ringing overtones of most jazz drum kits and the common use of chains or rivets on the cymbals. Gridley suggests the penchant for these kinds of sounds can be traced to African musical tastes and traditions of improvising with the tone of an instrument or voice (1999, 44).

South African composer Andile Khumalo highlights timbre as the central concern of much traditional South African music and links this emphasis on timbre to language. Citing scholars Agawu, Kubik and Lo-Bamijiko, he suggests that “some African musicians use speech tone (both pitch and sound quality) to fine tune melodic structures, and coordinate the timbre of an accompanying instrument” (Khumalo 2017, 5). Khumalo states that a large number of Bantu languages found across Africa from Congo to South Africa can be classified

as what Murray Schellenberg refers to as “tone languages” (Khumalo 2017, 32). These can be defined as languages that rely on timbre to accurately portray meaning. As an example, Khumalo shows how a variation in pitch changes the meaning of the Zulu word “umfundisi” from “the teacher” to “the reverend”, thus demonstrating how the meaning of a particular word can vary depending on the accuracy of the timbral inflection with which it is delivered (Khumalo 2017, 33). Furthermore, he states that most Nguni languages, which make up a large proportion of the languages of Southern Africa and include Xhosa, Zulu, Swati and Ndebele are Bantu languages. Thus, it is evident that the concept of timbre is crucially important to Nguni languages and consequently to Nguni culture and music. Using the example of the tonal spectrum of Nguni bow music, Khumalo shows how this conscious approach to timbre influences the melodic aspect of the music. In regard to the uhadi, an instrument often used in Nguni music, the scale from which the music is derived is created by a harmonic series made up of the “overtones of the two fundamental notes” played on the single string of the instrument (African Instruments website). Therefore, in uhadi music the focus is on the overtones and timbre of the instrument to create melody and form. For this reason, as Khumalo states, it is important for the uhadi player to place the instrument against the skin so she can hear all the overtones in each note. In terms of the tonal spectrum of the music, Khumalo states that in bow music the starting point is the vertical (overtone/timbre) rather than the horizontal (melody). He notes that this is a key feature of much traditional Southern African music. This approach can be said to contrast with the common approach found in much Western music in which the elements of melody or harmony are often considered the primary point of reference.

Khumalo asserts that a key focus in bow music ensembles is for the voices to emulate the sound of the uhadi and match its timbre, resulting in techniques such as overtone singing commonly found across much traditional Southern African music. Overtone singing, referred to as umngqokolo in the Xhosa language, is described by Dargie as the “most striking technique” he observed in the music making of the Xhosa/Thembu people of the Lumko district near Lady Frere in the Eastern Cape (Dargie 1991, 34). Also known as “throat singing”, it is a vocal technique in which overtones are created by manipulating the resonance of the vocal chords to create a polyphonic texture. For Khumalo, the bow music performer views the voice as enhancing the timbral aspect of the music. Therefore, he states that the elements of melody and timbre are so intertwined in this way that they cannot be separated in African musics. This conception of sound as being more than mere pitch, but rather an

amalgamation of multiple factors and tones could be a contributing factor to the short harmonic cycles often found in much traditional and neo-traditional South African music, as complex tonalities tend to not allow enough space for adequate attention to be paid to timbral nuances in the music.

A consideration of these approaches to timbre and rhythm in African musics and their connection to language should be considered when analysing music from African countries. Regarding South African jazz, this link will be explored further in Chapter Three through the analysis of various South African jazz compositions. Khumalo highlights the important connection between language and music in Africa saying:

In many African societies, language plays an important role, carrying the fingerprint of each community, and as such serves as the starting point for related artistic activities, including music making. This argument implies that, in most cases, structures found in language are most probably present in music. (Khumalo 2017,32)

Referring to traditional South African vocal music, Thulasizwe Nkabinde also argues that the rhythms are often derived from the lyrics of the song (Nkabinde 1997, 6). Furthermore, Nkabinde notes that “the sung melody usually follows the sound of the spoken dialect, the tone largely dictates what note the singer moves to” (Nkabinde 1997, 6). For this reason, the rhythms of traditional South African and other African musics can often sound unfamiliar to the western ear that is not attuned to the nuances and speech patterns of the local languages.

In his study of the music of the Xhosa/Thembu people of the Lumko district, Dargie identifies certain tropes of traditional South African music which are in some ways evident in South African jazz. Dargie suggests that it is the “highly developed rhythms” which act as the life-force of the music.

...almost every song of the Lumko district is built out of combinations of rhythms. It is these rhythms which give life to the song. It is the combination or multiplication of rhythms which brings the body to life in the song. (Dargie 1988, 8)

In his analysis of these rhythms Dargie identifies several rhythmic techniques in traditional Xhosa music which can be heard in much South African jazz, as well as American jazz. These include cross-rhythms, syncopation, a ‘swing’ feel, delayed beats and additive rhythms (Dargie, 1988, 84-85). This raises the question of whether the influence of these rhythmic devices on South African jazz came primarily from traditional sources or rather rhythms that

were filtering back to South Africa through the sound of American jazz. This will also be explored further in the next chapter.

In addition to the rhythmic elements of the music from the Lumko district, Dargie suggests that the most prominent and distinctive feature of the music is the two-chord harmony pattern, which forms the harmonic foundation for certain Xhosa songs such as the “Click Song” and “Hamba Bhekile” popularised by performers like Miriam Makeba and Margaret Singana respectively (Dargie 1988, 7). Speaking about the harmonic structure of the “Click Song”, Dargie states:

The two-chord pattern may be clearly seen, written as the triads F major and G major. This produces the characteristic Xhosa sound, a chord pattern not found as a rule in other African musics (i.e., two major triads a whole tone apart). (Dargie 1988, 8)

Other tropes of the music which Dargie identifies, such as polyphony, cyclical song structures and an emphasis on improvisation, can also be said to be key features of South African jazz.

Advanced rhythmic concepts can be found in much of the traditional music across South Africa. In Elkin Morrell Sithole’s study of Zulu music he states that a “complex rhythmic structure” underpins the music and gives character to each song (Sithole 1968: 72). In an e-mail conversation in August 2016, Prof. Andrew Tracey, former Director of the International Library of African Music, stated that in his view, the concepts of polyrhythm and polymetric time are the defining attributes of much of the music heard across the African continent:

Conflict of interest - inside close cooperation - is one of the basic principles of all African music to me, which relates to relations between people. Put two different rhythms together, and you wake up an African consciousness. (Tracey 2016)

Similarly, Chernoff states that the power of African compositions cannot be attributed to any particular rhythmic line, but rather to the way in which the rhythms are created in relationship to each other (Chernoff 1979, 112). This focus on different rhythmic lines that operate in both a complementary and conflicting manner is stressed by Tracey to be a “structural rule of African music” of equal importance to the idea of cooperation (Tracey 1994, 280). According to Tracey, this balance can be seen in South African mbaqanga music from Johannesburg,

Nigerian juju music and reggae from Jamaica where the core of the composition is built on a structural opposition of at least two components (Tracey 1994, 280).

Although such ideas and the terminology in which they are presented can be said to present an essentialist view of South African and other African traditional music, as the analysis presented in this study will show, these rhythmic concepts in varying degrees can be seen to have influenced the compositional and improvisational style of many South African jazz musicians. Whether this is a direct result of traditional music influence or an indirect assimilation of African concepts through the popularity of American jazz will be explored in the following section as I examine the roots and individual stylistic traits of the key styles of South African jazz.

Jazz in South Africa: Roots and Styles

If there is one concept fundamental to any understanding of urban black popular music in South Africa, it is that this music is a fusion – vital, creative, ever-changing – of so-called ‘traditional’ styles with imported ones, wrought by people of colour out of the long, bitter experience of colonisation and exploitation. (Ballantine 2012, 4)

From the time the first touring American minstrel shows reached South Africa in 1848, South Africans have been captivated by the sound and symbolism of African-American music. Over the years this fascination has led to the development of a variety of styles of South African jazz, all of which blended elements of local traditional music and culture with U.S.-American music. Many of these styles have often acquired several titles, and have split into various sub-genres, the most influential however being the styles of marabi, African Jazz, and kwela. Each of these styles, have in some way shaped the current sound of what we call South African jazz, and carry their own particular sound, instrumentation and set of influences. As an in-depth investigation of the individual histories and contributions of all these styles is undoubtedly warranted, it falls outside the scope of this particular study. For this reason, I will be looking more broadly at certain stylistic traits commonly found across the main genres.

As discussed above, tracing the roots of U.S.-American jazz is no easy task. However, it is equally difficult to examine the roots of South African jazz, as in addition to the problem of the community of people that created and shared the music being excluded from any control

over institutions of preservation and dissemination of the music through recording studios, radio etc., there was a terribly irresponsible attitude on the part of the record companies and the South African Broadcasting Corporation SABC towards preserving the music. Very few archives of urban black South African popular music sold by the labels were created or maintained, and often many of the recordings were simply thrown away over the years (Ballantine 2012, 3). For this reason, as Ballantine suggests, South African jazz culture can be said to be strangely amnesic of its own history.

In the first half of the twentieth century, a number of styles of popular music developed in South Africa amongst the new black working class in the emerging urban residential areas surrounding the gold mining centres (Allen 1993, 17). All of these styles fused elements common to traditional South African and other African musics with contemporary influences from popular African-American music (Allen 1993, 17). Of the styles that emerged in this period, the first and arguably most influential is marabi.


Marabi

Marabi is described by Ballantine as just as important in the development of South African popular music as the blues was to American popular music (Ballantine 2012, 7). Merz (2016) echoes this statement claiming prominent South African “musicians ranging from tenor-man Bazil Mannenberg Coetzee to pianist Darius Brubeck” have referred to marabi as “South Africa’s blues”, highlighting its central importance in South African jazz as “the form to base compositions on” (Merz 2016, 34). Described by Matshikiza as a set of “highly rhythmic repetitive single-themed dance tunes” (Matshikiza in Ballantine 2012, 32) which developed between the 1910s to 1930s, marabi was generally performed on keyboard, banjo or guitar in shebeens⁵ and at drinking and dancing parties. Like the blues, it followed a three-chord cyclical harmonic structure. However, in the case of marabi, the three chords were usually played in short two or four bar phrases, and were most commonly voiced as triads in the sequence I-IV-I-V. Due to the preference for diatonic tonality in marabi, few chord extension tones were used other than the occasional addition of a major 6th to chord IV and the use of the dominant 7th on chord V. The resulting progression is the iconic I-IV6-Ic-V7 which became the harmonic foundation of the South African sound. This progression permeated the

⁵ The term ‘shebeen’ refers to an unlicensed drinking establishment. These were prevalent in townships in apartheid South Africa due to strict laws governing the selling and consumption of alcohol. The shebeens often served as important venues for live music, especially jazz.

subsequent styles of South African jazz and can be heard in South African standards ranging from the “Pata Pata” (marabi) to “Skokiaan” (tsaba tsaba) to “Meadowlands” (kwela).

In the pre-colonial music of Southern Africa there seems to be little evidence of the I-IV-V-I progression typical to the U.S.-American blues style, or many longer harmonic cycles. Instead, there seems to be a definite predilection for short harmonic progressions, such as the aforementioned two-chord progression of traditional Xhosa music of the Eastern Cape noted by Dargie. It can be argued that it was the use of these short harmonic cycles that then led to certain styles of melodic and rhythmic phrasing which mirrored the short, repetitive harmonic movement, thus resulting in characteristics common to much South African jazz, such as short repetitive motivic melodies, basslines and drum grooves.

Rhythmically, marabi was often accompanied by a straight eighth to sixteenth note rhythmic pattern, which Ballantine states is a basic drum pattern commonly found in Nguni music (Ballantine 2012, 34). This pattern, $\sharp \frac{2}{4}$  was generally played by shaking a can filled with small stones (Ballantine 2012, 34). In addition to providing the harmonic and rhythmic material for the other subsequent styles of South African jazz, namely tsaba-tsaba, mbaqanga, African Jazz and kwela, marabi most importantly met social and cultural needs of the newly urbanised black migrant workers in South Africa by taking traditional Sotho, Xhosa and Zulu melodies and songs, as well as African Christian hymns and setting them to a new up tempo urban rhythm (Ballantine 2012, 34). For these reasons, marabi is regarded as the mother of South African jazz.

Tsaba Tsaba

Tsaba tsaba is a closely-related style, and possible sub-genre of marabi. Emerging in the 1930s and popularised by the Jazz Maniac’s song ‘Tsaba Tsaba’, this style is characterised by a fast tempo with a driving quaver beat on the bass drum (Allen 1993, 19). However, aside from this change in tempo and rhythm, as well as the accompanying tsaba tsaba dance style, this particular genre is said by Allen to be “remarkably similar” to marabi (Allen 1993, 19). Spread by migrant workers and the influence of gramophones, the style of tsaba tsaba moved north to what was then known as Rhodesia – current-day Zimbabwe (Allen 1993, 19). There it developed into a style different from South African tsaba tsaba and marabi but retained the name tsaba tsaba. The most famous composition of Zimbabwean tsaba tsaba is “Skokiaan”, written in 1947 by August Musarugwa of the Police Band in Bulawayo (Allen 1993, 19). Due

to the similarities with the style of 'vastrap' from the Western Cape area of South Africa, "Skokiaan" became known as a South African jazz standard and was widely performed and recorded as such by musicians such as Hugh Masekela and even Louis Armstrong. In view of its close likeness to marabi, as well as the Zimbabwean development of the style, an analysis of the influence of tsaba tsaba falls outside the scope of this study, which aims to focus on the key styles that influenced the South African jazz sound.

Kwela

Drawing influences from marabi, kwela is based on cyclical repetitions of the primary chords (often used in the sequence I-I-IV-V) and a downbeat shuffle rhythm in which all four beats of the bar are accented. Regarding the rhythmic quality of kwela, Allen states:

Kwela compositions may be divided into two fundamental rhythmic groups: those which are swung and those which are based on a straight beat. The basic crotchet beat of the former is subdivided into three and the latter into two or four. The swing beat is a legacy of the jazz roots of kwela, whereas the straight beat stems from Southern African "traditional" music. Kwela compositions belonging to the second group exemplify the general trend away from jazz towards a neo-traditional African style which culminated in sixties mbaqanga. (Allen 1993, 104)

In addition, Allen argues that due to the social changes brought on by urbanisation and the popularity of U.S.-American swing in South Africa, young musicians growing up in the townships would have been more influenced by U.S.-American jazz through records and live American-style African big bands than traditional music, therefore placing the influence of U.S.-American swing above traditional rhythms in the formation of the rhythmic feel of styles such as kwela (Allen 1993, 85).

Elements stemming from "traditional" musical sources such as cyclicity, call-and-response, and melodic structure, allowed township dwellers still adapting to urban life to identify *kwela* as their own, whilst influences from black American musical styles, notably *kwela's* swing rhythm, encouraged aspirations towards a more cosmopolitan identity. (Allen 1993, 239)

However, Allen does identify certain rhythmic complexities in kwela in the form of two-against-three cross rhythms, but clarifies that such devices are commonly found in the pennywhistle parts rather than in the drum kit patterns (Allen 1993, 84). Although, it is not just the rhythms played by the drum kit that contribute to the feel of any particular style of jazz, but rather the phrasing and rhythmic sensibility of the entire ensemble, Allen's findings

address the previously-mentioned common misconception that the unique feel of South African jazz is defined and articulated by drum rhythms. The drum kit patterns in kwela generally take the form of a four-beat shuffle in the style of Count Basie, with strongly accented “backbeats” (beats two and four of the bar) played on the snare drum. This could also possibly be attributed to the instrumentation of the original kwela groups. Kwela was performed primarily with a guitar and pennywhistle; the guitar played a downbeat-oriented shuffle pattern, which was later mimicked on the drum kit. Coplan adds that like marabi and the closely related style of tsaba-tsaba, kwela incorporated certain rhythmic and melodic motifs found in the “boeremusiek” of the Afrikaners and the “ghommaliédjies” of the Cape coloured people, which he claims can be heard most noticeably in the banjo backing parts (Coplan 2007, 194).

Scholars such as John Storm Roberts, however, argue that it was the prevalence of the rhythmic pattern in much traditional South African music of “firm beats with light, lifting beats in between” that lead to the adoption of the syncopated swing pulse of the American shuffle feel in kwela music (Storm Roberts in Allen 1993, 85). If the new appealing sound of U.S.-American jazz grabbed the attention of South African listeners and musicians, a contributing factor to its popularity could possibly also have been the prevalence of certain fundamental qualities of traditional South African music in the sound of U.S.-American jazz (Storm Roberts in Allen 1993, 85). As a further example he also cites the common swing band practice of playing rhythmically complex riffs and solo passages over a basic four beat rhythm as resembling traditional South African vocal ensemble techniques. Providing the example of Swazi bow playing, Kubik reveals evidence of the existence of the basic swing pulse in traditional South African music (Kubik in Allen 1993, 85).

African Jazz

Regarding the rhythmic quality of one of the most distinctive forms of South African jazz known as “African Jazz”, Allen quotes influential South African jazz saxophonist Barney Rachabane explaining the style of African Jazz as the result of African musicians attempting to imitate American musicians and coming out sounding distinctively African (Allen 1993, 26). However, she goes on to conclude that African Jazz, influenced by the New Africanism movement, was also a deliberate attempt by South African musicians to revisit their roots by returning to the sound of the earliest form of South African jazz, marabi. Such arguments lead to a particularly contentious question regarding the development of South African jazz,

one that pertains specifically to the investigation of this study: Is South African jazz Africanised American music or Americanised African music?

Allen highlights the subjective character of this question by recounting two opposing views on the rhythmic quality of African Jazz. Originating in the thirties and forties, African Jazz is defined by the informants Allen interviewed as “marabi arranged for dance band instruments” (Allen, 1993, 21) and often tends to be characterized by a swing beat. Regarding this swing feel, Allen notes that Ntemi Piliso from the African Jazz Pioneers classified the rhythmic shuffle of African Jazz as resulting from the influence of American swing (Allen 1993, 21), whilst journalist Doc Bikitsha quoted in Ballantine views the rhythmic feel as being derived from the Zulu indlamu rhythm (Allen 1993, 23).

Figure 1.1 Zulu indlamu rhythm



Allen attributes these contrasting views of the same rhythm to the fact that Piliso is a jazz musician heavily influenced by his African-American jazz role models, whilst Bikitsha is a journalist presumably viewing the music through the lens of New Africanism, in which an emphasis on African roots was a key focus (Allen 1993, 23). Another possible reason for this difference in opinion could lie in the fact that, as heard on the *African Jazz Pioneers* album, not all music classified as African Jazz has a swing beat. Certain pieces have more of a straight, marabi influenced rhythmic feel and would only bear resemblance to American swing bands in the arrangement style and instrumentation used. As Allen mentioned in regard to kwela, many African Jazz bands also played both swung and straight-feel South African compositions. Therefore, depending on which particular songs Piliso and Bikitsha are referring to, they could be speaking about two different rhythms, although under the banner of African Jazz they are essentially two sides of the same coin.

Referencing Charles Keil’s assertion that assigning a name to a style is “a declaration of cultural consolidation”, Allen states that although the word order of “African Jazz” suggests the style is Africanised American music, the stylistic traits such as the short harmonic form and the “conscious utilization of African roots” in composition suggests that it is more correctly labelled as Americanised African music (Allen 1993, 26). It should be noted

however, that like Matshikiza, Allen points out that Piliso also ascribes the defining characteristic of South African jazz to the repetitive, short, two-or-four-bar triad-based primary chord harmonic structures and resulting melodic style rather than any specific rhythmic quality, which he describes as “American”:

However, although Piliso conceptualises the rhythm and arrangements of “African Jazz” as American, he presents all other definitive stylistic elements of this form as African. (Allen 1993, 24)

This notion will be explored in the subsequent chapters, along with detailed analyses of examples of African Jazz, marabi and kwela.

Mbaqanga

Allen suggests that the term “mbaqanga”, which refers to the staple maize-meal diet of many of the working-class musicians who played the music to earn a living wage, stems from “the need to define and express an independent and valuable black South African urban identity” by renaming what had become generally referred to as African Jazz (Allen 1993, 26).

Although the terms are sometimes used interchangeably by musicians and musicologists, Allen argues that the style of mbaqanga developed in the 1960s is markedly different from African Jazz (Allen 1993, 26). As the name suggests, mbaqanga is viewed as a more commercially appealing style than African Jazz and has been popularised in South Africa by artists such as Simon ‘Mahlatini’ Nkabinde and internationally by Paul Simon’s heavily mbaqanga influenced *Graceland* album. The roots of mbaqanga lie in traditional Zulu music mixed with influences of marabi and kwela. Rhythmically, mbaqanga is, like tsaba tsaba, generally based on a straight-eighth note feel with a driving bass drum on all four downbeats of the bar. This quarter note bass drum pattern, commonly referred to as “four on the floor”, is complemented by the hands performing various orchestrations of the rhythm below. This universal rhythm is known as the Charleston in American jazz, the Habanera in Cuban Latin music, and the Ghoema in South Africa.

Figure 1.2 Charleston/ Habanera/ Ghoema rhythm



This rhythm is typically played with brushes on the snare drum. The first of the three notes is omitted on the snare drum as it is played by the bass drum in the four-note note “four-on-the-floor” pattern. This creates the feel of the groove as a heavy emphasis is placed on the eighth note after beat two and beat four of the bar. An additional snare accent is consistently placed on the last sixteenth note before beat two and beat four of the bar to set up the anticipations before beat three and beat one of each bar. The bass guitar generally phrases around this same three-note rhythmic pattern and plays an important role in defining many of the stylistic features of the music. This will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

Although, mbaqanga became exceptionally popular both locally and internationally, it will not be a key focus of the analysis presented in this dissertation as, like tsaba tsaba, its musical traits reveal it as being more of a hybrid, sub-genre of the original styles of South African jazz: marabi, African Jazz and kwela.

Due to the overlap of certain musical elements in the different styles of South African jazz, and a lack of well-documented records of the development of the music, there are often vague or confusing definitions provided for each style by scholars and musicians alike. As Allen observes in the interviews of her informants, “Occasionally, the term *kwela* is used interchangeably with marabi, mbaqanga, and “African jazz”” (Allen 1993, 58). Citing the work of a number of prominent scholars on the style of kwela she states, “Academics who have written about *kwela* have been no more precise, or more in agreement with one another, about the boundaries of this musical style” (Allen 1993, 58). In my own research on the different styles of South African jazz I found this to be a challenge not limited only to the style of kwela, and believe that this problem contributes to the mystical, varied nature of the definitions of the South African jazz feel. In view of this though, perhaps the interrelatedness between the styles is in itself a unique quality of the South African jazz sound. In addition to this, a further contributing factor to the confusion surrounding the parameters defining the various styles of South African jazz can be said to be the influences of U.S.-American music and South African politics. The strategy of divide and rule of the Nationalist government was pursued across the arts through the program of Bantu Radio beginning in 1962. The focus of the program was to encourage the concept of tribal identity within the Bantustans and the separate development of the ‘individual’ traditional and folk musics of each ‘tribe’. These radio stations soon began playing various styles of South African jazz such as kwela, mbaqanga and African jazz (South Africa Project website). Due to the focus on segregation

mandated to these stations, it can be said that there was no overarching understanding and acknowledgement of South African jazz as a unified genre, but rather a collection of separate styles attributed to the separate Bantustans.⁶

Influence and Interference in the South African Jazz Sound

It can be argued that the rhythmic quality of South African jazz tends to reveal a substantial amount of U.S.-American influence in relation to traditional South African rhythmic material. This lack of local rhythmic content can be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, the fact that the majority of slaves in the United States were brought from West and Central Africa leaves us with a low statistic of the probability of much music from other areas of Africa making a lasting, significant impact on the 150-year process of the development of early jazz. Secondly, as documented by Storm Roberts, South African traditional music generally “tends toward a pattern of complex sung rhythms, set off against a steady beat” (Storm Roberts 1972, 257). The prevalence of this “steady beat” in much traditional South African music could, as Storm Roberts suggests, be the reason that certain South African forms of jazz such as kwela developed with a rhythmic feel that matched the U.S.-American four-beat shuffle.

A third possible reason for South African jazz having a similar rhythmic feel to U.S.-American jazz can be attributed to the time and unique political climate in which it developed. At the time of its development, South Africa was besotted with American culture and consequently the music was greatly influenced by U.S.-American musical styles such as ragtime, jazz and blues, as Todd Matshikiza noted:

Africa was a long way past original musical works. She was drunk with American and English music works, and quite inevitably, too. The missionaries had taught that the music of Africa was barbarian. Barbaric. Barbarous. Africa had to abandon African music as such. Africa had to learn Western music. (Matshikiza qtd. in Ansell 2004, 47)

Ansell notes that the infatuation with African-American culture stemmed from a variety of cultural and political factors and reached its pinnacle in 1950s Sophiatown (Ansell 2004, 47). She goes on to quote trumpeter Johnny Meko who explained, “People were listening to this music at home because we felt this is our music and these are our black heroes. The attraction to that kind of music was that the rhythms were more like our mbaqanga” (Johnny Meko

⁶ Bantustans were territories assigned to specific black ethnic groups under the apartheid government as part of their policy of separate development.

quoted in Ansell 2004, 47). Ansell explains that the admiration of America on the part of black South Africans was both “illusory and real” in that the glamour of the debonair, well-dressed musicians of the big band jazz groups seen in popular films obfuscated the unequal position of these performers in American society, even as African-Americans experienced certain liberties not afforded to black South Africans (Ansell 2004, 48-49).

Coplan adds that the negative associations instilled by the missionaries regarding “the identification of traditional music with the rural present and tribal past”, coupled with the popularity of U.S.-American jazz in the youth-orientated culture in the townships, resulted in local musicians preferring to strive for exact imitation of U.S.-American jazz rather than develop their own versions of the music. Consequently, Coplan states that there were very few black jazz musicians in the 1940’s who contributed anything distinctly South African to their performance and interpretations of U.S.-American swing music (Coplan 2008, 179). In *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood* (1994), Rob Nixon’s study of the mutual interest and fascination of South African and American cultures, he attributes this preference for American jazz to the idea that certain local musicians with an ambivalent attitude towards their traditional music found the African sounds in jazz music more acceptable and appealing when repackaged in “a transmuted, transatlantic guise” (Nixon 1994, 13). This infatuation with American jazz resulted in local groups such as the Jazz Epistles and the Blue Notes that strived to emulate as closely as possible the sound of their American bebop heroes. Individually, however, a number of the members of these groups, including Abdullah Ibrahim, Hugh Masekela, Kippie Moeketsi, Chris McGregor would go on to make great contributions to developing the sound of South African jazz.

As the white population developed a taste for the sounds of the American big bands of Duke Ellington, Glen Milller and Count Basie, so the demand for local performances of this type of music grew. However, the local version of the music had to be tailored to white tastes, and as a result much of the jazz that was being recorded in South Africa had to suit the palate of the white consumer who called for a highly Americanized brand of jazz delivered in English or as instrumental music. Thus, as was the case with Africans brought to America as slaves who had to compromise much of the distinctive sounds of their traditional music to fit into European structures as jazz developed, so the unique traits of traditional South African music were often removed or diluted in South African jazz to fit the mould of the popular U.S.-American sound.

For jazz pianist and composer, Todd Matshikiza, this dilution of the uniquely South African elements of the sound impeded the development of certain styles of South African jazz to their full potential. In his 1961 article for the British newspaper *New Statesman*, Matshikiza claims “The black composer had little or no work to do. Writing for the record companies became a specialised white job because the jazz had to have a selling flavour. And so the authentic mood of Sponono and Marabi died with all the potential of a distinct art form” (Matshikiza 1961, 315). With particular reference to the record label, Troubadour, Lindelwa Dalamba argues that the prioritization of this “selling flavour” by white-owned record labels over the development of any existing popular music styles in South Africa was not only done to appeal to white consumers, but those in the townships as well:

Troubadour was committed to popular music rather than to jazz... Jazz, African or otherwise... had to seem as close to the hybrid musics surrounding it, which were proving popular with township consumers. Mbaqanqa, seen as African *jazz*, had to be liquidated into the musical hybridities that assured profit to the music industry. (Dalamba 2016, 72)

Matshikiza describes Sponono as “the three-chord ‘jazz’ form (two major chords and a dominant seventh), that arrived in South Africa with the guitar” (Matshikiza 1961, 315). He goes on to state that this particular three-chord harmonic structure “characterises most (so called) African jazz in the same way as the blues is distinguished by the twelve-bar sequence and the Blue Note from other forms of jazz” (Matshikiza 1961, 315). It is interesting to note here that Matshikiza, a renowned musician who composed across a variety of genres and performed as a jazz pianist, cites the harmonic form of sponono and not any specific rhythmic quality as the defining feature of the original South African jazz sound. He states that Griffiths Motsielo, who worked as a A&R Manager for South African record label, Gallo Records, discovered Sponono in the mid-nineteen-twenties, and jazz organist and composer Gashe developed the style further by expanding the harmonic structure of the music through tonal inflections and the addition of pedal points to the three-note chords, thus allowing for “variation phrases” in the two-bar sequence (Matshikiza, 1961, 315). However, Matshikiza believes that the original distinctive sound of sponono and marabi, as well as any potential for the further development of this uniquely South African style of jazz, was abruptly halted by white interference:

Gashe, the African pioneer, was well on the way towards establishing and incorporating other harmonic relationships with this music. His early recordings, alas now extinct, reveal how he used tonal inflections to enhance the three-chord form and

exploit the as yet unnotated African music scale. But a heavy white claw pounced upon Gashe and Sponono and said any attempt to internationalize this form must be done by the white claw. (Matshikiza 1961, 315)

Matshikiza reveals he too fell victim to this form of white interference stating that his masterpiece *King Kong*, branded at the time by British media as an “all-native South African Jazz Opera” and by the Afrikaans press as “Bantu Opera”, was “neither jazz nor opera” in his original score, which was taken from his hands and given over to white producers and arrangers who reworked and edited it before he could name it (Matshikiza 1961, 315). In Chapter Three of this dissertation, a detailed analysis of one of Matshikiza’s compositions for *King Kong*, ‘Kwela Kong’, will be used as case study in relation to this notion of interference in South African jazz.

Conclusion

In view of the above, it can be argued that the distinctive character of American jazz as well as South African jazz cannot definitively be reduced to any single trait directly attributable to an African or European source. Each style of jazz is intertwined with many different influences from both Africa and Europe, and in the case of South African jazz, American influence as well. For this reason, it could be suggested that perhaps the unique sound of South African jazz is derived more often from the “how” rather than the “what”; the accent rather than the content. In many cases the “South African-ness” of the music could possibly be attributed more to the particular feel the musicians play with and the subtle nuances of how they choose to approach certain musical elements and instruments rather than to a specific set of rhythmic or harmonic characteristics. The following chapter will investigate this assertion through in-depth analysis of a selection of well-known South African jazz compositions and improvisations.

Chapter Two: Analysis of Selected South African Jazz Recordings

Case Study 1: The African Jazz Pioneers, Brian Thusi and Abdullah Ibrahim

For the purpose of investigating the features of South African jazz that distinguish it from American jazz and other Black Atlantic styles of music, I have selected recordings that are representative of the original genres of South African jazz such as marabi, African Jazz, kwela, mbaqanga, and ghoema. The African Jazz Pioneers exemplify the style of African Jazz and marabi, while Brian Thusi draws on the mbaqanga style, and Abdullah Ibrahim is well-known for popularising his brand of ghoema-influenced jazz. The remaining style, kwela, will be examined in detail in the following chapter which analyses the music of Todd Matshikiza. All these styles are generally built on the distinctive harmonic cycles of the primary chords that have come to define the sound. The selected recordings feature musicians who have been influential in the development of the music and the local and international popularity of the genre. Despite their undisputed importance, I am by no means suggesting that these artists rank definitively as the *most* influential of all the South African jazz greats. Rather, I have chosen these particular recordings as each one clearly highlights certain key features of the South African jazz sound in instructive ways.⁷

The African Jazz Pioneers, led by alto saxophonist Ntemi Piliso, are renowned ambassadors of the South African jazz sound. Blending the U.S.-American big-band styles of Count Basie and Duke Ellington with South African marabi music, they popularised a style of South African jazz commonly referred to as African Jazz. Using the definition of jazz as a hybrid music cultivated in and exported by America, one could suggest that when marabi merged with elements of the U.S.-American jazz sound coming over the Atlantic, the resulting style, African Jazz, was the first truly hybrid South African jazz style. For this reason, the African Jazz Pioneers album can be said to encapsulate many of the original key features of the South African jazz sound. Taking the iconic sound of the African Jazz Pioneers as a starting point to

⁷ To date there is no established canon of “great” South African jazz recordings akin to the Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz (1973). For this reason, I chose to analyse recordings that are readily available and in which the rhythm section parts are clearly audible and reflective of live performance practice. My analyses are of necessity informed by my musical experiences and socio-cultural background. I do not speak any indigenous South African languages, nor have I had the experience of growing up during apartheid in a township community. As such, my analyses represent a particular hearing of the music that will be variously shared or disputed by other listeners and scholars.

examine the traits commonly heard across different styles of South African jazz, this chapter will begin by focussing on close musical analysis of a number of songs from the African Jazz Pioneers' debut album. Findings will be scrutinised in terms of their connection to traditional music from South Africa and other African countries, as well as their similarities to the American jazz styles, with particular attention paid to the rhythmic content of the music and the roles of the instruments of the rhythm section.

Citing the ever-changing infatuation black South African people had with black U.S.-American music between the 1930s and 1960s, Allen states, as mentioned in the previous chapter, that ideologically African jazz was a deliberate return to African roots (Allen, 1993, 26). In this way, bands such as The Harlem Swingsters took popular South African melodies like the Cape vastrap⁸ classic "Tomatie Sous", arranged them for a big band and added a swing beat (Allen, 1993, 21). Saxophonist and band leader of the African Jazz Pioneers, Ntemi Piliso, attributes the rhythm and big band style arrangements of African jazz with swing-style backing riffs in the solo sections to American influences, and describes all other stylistic features as African (Allen, 1993, 24). Like marabi, the form takes the structure of a repetitive two or four-bar progression of the primary chords. These chords are generally played as triads or dominant seventh chords with only three pitches played at a time, i.e. when a seventh chord is voiced, the tonic of the chord is omitted (Allen, 1993, 24). Unlike American swing, African Jazz generally does not make use of heavily extended chords and long, complex chord progressions. Furthermore, there are no "bridges" as in American jazz standards where a different chord progression is introduced. In African Jazz the short chord progression and accompanying melody repeats until a variation of the melody occurs, but the chords stay the same. This repetitive element of the music is what Piliso describes as its defining feature and one that exemplifies the ideals of much South African music:

[W]ith our music, I think the dominating factor is the monotony [You] repeat it so much that it must get into you. And then when they dance, they dance themselves into a frenzy. It gets into the soul ... (Piliso quoted in Allen 1993, 25)

Although Piliso's aim in starting the African Jazz Pioneers was to recreate the African Jazz sound of the 1950's, by the time their self-titled album was recorded in 1989 a number of elements from later styles of South African jazz such as kwela and mbaqanga became evident

⁸ Vastrap is a style of Afrikaans folk music closely related to Ghoema.

in the music. These elements will be addressed as I examine some of the stylistic traits of the South African sound in the African jazz music of the African Jazz Pioneers. As revealed in the analyses presented in this chapter, these stylistic tropes can be found across many of the styles of South African jazz.

South African Jazz Traits in Nontosangoma

The opening track entitled “Nontosangoma” begins with a solo saxophone line that immediately reveals several tropes of the South African jazz sound. For instance, the rough, earthy tone of the typically smooth-sounding alto saxophone is heard swooping up to key notes of the repetitive four bar motif, playing far behind the beat and constantly phrasing somewhere between straight eighth notes and triplet eighth notes as the majority of the notes in the motif are tongued rather than performed legato. Contrasted with a similar opening saxophone motif from the American big band tradition, such as Glen Miller’s “In The Mood”, one can immediately hear the difference in execution. Miller’s saxophone section deliver their lines with a much cleaner, smooth tone and more consistency in the evenness of the triplet passages, articulation and intonation, approaching each note head-on instead of from below or above. Straight eighth notes are played as straight eighth notes and triplets are played as triplets. In “Nontosangoma”, however, when the straight eighth note drum groove begins after the introduction, the saxophones still tend to phrase with a slight triplet feel. The resulting subtle two-against-three polyrhythm created by this style of phrasing is a common rhythmic feature of South African jazz, and is stated by Allen to be commonly found in kwela music (Allen 1993, 84). Allen attributes the origin of this rhythmic technique to “the tension between the rhythmic characteristics of kwela’s roots (swing-jazz and ‘traditional’ African music)” (Allen 1993, 84). Merz highlights this technique in his analysis of the alto-saxophone style of Kippie Moeketsi in relation to that of American bebop saxophonists:

Whereas most U.S.-American beboppers use the tongue on offbeat notes to provide a lilt and drive to their lines (fig. 1), Kippie seems to favour the “all or nothing” approach. That is, in normal eighth-note passages, every note is tongued, whereas in more technically demanding phrases the tongue is left out entirely. The effect is that the eighth-note lines are somewhat straighter than the normal swing feel, while the slurring of the sixteenth notes, combined with their intentionally less than metronomic subdivision (including by implication the obviously un-subdividable gestures so important to Kippie’s rhythmic conception), create a stumbling feeling. The two together lead to a level of rhythmic tension that may be sustained for an entire solo. (Merz 2016, 34)

The technique is heard in much of the ensemble passages on the African Jazz Pioneers album and is used extensively in the various solos. Although it is also used by much of the rhythm section, it is never heard in the rhythms played by the drummer. The drums strictly play either straight eighth notes or triplets.

In general, the drum grooves on the album are more repetitive than those found in American jazz and fusion. Many of the drum grooves draw heavily on the marabi rhythm mentioned in Chapter One, which is often played on the hi-hat and accompanied by either a cross-stick rim-click on all four beats of the bar or a snare drum “backbeat” on beats two and four of the bar. The bass drum generally plays the downbeats and each downbeat’s preceding eighth note, occasionally alternating with a U.S.-American funk style bass drum pattern and snare backbeat combination for certain songs.

In the U.S.-American tradition there is generally a trend of constantly varying the drum pattern throughout the song, even if it’s just in terms of slight accents or placement of the backbeat. In the South African tradition, the drummers often seem to adhere more strictly to the main drum groove, place a stronger, more consistent emphasis on the backbeat or quarter note cross-stick pattern, and often tend towards less variation in the orchestration of the patterns and accents around the drum kit. In addition to “Nontosangoma”, variations of the marabi influenced straight eighth note groove can be heard on a further five of the songs on the eight-track album, including “Yeka Yeka”, “Hellfire”, “Hosh”, “Ten Ten” and “Riverside”.

Figure 2.1 “Nontosangoma” drum groove



Figure 2.2 Standard marabi drum groove in solo section of “Nontosangoma” – 1 mins 42 secs



Figure 2.3 “Yeka Yeka” drum groove

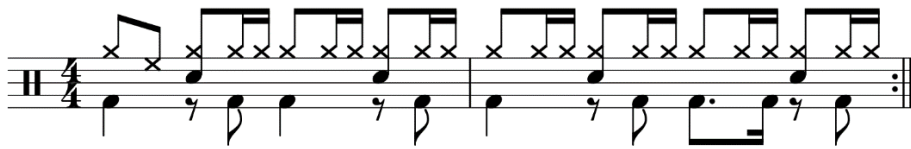


Figure 2.4 “Hellfire” drum groove

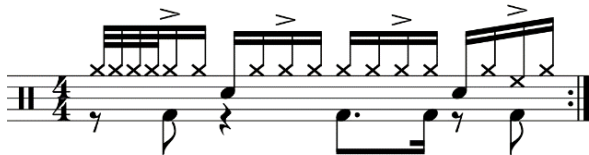


Figure 2.5 “Hosh” drum groove



Figure 2.6 “Ten Ten” drum groove



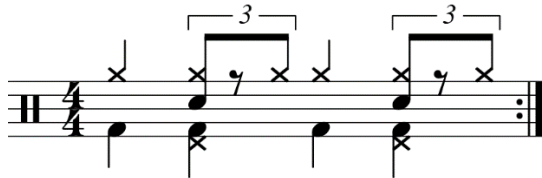
Figure 2.7 “Riverside” drum groove



This style of drumming also extends to the one swing style track on the album, “Mbombela”. Although it is written in the U.S.-American big-band dance style, drummer Siphon Mtshali approaches the swing groove in a very conservative manner. Unlike the flashy American drummers such as Gene Krupa, Max Roach and Buddy Rich who complemented the backbeat-driven big-band style with varied “comping”, extreme dynamics and complex rudimental fill passages, Mtshali chooses to stick religiously to a repetitive one-bar “four-on-the-floor” swing groove, keeping a consistent backbeat on the snare and never varying the

traditional swing pattern on the ride cymbal. This approach to the swing groove is typical of the swung marabi and kwela styles and complements the repetition and simplicity inherent in the composition.

Figure 2.8 “Mbombela” drum groove



There is also a contrast between the tones and timbres of the drums heard in the U.S.-American style and that of the African Jazz Pioneers. Whilst the American drummers tend towards the more sustained sounds in drums and cymbals, created by tuning the drums high and using thin, often rivetted cymbals set loosely and played with an open, loose technique, the drum sound of the African Jazz Pioneers, as well as much of the South African jazz of the dance-band era, can be described as a punchy almost pop music tone, relying on more deadened drums and brighter cymbals played with a tight-grip hand technique. It should be noted that this could possibly be a result of restricted access to quality instruments and outdated recording techniques resulting from the isolation of apartheid and the financial hardship musicians of colour were forced to operate under. These factors could also perhaps have contributed towards the difference in style of U.S.-American and South African jazz drummers. Due to the segregation enforced by the apartheid government in all public institutions of learning, most black musicians did not have access to formal music education. For this reason, many musicians were forced to learn purely by ear and word of mouth, resulting in a performance style that at times, and with certain exceptions, sounds less schooled, technical and polished than that of their U.S.-American counterparts, but is consequently unique, energetic and exciting to listen to. This notion will be elaborated on later in this chapter under the heading “Influence of Apartheid”.

An example of the U.S.-American jazz approach to timbre and feel can be heard in the classic Weather Report fusion piece, “Birdland”. The drum groove is a straight eighth downbeat-oriented pattern not too dissimilar from that of “Nontosangoma” or “Ten Ten”, yet the drummer, Alex Acuña, keeps an open, loose feel and tone, and constantly varies the bass drum pattern to either follow or improvise around the ensemble figures and phrasing of the

instrumentalists. The hi-hat has a particularly loose sound, opening on every upbeat of the bar, and although the downbeat cross-stick pattern on the snare remains mostly constant throughout the piece, it is played with a vast degree of dynamics with almost constant crescendos and diminuendos, thus functioning more as an embellishment of the pattern rather than a key focal point. Near the midpoint of “Birdland” (2 minutes 43 seconds) Acuña adds a snare drum to the pattern on beat 3 and the last eighth note of the bar, which he continues playing for 16 bars before returning to the original groove. As the end of the piece approaches (5 minutes 44 seconds) he varies the pattern by opening the hi-hats on all the eighth notes as he builds towards the end. In contrast, Siphó Mtshali of the African Jazz Pioneers plays the closed hi-hat and snare patterns with a tight, definite sound and sticks to a fixed bass drum pattern that interlocks with the bass guitar line. There is little to no use of dynamics throughout the piece and he only ever interrupts the quarter note rim-click to insert fills at the end of certain phrases. Importantly, Mtshali’s quarter note rim-click remains clear and noticeably behind the beat in comparison to that of Acuña. The difference in tone between the two drum sounds could perhaps be attributed to the stylistic trends of the different times at which the recordings were released: “Birdland” in 1977 and “Nontosangoma” in 1989. However, whether it was intentional or not, the difference in tone must be noted. Alex Acuña’s kit has the dry, sustained sound typical of much traditional U.S.-American jazz, whilst that of Siphó Mtshali is a markedly more clean, punchy pop sound. Though the general straight-eighth, quarter-note funk feel is similar, the manner in which these two compositions are performed by the respective drummers provides a stark contrast and prime example of the role interpretation and articulation play in the creation of the South African jazz sound.

Repetition

An important trope appearing in Gridley’s list of elements of “African music” that has survived in African-American music is “extensive repetition of brief patterns” (Gridley 1999, 51). This can be said to be one of the most obviously prevalent traits in South African jazz and can be heard in everything from the melodic structures of the saxophone and brass ensemble figures to the improvisations of the soloists and the supporting material of the rhythm section. This technique is heard throughout the African Jazz Pioneers album, but especially in one of their most popular compositions, “Hellfire”.

The piece is essentially made of two main melodic motifs (A & B – figures 2.9 and 2.10) performed by the saxophone section. Each motif is two bars in length and repeats several times. The first motif (A) is played once by a solo saxophone, followed by six repetitions of the motif by the saxophone section. The motif then modulates to the subdominant key where it repeats four times then returns to the tonic key for four more repetitions. After the third repetition the brass section plays the first of the two-bar backing motifs (figure 2.11), which repeats four times. As the main melody modulates, the second brass backing (figure 2.12) is added after two bars and repeats three times, with a slight variation on the last note of the third repetition. When the melody returns to the tonic key the brass section continues with the first backing motif. Motif B then enters and is repeated four times and is then followed by the solo section. Therefore, both the melody and backing figures throughout the song are based on the concept of repetition. This two-bar motif approach to composition and arrangement is evident in all the tracks on the *African Jazz Pioneers* album with the exception of the “Nontosangoma” and “Mbombela” which are comprised of four-bar motifs.

Figure 2.9 “Hellfire” – Motif A



Figure 2.10 “Hellfire” – Motif B



Figure 2.11 “Hellfire” – Backing 1



Figure 2.12 “Hellfire” – Backing 2



These two-bar motifs are supported by the rhythm section in which the piano/keyboard, guitar and bass guitar also play two bar riff-based supporting material. The drumkit generally sticks to a one-bar groove seen in figure 2.4.

As is evident in the composition of “Hellfire”, repetition is a key feature of the African jazz style. When compared with a repetitive American big-band jazz composition such as Duke Ellington’s “Perdido”, the prominence of short repetitive phrases becomes very apparent. As “Perdido” is also based on a repetitive pattern, the pattern itself is eight bars long and there is much variation throughout the repetitions and in the supporting parts of the brass and saxophone sections as well as the rhythm section.

Rhythm section

In comparison to the rhythm sections of U.S.-American-style swing bands it can be said that the rhythm sections in South African jazz feature less individualism and tend to function with more of an ensemble approach. A possible reason for this could be related to the function of music in traditional South African cultures as an important means of communication and thus an essential aspect of everyday life. For this reason, in addition to functioning as a source of entertainment, music tends to have more of a utilitarian role in traditional communities and is therefore less centred on the individual. Thomas Turino’s framework for understanding music separates the performance of music into the categories of “participatory” and “presentational” musics. Participatory music refers to music in which everyone present is involved in the performance of the music. As everyone actively participates in the music-making, there is no distinction between performer and audience. In contrast, presentational music refers to “one group of people (the artists) providing music for another (the audience)” (Turino 2008, 51). Much of the traditional music in South Africa can be said to fall under the category of participatory music. Chernoff highlights the communal approach to music making in many cultures in Africa as a means to serve the greater whole of the composition and societal function of the music rather than operating primarily as a vehicle for self-expression:

In African music, expression is subordinated to a respect for formal relationships, and technique is subordinated to communicative clarity. On this consideration stands the integrity of the music as a social force (Chernoff 1979, 122).

For this reason, perhaps, South African jazz can be said to sound more communal as the collective effect of each musician’s particular part interwoven with the others in the ensemble

is valued above displays of individual brilliance. This trait is common to much traditional South African music and can be heard in the way in which all the members of the rhythm section in South African jazz tend to stick faithfully to their individual two or four-bar patterns and motifs to prioritise supporting the ensemble as a whole rather than making an individual statement.

Bass Guitar

A key feature of the South African sound can be said to be the space created by repetitive basslines and drum parts that allow room for the musicians in the ensemble to focus on creating a strong sense of groove, unique tones and articulations, and short melodic phrases. As I have already mentioned, the role of the drum kit in South African jazz differs in many ways from that of U.S.-American jazz, however, it can be said that much of the South African “flavour”, in terms of both rhythm and harmonic content, is derived from what is played by the bass guitar (or double bass).

As much of the harmony of marabi is built on the repetition of chords I-IV-Ic-V, many of the basslines tend to take on similar characteristics ranging from simply stating the root notes of each chord to more complex lines involving chord extension tones, chromaticism and intricate rhythms. Two examples of the minimalist approach common to the basslines of the marabi style can be heard in the 1975 recording of “Tshona!” by Pat Matshikiza and Kippie Moketsi, and the African Jazz Pioneers’ recording of the classic marabi composition, “Way Back Fifties”. In “Tshona!” the I-IV-Ic-V chord progression is outlined by a dotted half-note bassline with an upbeat to each minum played on a sustained pitch of F, starting an octave above the first note of the motif. A similar bassline appears in “Way Back Fifties”, the only difference being that the bass guitar is now phrasing in straight eighth notes and alternating between two notes (Db and Bb) on the upbeat to each dotted half-note.

Figure 2.13 “Tshona!” bassline

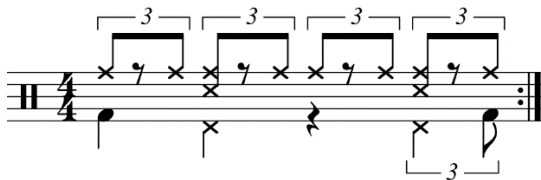


Figure 2.14 “Way Back Fifties” bassline



In “Tshona!”, the minimalist approach of the bass is echoed in the basic, unembellished “behind the beat” shuffle drum groove with a constant backbeat played on the snare drum with a rim-click. Drummer Siphon Mabuse generally sticks to this groove without much variation besides an occasional one bar 6 against 4 Afro-Cuban style bell pattern, which appears for the first time at the start of the B section (1 mins 19 secs).

Figure 2.15 “Tshona” drum groove – A section



The drum groove for “Way Back Fifties” is equally “plain” and consistent - a one-bar phrase comprising of downbeat hi-hats, upbeat snare drums (with every second snare eighth-note split into two sixteenth-notes) and the bass drum outlining the classic marabi two-feel on beats one and three of the bar.

Figure 2.16 “Way Back Fifties” drum groove



Harmonically, the two compositions follow the same repetitive chord progression, I-IV-Ic-V. In terms of melody, the main tune of “Tshona!” played by the saxophone and piano is very modest, comprising of only three notes in the A section and four notes in the B section. “Way Back Fifties” is slightly more melodically complex but structurally is also comprised of two main repetitive sections, A and B.

Figure 2.17 “Tshona!” melody – A section

Figure 2.18 “Tshona!” melody – B section

Another common melodic feature amongst the basslines of the marabi style is heard on the subdominant chord where the bass guitar plays the root note of the chord, then moves down a minor third and up a perfect fourth to anticipate the root note of the characteristic tonic chord in second inversion. This chord is then followed by the dominant, which often features a similar characteristic motif in the bass, starting on the fifth of the chord, then moving to the root. Such motifs can be heard in “Ten Ten” and “Hellfire” by the African Jazz Pioneers.

Figure 2.19 Standard marabi bassline

Figure 2.20 “Ten Ten” bassline

Figure 2.21 “Hellfire” bassline

The anticipations before beats one and three of the bar are the key rhythmic figures. These anticipations are often echoed by the drummer, and as previously mentioned, the last anticipation of the bar tends to act as the starting point of much of the rhythmic phrasing in

the ensemble figures and improvisations. As most of the styles of South African jazz tend to share similar harmonic progressions, these kinds of intervallic, three-note bass motifs are heard across the various genres and act as a key indicator of the South African jazz sound. A further example of such motivic bass movement can be heard in the iconic bassline of Abdullah Ibrahim’s ghoema-influenced South African jazz standard “Mannenbergs”. This bassline has the same rhythmic anticipations before beats one and three of the bar and features a similar intervallic pattern to three listed above. It starts with the usual movement up a perfect fourth to the subdominant chord, however, as this chord falls off the beat the usual bass movement of down a minor third then up a perfect fourth is replaced with a rest. This results in the line moving instead in a stepwise motion to anticipate the root note of the usual tonic chord in second inversion.

Figure 2.22 “Mannenbergs” bassline



Basslines in Brian Thusi Recordings

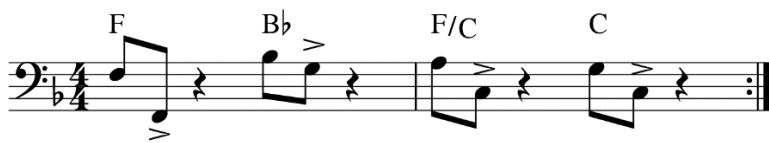
The music of trumpeter and composer Brian Thusi draws on his Zulu roots and the sound of mbaqanga. The mbaqanga style of bass playing is largely characterized by descending intervallic jumps and syncopated accents. The higher note of the jump usually acts as an anticipation to the lower note, which typically falls on the eighth note after beat two and beat four of the bar, and functions as the key rhythmic phrasing point in the music. Additionally, the notes of the basslines are often approached with a slide from below, and sometimes ornamented with a number of repetitive sixteenth notes on the same pitch preceding the chord tone about to be played. This technique is also commonly used by other instrumentalists as an improvisational and compositional device across the various styles of South African jazz.

Shaun Johannes’ analysis of the development of the bass guitar in the styles of mbaqanga and ghoema in Cape Town highlights the ornamental, sliding technique as one of the common features of the mbaqanga bass playing style (Johannes, 2010, 27). Regarding the general function of the bass guitar in mbaqanga music, Johannes states, “The bass plays a more ornamental role while maintaining its function as the musical anchor harmonically and rhythmically” (Johannes, 2010, 27). Furthermore, mbaqanga basslines are often played with a generous amount of vibrato and a muted/deadened tone. In a video performance for Jazz at

Lincoln Centre’s Jazz Academy, renowned South African bass player Herbie Tsoaeli states that this muted tone was originally achieved on the double bass by playing the strings with the thumb instead of the index and middle fingers (Jazz at Lincoln Centre’s Jazz Academy 2014).

An example of another commonly used South African jazz bassline, shared here across the genres of African jazz and mbaqanga, can be heard in “Riverside” by the African Jazz Pioneers and “Dembese” by Brian Thusi.

Figure 2.23 “Riverside” bassline



This syncopated rhythm, accenting the second eighth note in each group of two eighth notes occurring on beats one and three of the bar is common to both styles of bass playing, and is generally supported by the drummer playing a bass drum on the off-beat accents. The previously-mentioned intervallic pattern is also a common template in this style, which the bass guitarist can embellish and improvise on. In general, the bass guitar in much South African jazz plays an important melodic role vital to the feel and sound of the style, and therefore most bass guitarists often make use of these kinds of repetitive patterns.

A more contemporary version of this same bassline can be heard on Brian Thusi’s compositions “Dembese” and “Sibusiso”, taken from his 2009 album *Nomakunjalo*.

Figure 2.24 “Dembese” bassline



Although being a slightly more complex line, the “Dembese” four-bar motif follows similar rhythmic and intervallic pattern to that of “Riverside”. Both start with the characteristic mbaqanga-style octave jump from the high tonic note to the lower. The figure on the subdominant chord of “Dembese” differs slightly to “Riverside” as there is no movement of a

minor third down in the former. Nevertheless, both basslines move a major 6th down on the Ic chord, the only difference being the timing of the intervals – in “Dembese” the jump is anticipated on the Ic chord instead of appearing on the beat. On the dominant chord the bassline in “Dembese” remains on the tonic, jumping an octave down instead of from a fifth above. Rhythmically, both lines have two eighth notes on beat one and three of every bar (except for bar three of “Dembese” where the first of the two eighth notes is split into two sixteenth notes). Besides the extra passing notes added in the “Dembese” bassline, the main difference between the two is the placement of the accents. In contrast to bassist Bheki Buthelezi’s accentuation of every second eighth note of each grouping heard on “Riverside”, Brian Thusi’s bassist, Philani Ngidi, emphasizes the first note on the tonic chord, and from there on he mainly accentuates the sixteenth note anticipation to each downbeat. In “Sibusiso”, the bassline starts with the usual octave jump downwards on the first two eighth notes of the bar followed by an anticipated sixteenth to eighth note descending pattern on beat three. This same rhythm continues for the rest of the four-bar phrase, with a slight embellishment at the end of the third bar in which two sixteenth notes are added as an anticipation of the following downbeat of the next bar, creating a three-note pattern on the same pitch. This is a common rhythmic and melodic device found across much South African jazz. Ngidi uses a similar syncopated rhythm to the bassline in “Riverside”, accenting the second eighth note in each group of two eighth notes at the beginning of each bar. Although the intervallic movement is different in order to keep the sustained C as the first note of each bar, as in the African Jazz Pioneers’ “Ten Ten” and “Hellfire” there is also much use of intervals of thirds and fourths.

Figure 2.25 “Sibusiso” bassline

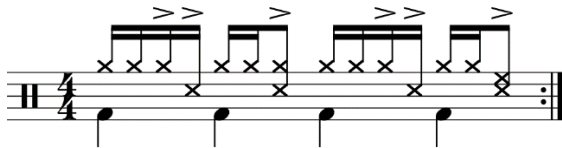


In terms of the accompanying drum grooves, the two tracks reveal two different styles of drumming common to much South African jazz. Drummer Sibusiso Zondi’s groove for “Sibusiso” borrows heavily from the marabi style, with a constant downbeat cross-stick accent on each beat of the bar and the bass drum following the syncopated offbeats of the bass guitar line. In contrast, the groove Zondi plays in “Dembese”, adopts less of a marabi-style beat and more of a groove typical to mbaqanga and ghoema music.

Figure 2.26 “Sibusiso” drum groove



Figure 2.27 “Dembese” drum groove



This pattern moves the main accents away from the downbeats and onto the upbeat anticipations, which complements the accent pattern of the bass guitar and produces a syncopated counter-rhythm to the “four on the floor” downbeat-oriented bass drum pattern. These two elements can be said to be what makes this drum groove so popular across many different styles of South African jazz and other forms of popular from around Africa as it merges a low, strong, “danceable” repetitive downbeat with a syncopated, upbeat-centred rhythm that lends itself to further polyrhythmic and polymetric improvisation from the drummer and other members of the ensemble. The strong emphasis on the upbeats and anticipations, along with the repetitiveness of the pattern (and the slight variation of the open hi-hat on the last eighth note of the bar) combine with similar elements of the bassline to create a space in which the melodic and harmonic instruments are stirred to create short, syncopated, repetitive, call-and-response style melodic content in their composition and improvisations.

Guitar

In addition to the bass guitar/ double bass, drums and piano, another important element of the South African jazz rhythm section is the guitar. Stringed instruments are deeply rooted in the history of traditional South African music. In the traditional Xhosa music of the Eastern Cape the uhadi functioned as the primary accompaniment for solo and ensemble vocal music. Similar stringed bow instruments are found throughout Southern African traditional music, including the umakhweyana in Zulu music, and the mbulumbumba in Khoisan music. With the discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand and the subsequent advent of widespread migrant labour to Johannesburg and its surrounding areas, the guitar became a popular instrument for

recreation in miners' boarding houses as it was portable and relatively cheap to acquire. Combined with a similarly cheap and portable instrument, the pennywhistle, the enduring South African jazz style of kwela emerged. Allen states that in kwela music the guitar has a more significant role than the other instruments of the rhythm section as the guitar was the only instrument of the rhythm section used in the original kwela bands (Allen, 1993, 96). In summary, Allen identifies the traits of kwela guitar playing as:

- Downbeat shuffle rhythm strumming
- Treble-focussed, "tinny" tone
- Occasional ostinato figures on the supertonic
- Contrapuntal lines (introduced with the arrival of the electric guitar)
- "Voice leading and spacing which results in open fifths and fourths" (a technique common to much traditional and neo-traditional Southern African music)
- The use of the two-against-three cross-rhythms in solos
- The use of glissandi

Allen suggests that the increasing use of electric guitars in South African jazz and the consequent change in style of guitar playing contributed to kwela eventually developing into mbaqanga (Allen 1993, 98). She cites techniques such as the use of contrapuntal guitar lines, extended solos and guitar introductions as indicators of this metamorphosis of guitar playing in the South African jazz tradition (Allen 1993, 98). Allen quotes a personal conversation with guitarist Zami Duze who explains the difference in guitar style of kwela and mbaqanga being faster, thus demanding "more technically proficient" guitar playing. Duze isolates an important guitar technique in which the lead guitarist plays an independent melodic line that continues throughout the piece and is generally comprised of "fast singing lines", a "special kind of fill-ins", and often "lots of parallel thirds" (Allen, 1993, 100). This preference for lines over chords, as well as many of the other guitar techniques mentioned above can be heard in the guitar playing on much of the African Jazz Pioneers album and Brian Thusi's *Nomakunjalo*, and can be said to be influenced by the Zulu style of guitar playing known as maskanda⁹ (or maskandi).

⁹ For a further discussion of the history and techniques of maskanda music see Carol Ann Muller, *Focus: Music of South Africa* 2008, 113 – 128, and Barbara Titus "Walking like a crab": Analyzing Maskanda Music in Post-Apartheid South Africa. *Ethnomusicology* 57 (2): 286-310.

Maskanda was popularized by musicians such as Busi Mhlongo, and features a unique rhythmic picking pattern that creates repetitive single note melodic lines which substitute the more commonly heard guitar technique of strumming the notes of the chords simultaneously. These motifs are often equally as melodic as the main melody of the song and create a contrapuntal texture unique to the style. This technique of guitar playing was adopted by pop music icons such as Paul Simon and Johnny Clegg in the 1980s and has since become a key feature of the mid-2000s American indie rock sound heralded by bands such as Vampire Weekend. The lyrics of maskanda often centre around storytelling of the migrant experience and generally feature sections of spoken word. These sections were initially comprised of Zulu praise poetry but later became more interwoven with the theme of the song. A common feature of the maskanda style is known as “izihlabo”, which is when the guitar (or sometimes a concertina) plays a fast run of notes, unrelated to the melody, at the beginning of the song as an introduction. An example of this can be heard on Brian Thusi’s “Gravel Road” from his *Nomakunjalo* album.

Ghoema Rhythm Influence: Abdullah Ibrahim

The neo-traditional style of ghoema music which originated in the Western Cape province of South Africa, has had a significant impact on the development of South African jazz. The rhythms of this style in particular have permeated various genres of South African jazz and influenced many South African jazz composers. However, the analysis of the rhythms of ghoema music reveal a myriad of local and global influences. In *Cape Town Harmonies* (2017), Armelle Gaulier and Denis-Constant Martin refer to the rhythm as the “basic pattern of the ghoema beat” and the “indigenous basis” of ghoema music (Gaulier, Martin 2017, 156-157).

Figure 2.28 Basic pattern of the ghoema beat (Gaulier and Martin 2017)



Figure 2.29 Common variation of the ghoema beat (Gaulier and Martin 2017)



Figure 2.30 Common variation of the ghoema beat (Gaulier and Martin 2017)



Renowned South African pianist, Paul Hamner, recounts the origin of ghoema music as developing from the influence of Ratiep music from the Sufi religion, which was brought over by Malaysian slaves during the slave trade (Jazz at Lincoln Centre's Jazz Academy 2014). Hanmer states that the rhythm of Ratiep music is very fast and based on the tumbao rhythm, a universal rhythmic pattern common to much Latin music. This rhythm forms the rhythmic foundation for most basslines in the Afro-Cuban style.

Figure 2.31 Tumbao rhythm



Figure 2.32 Common variation of Tumbao rhythm



Elements of Ratiep were then blended with musical and instrumental influences of American jazz coming across the Atlantic with the travelling Vaudeville shows. Added to this were elements of traditional South African music and marabi, such as the I-IV6-Ic-V7 harmonic progression. All of this was put together in the music of the Cape minstrel carnival parades. Interpretations of this music then filtered into smaller ensemble configurations and compositions.

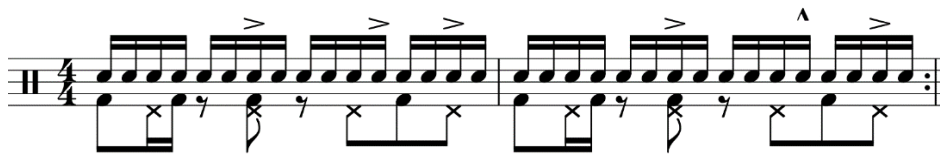
The third variation of the ghoema beat indicated above in figure 2.30 is also the key rhythmic basis of much Latin music. In Latin music this three-note pattern is referred to as the tumbao rhythm (figure 2.31) derived from the name of the large drum on which it is played - the tumbao. In traditional ghoema music this same rhythm and its various permutations are played on a drum closely resembling the tumbao, the ghoema drum.¹⁰ Subsequently, when composers such as Abdullah Ibrahim began combining ghoema with jazz, these rhythms were

¹⁰ The ghoema drum is a large drum, originally made from wine barrels, that is played with alternating hands striking a single head which was traditionally made from the skin of a springbok (Gaulier, Martin 2017, 155).

transferred onto the drum kit and took on a more contemporary form. In such settings the bass guitar/ double bass follow the tumbao rhythm. This connection to Latin music will be explored further in the next section.

An example of the assimilation of the ghoema rhythm into jazz drumming can be heard in many of Abdullah Ibrahim’s recordings, and especially on his classic composition, “Chisa” from the album *Township*. Here the ghoema pattern is incorporated into a consistent sixteenth note snare drum pattern reminiscent of the Brazilian bossa nova style. The sixteenth notes are played with brushes in an alternating hand pattern and the ghoema rhythm is split between the bass drum, hi-hat and snare drum accents.

Figure 2.33 “Chisa” drum groove



Similar versions of this pattern appear throughout the *Township* album on tracks like “Shosholozza” and “Genadendal (Valley of Grace)”. Another common up-tempo orchestration of the ghoema beat can be heard on the same album on tracks like “The Minstrel” and “Lekker Lekkers (Nice Sweets)”. “The Minstrel” appears twice on the album – a trio version and a full band version. The trio version is medium tempo and features a drum groove similar to that of “Chisa”. It is also a sixteenth note snare pattern played with brushes and differs mainly in terms of the repetitive pattern on the bass drum. This bass drum pattern is also commonly heard in the Cuban styles of cha-cha, guaracha, mozambique and rumba, as well as in the calypso rhythms of Trinidad and Tobago.

Figure 2.34 “The Minstrel” - trio version drum groove



The overlapping rhythmic content between Latin music and many of the neo-traditional South African music styles such as ghoema will be the focus of the next section of analysis.

Although such observations do provide important insights into the interrelated rhythmic character of the two musics, it can be said that it also further complicates any attempt at compartmentalizing the rhythmic features of South African jazz.

Rhythmic Influence of Latin Music on South African Jazz Styles

The rhythms of much of the traditional and popular music heard across the African continent have always had close ties to those found in Latin music. As stated in the previous chapter, the slave trade had an immense influence on the dispersal of musical traditions around the world. Many slaves brought from African countries were taken to work in the colonies on the islands of the Caribbean such as Cuba, Haiti, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad and Tobago. Additionally, millions of African slaves were taken to work in the Spanish, French and Portuguese colonies of Latin America, including countries like Brazil, Columbia and Argentina. For this reason, the musics emanating from these countries during and after the slave trade share many common features with much of the musics of Africa. Rhythmically, certain common grooves such as the “Afro/Cuban 6/8” reveal clear African origins of rhythms from Nigeria and the Congo. However, in most cases the lines between the African and Latin American elements become more blurred.

The Charleston rhythm formed the rhythmic basis of the early forms of U.S.-American jazz such as ragtime, and became a key feature of the new, hugely popular style. As stated in the previous chapter, the Charleston is identical to the Cuban Habanera rhythm. This same rhythm is found in much of the traditional music from Ghana, in particular the Ghanaian folk song ‘Savou Dance’ (Lawn, Hellmer 1993, 156). Lawn and Hellmer argue that due to the migration and consequent cultural exchange between Africa, Latin America and North America during the slave trade, the iconic Charleston rhythm that came to define the rhythmic character of U.S.-American jazz developed indirectly from the Cuban Habanera, which in turn may have been influenced by Ghanaian rhythms (Lawn, Hellmer 1993, 156). In view of this, it could be argued that the popularity of incorporating Latin rhythms into U.S.-American jazz could possibly have recycled certain African rhythmic elements back into the emerging styles of South African jazz as South African musicians mixed traditional musical elements with U.S.-American jazz. Consequently, this could possibly explain why certain styles of South African jazz such as marabi, kwela, mbaqanga and ghoema share so many common rhythmic qualities with Latin music.

Allen claims that many kwela pennywhistle compositions were influenced by other jazz forms such as the blues and latin music. Regarding Latin rhythmic influences, Allen references several kwela recordings including Spokes Mashiyane's "Jealous Down" and "Goli Kwela" by Kippie Moeketsi that contain the "Latin-influenced drum-set riff" similar to the rhythm heard in marabi (Allen 1993, 83).

Figure 2.35 "Latin-influenced drum-set riff"



She adds that some kwela recordings even featured a full Latin percussion section, such as Mashiyane's "Mambo Spokes". Furthermore, references an August 1960 Drum magazine record review that asserts the kwela song "Elizabethville", by Bopape, M. Nkosi and B. Nkosi is based on the rhythms of calypso music (Allen 1993, 83).

The Latin influence on the style of mbaqanga is evident in the rhythmic phrasing of the most common drum grooves associated with the style, which can be said to be almost identical to the grooves heard in soca music of Trinidad and Tobago. Derived from the portmanteau of the terms soul and calypso, soca is the most popular dance music of Trinidad and Tobago. Rhythmically, it is very similar to calypso but differs mainly in the consistent downbeat bass drum on each beat of the bar which makes it more of a dance style. Furthermore, the anticipation before beat three of the bar, which is played by the bass drum in calypso, is commonly moved to the snare drum in soca. This orchestration, along with the hi-hat pattern and snare accents, is almost identical to the beat heard in Brian Thusi's "Dembese" (figure 2.27) and much mbaqanga-influenced jazz and popular music in South Africa.

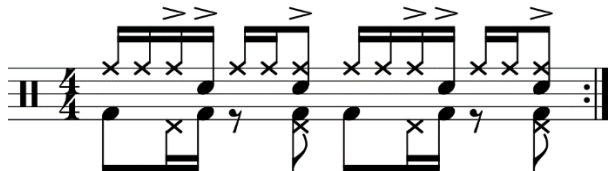
Figure 2.36 Soca drum groove



As previously mentioned, the rhythms of the traditional versions of the ghoema style bear many similarities to Latin patterns such as the tumbao rhythm. As stated, these influences can

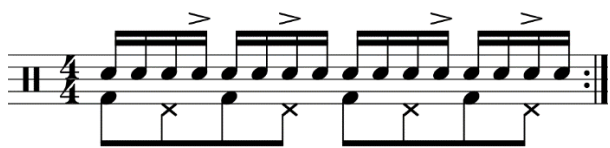
be heard in the trio version of Abdullah Ibrahim’s “The Minstrel”. Furthermore, the beat featured in the full band version of “The Minstrel” is remarkably similar to the soca groove and that of “Dembese”. Both are comprised of almost identical cymbal and snare drum patterns, and differ only in the bass drum rhythm which in “The Minstrel” plays around the three-note calypso pattern heard in “Chisa”.

Figure 2.37 “The Minstrel” - full band version drum groove



Another example of this influence of Latin music on ghoema drum grooves is evident in the second up-tempo track from Ibrahim’s *Township* album, “Lekker Lekkers (Nice Sweets)”. Although minor embellishments are added along the way, the snare pattern is essentially the same as “The Minstrel” (trio version), but the snare drum is played with rutes¹¹ and the snare is set off the drum. Like the soca groove, this version takes more of a dance feel as the bass drum is played on all the downbeats of the bar instead of following the calypso rhythm. The resulting rhythmic counterpoint between the snare drum accents and the bass drum provides the exact same rhythm that characterizes the soca groove.

Figure 2.38 “Lekker Lekkers (Nice Sweets)” drum groove



In her examination of the ties between kwela and Afrikaans folk music, Allen refers to the Latin rhythmic influence on South African music as she quotes Cape musician Nico Carstens saying, “They had a rhythm which we called *quela*¹² in the Cape, but it was more like a

¹¹ Rutes are an alternative type of drum stick made up of a cluster of thin wooden dowels as opposed to one thick piece of wood. They are generally used by drummers to achieve a lower volume and different texture to that of regular drum sticks.

¹² As noted by Allen, *quela* is a distinctly different musical style to the pennywhistle kwela of the 1950’s. Allen explains the confusion surrounding the two terms arose when Afrikaans boeremusiek bands appropriated the term *quela* and changed the spelling to kwela.

*klopse*¹³ and it was very akin to Latin rhythms, the Samba and the Salsa etcetera I quite honestly can't tell you where is the dividing line between a *vastrap* and a *quela*" (Allen 1993, 233). This observation serves to underscore the inter-relatedness of the neo-traditional South African styles of music and their ties to latin rhythms. Similarly, Allen quotes Todd Matshikiza in a 1956 *Drum* article saying, "A new style, the *Quela* (pronounced *kwela*), has evolved. *Quela* is the brainchild of the squares and the modern samba, so that you get a *vastrap* which is both South African and yet continental. You can dance the squares to *quela* and you can also samba to it" (Allen 1993, 233).

The soca drum groove and its various orchestrations on the drum kit can be heard in many other styles of popular music across Africa, such as Makossa from Cameroon, Soukous from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Afrobeat, an internationally popular style originating from Nigeria that contains Ghanaian influences. In an appearance on *drumeo.com* on 2 May 2017 one of Nigeria's premier Afrobeat drummers, Tosin Aribisala, demonstrates the interrelated nature of these African pop styles and their connection to Latin rhythms, highlighting in particular the snare drum patterns derived from the 3:2 son clave heard in many Latin styles such as bossa nova, mambo and samba.

Figure 2.39 3:2 son clave – two bar phrase



The two-bar 3:2 son clave rhythm is often interpreted by drummers as a one bar figure which can be orchestrated in various ways around the drum kit.

Figure 2.40 3:2 son clave – one bar phrase



Further study of the connection between Latin music and these styles, as well as the South African jazz and popular music styles would be a useful intervention in this field of research and would aid in clarifying the proportion of musical exchange that occurred between

¹³ Klopse is style of song popular in the Cape 'coloured' community which often sung at carnival celebrations.

African and Latin American countries, however this falls outside the scope of my dissertation.

Black Atlantic Pool of Music

In view of this, it can be said that many of the elements found in South African jazz can also be heard in other Black Atlantic musics such as jazz and other popular music from elsewhere in Africa, Latin America and North America. The very subtle differences in the rhythmic composition of the musics from these parts of the world complicate any attempt at tracing the exact origin of each particular trait. The mass sharing of culture and music that took place during the slave trade and the years succeeding it, resulting in years of back and forth assimilation of various elements into the traditional and popular music of these areas, has created a pool of music, rhythms and rhythmic concepts from which it is very difficult to draw many absolute conclusions on each one's origin. With this in mind, it can be said that it is often the subtle differences in execution of the patterns, the idiosyncrasies of feel, that tie the music to a particular area more than any single concrete musical trope. For this reason, it could be useful to examine how a particular style of music is performed by musicians from outside the area in which the music originates. This of course, could possibly be an area for further study, looking at how people from different countries interpret a particular style of music. However, due to the limitations of this study I will examine just one example of how South African jazz is performed by U.S.-American musicians.

The case study presented is the chart-topping 1968 release of Hugh Masekela's "Grazing in the Grass". Composed by actor and singer Philemon Hou and recorded at the famous Gold Star Studios in Hollywood, California, this catchy tune reached number one of the Billboard Hot 100 on its release and has since become known the world over as a South African jazz standard (Pass The Paisley website). In the year the song was released Masekela won a Grammy Award for it under the category Best Contemporary Pop Performance – Instrumental, propelling him into international stardom and iconic status as the face of South African jazz. But, how South African is it in terms of its musical make-up? And if it is "uniquely South African" in sound, what in the recording can be attributed to creating that distinctive sound?

Case Study 2: Hugh Masekela – Grazing in the Grass

The origin of “Grazing in the Grass” immediately puts into question the “South African-ness” of the song. Recorded in an American studio, with an all-American backing band, the song is essentially a reinterpretation of a Zambian song by a Zambian singer, Philemon Hou. In his article “Friends Of Distinction: Grazing In The Grass Going In Circles”, published on Internet FM, Eric Berman asserts that during his time spent in Zambia prior to recording “Grazing in the Grass”, Masekela bought a copy of a “cowbell-infused novelty record” called “Mr. Bull #5”, which his American record label UNI Records suggested he cover to fill a three minute shortfall on his album before its release (Internet FM website). Taking “Mr. Bull #5” as the main backing for the track, Philemon Hou wrote a new melody for it which became the iconic tune of “Grazing in the Grass”.

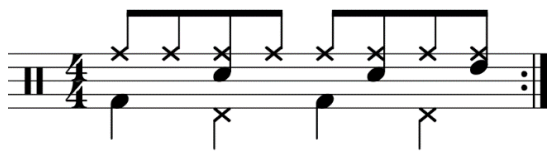
South African And U.S.-American Rhythm Sections

Besides Hugh Masekela, all the musicians featured on the recording of “Grazing in the Grass” are U.S.-American. As the only South African, it can be argued that Masekela alone brings a particular South African flavour to the melody and improvisations. When listening to the recording, the first things that stand out to me are the guitar part and the bassline. The comping style of the guitar, along with the piano are particularly static in comparison to what we hear on the African Jazz Pioneers, Abdullah Ibrahim and Brian Thusi albums. To my ear, the repetitive character of the chords is duplicated but without the nuances and flare that one hears on the South African recordings. American guitarist, Bruce Langhore, seems to play the progression with the U.S.-American funk/ pop style of a fixed rhythmic chord pattern, whereas South African guitarists often prefer to borrow from the Zulu maskanda style of playing repetitive sixteenth-note-based, single note melodic lines as opposed to block chords. The bass guitarist, American Henry Franklin, plays a double eighth note root pattern on the downbeat of each bar, which is often heard in South African jazz. However, when isolated, his bassline reveals very little South African character as the accents remain firmly on the downbeat. A similar bassline is heard in the African Jazz Pioneers’ “Riverside” and Brian Thusi’s “Sibusiso” but both are played with a consistent syncopated feel created by an accent falling on the eighth note after each downbeat. In addition, the supporting chord progression I-vi-ii-V of “Grazing in the Grass” does not follow the typical marabi progression of I-IV-Ic-V7. Therefore, the progression is not sufficient on its own to define the South African sound when the other nuances such as the syncopations, tonal inflections and intervallic

embellishments are not evident in the bass guitar part. In terms of the contribution of the piano, like the guitarist, pianist William Henderson performs his supportive rhythmic part with such metric accuracy, consistency of tone and lack of variation that it loses the fluid, relaxed, behind the beat feel typically heard by pianists such as Abdullah Ibrahim.

Lastly, drummer Chuck Carter takes a similar approach to the rest of the rhythm section, choosing to stick to a downbeat-oriented funk drum groove reminiscent of a more repetitive version of Tony Williams’ groove on Herbie Hancock’s original 1964 recording of “Cantaloupe Island”. He also opts for an open, washy cymbal and drum tone as opposed to the typically tight South African sound. Even with the “African sounding” cowbell accompaniment, this groove does not contain any of the characteristic patterns, accents or other rhythmic and tonal features heard in the other South African jazz drum grooves addressed so far in this study. Instead it takes on the static, American pop-like feel heard in the rest of the rhythm section.

Figure 2.41 “Grazing in the Grass” drum groove



This hybridised U.S.-American and South African sound may well have been the original intention of the producers and musicians in approaching the feel of the song. However, such an intention coupled with the song’s Zambian roots, brings into question the enormous success of it in the U.S. as an authentic sample of South African jazz or rather a creation of Zambian-influenced American funk/ pop featuring a South African trumpeter. Moreover, what this intentional or unintentional mix of influences exposes is the fact that the sound that many people around the world consider to be “South African jazz” did not develop in isolation, but rather in dialogue with international and, importantly, other African influences.

Traits of South African jazz in Masekela’s Style

...there is an element of getting inside the melody, like not playing naked notes, you know, putting some juice in the melody like swells,...certain ornaments that are typical township. (Feya Faku - Jazz at Lincoln Centre’s Jazz Academy video)

Referring to the way in which South African jazz musicians approach melody in composition and improvisation, renowned South African jazz trumpeter Feya Faku states that many South African jazz composers come from a singing tradition, thus resulting in the notes of the melodic lines often being played with a variety of ornaments to create a sung, voice-like sound.

In view of this it can be said that much of the South African sound of the original “Grazing in the Grass” recording is created by the performance of Masekela alone. His use of subtle nuance in his melodic, rhythmic and tonal choices reveal a unique South African sound that is immediately distinct from that of the other musicians on the recording. From the second note Masekela plays you can hear the South African feel in the accented staccato tonguing technique, so commonly used by South African jazz brass and saxophone players such as Jonas Gwangwa and Kippie Moeketsi. The B section of the melody reveals a number of tropes common to the articulation style of South African jazz musicians in the swooping up to the pitch of the first and fourth notes of this particular phrase and the staccato attack on the last note of the motif. Masekela’s tone takes on a rougher, earthier character to that of trumpeters like John “Dizzy” Gillespie, and his phrasing is noticeably behind the beat.

Compositionally, the repetition and rhythmic variation (in this case, exact repetition followed by diminution of the three-note phrase) of the first line of the melody of the B section is a commonly heard trait of the South African jazz sound. The resulting polyrhythmic effect of superimposing 3/8 within a 4/4 meter as well as the repetitive diatonic intervallic structure of the phrase is also a common technique of melodic development in the South African jazz style. Additionally, the five repetitive single notes in bar three of the B section melody, followed by the staccato, tongued note on beat four of the bar, reveal a similar melodic approach to that of the afore-mentioned basslines in the music of Brian Thusi and the African Jazz Pioneers, and can be said to be techniques common to much South African jazz.

Figure 2.42 “Grazing in the Grass” – B section melody



Figure 2.43 “Grazing in the Grass” – Hugh Masekela trumpet solo (1 min 5 secs)

The musical score for Hugh Masekela's trumpet solo "Grazing in the Grass" is presented in five staves. The key signature is B-flat major and the time signature is 4/4. The first staff begins with a two-bar motif (F, Dm, Gm7, C7) repeated. The second staff continues with a similar motif and a pedal tone. The third staff features a descending syncopated long note phrase. The fourth staff has a short motif (F, Dm, Gm7, C7) repeated. The fifth staff concludes with a final motif (F, Dm, Gm7, C7) and a triplet ending.

Masekela's solo starts with a short two bar motif which is immediately repeated. The repetition of a short melodic phrase (usually between one and five notes) is a common South African improvisational technique that comprises the bulk of Masekela's solo. This repeated motif is then followed by a pedal tone held over the first three chords of the progression. The slightly shifting intonation applied to this pedal tone as well as that of the succeeding syncopated long notes in the next four bars signify more features of the South African sound. Succeeding the pedal tone are four bars of descending syncopated long notes which together form their own four bar melodic phrase. The next short motif is heard half way through bar ten of the solo (1 mins 25 secs). This motif is preceded by repeated sixteenth-notes on the same pitch as the main three note pattern emphasized at the end of the phrase. As previously shown in basslines of mbaqanga, this is a widely used technique in South African jazz. The final motif is introduced in the last three bars of the solo. Masekela repeats this figure three times, utilizing a different rhythmic variation of the motif each time and melodic variation in which the motif becomes increasingly more arpeggiated. In addition, the use of almost entirely diatonic material in the solo instead of extensive chromaticism and implied harmony can be said to be another common feature in South African jazz improvisation. All of these stylistic characteristics evident in Masekela's performance instantly provide a South African feel to the recording, and drastically contrast the performance of the supporting band.

Case Study 3: Barney Rachabane and Kippie Moeketsi

Stylistic Traits

In view of Masekela's performance on "Grazing in the Grass" it can be said that the key to the South African jazz feel could lie not just in the devices of repetition and short motifs etc., but also, or more so, in the subtle nuances of articulation, tone and inflection. Davidson echoes this statement in the conclusion of his study of renowned South African alto saxophonist Barney Rachabane's improvisational style, which he compares to that of American saxophonist Bob Mintzer and Canadian trumpeter Bruce Cassidy:

Perhaps the defining parameters as to what constitutes 'South African' jazz improvisation are not just elements, such as cyclical repetition and on-going short melodic motifs and figurations, nor could they solely be based on a musical aesthetic that focuses on purely on-going melodic development that often occurs at the cost of loosening vertical relationships with the harmonies of the music, but they might be found in improvisations such as these, where the articulations, slurs and smears of the soloist seem to burn into our minds and souls in such a way that we experience the humanity and frailty of the player, and in this way we are touched in a deeper place within ourselves than with music sourced from a more stylized and contrived space. (Davidson 2012, 33)

In this study, Davidson identifies the elements that make Rachabane's solo sound "South African" beginning with Rachabane's tone as the first discernible difference between his sound and that of Bob Mintzer (Davidson, 2012, 27). He then goes on to mention other techniques such as Rachabane beginning his solo with a pedal tone, his use of "melodic rhythms and short motivic ideas", and his choice of mostly "diatonic material" as he focussed on "prime melodic development of his motivic ideas" as opposed to the American bebop and post bop style of outlining each chord and its numerous harmonic extensions (Davidson, 2012, 28). He also highlights Rachabane's "startling use of attacks on the reed of his horn as well as inflection" as the musical devices that contribute to his "distinctly African sound" (Davidson, 2012, 23). Davidson clarifies that such an approach is more typical of the traditional bebop style than of post bop practices.

In Merz's analysis and discussion of the individual saxophone styles of Barney Rachabane and Kippie Moeketsi, he notes that this unique approach to bebop articulation and phrasing developed from a conscious decision to reinterpret the technique in an original way. In a 1993 interview with Merz, Rachabane addresses the South African approach to bebop phrasing saying, "[s]ome of that stuff [inflection, articulation] is very complicated. Rather do it your

own way” (Merz, 2016, 33). Merz highlights this conscious reimagining of the American bebop articulation style by South African jazz saxophonists as a key feature of Moeketsi’s playing stating, “Not out of a lack of understanding but from a desire for a more personal approach, Kippie developed his own application of the Parker style. This individuality is most clearly reflected in his approach to articulation” (Merz 2016, 33). Furthermore, Merz adds that Moeketsi only uses this variation of the bebop articulation style in improvisation, citing recordings featuring Moeketsi as the lead player in a section which sound as if they had been recorded by American bebop musicians (Merz 2016, 33). Merz believes this demonstrates that it was a conscious effort by Moeketsi to reinterpret the bebop phrasing in a uniquely South African way as opposed to being a misinterpretation of the American style.

A further defining feature Merz highlights in Moeketsi’s style is “the liberal use of expressive devices” (Merz 2016, 34). He defines such devices as “scoops, fall-offs, extreme staccato and anything else that would detract from the grace of the line”. Merz refers to these techniques as “excesses of the swing era” which the American bebop musicians were abandoning in favour of a smoother improvisational style. He suggests that Moeketsi, being South African and thus free from the guiding trends of the American beboppers, felt free to use these swing era techniques alongside the harmonic developments of the bebop style (Merz 2016, 34). The common use of such expressive devices can be heard in much of the South African jazz discussed in this chapter and can be said to be one of the defining attributes of the South African jazz sound.

Influence of Apartheid

The peak of the bebop era occurred in the post-war era of the mid-to-late 1940’s, closely preceding the implementation of the policy of apartheid in South Africa beginning in 1948. For this reason, it could be argued that many of the early South African jazz musicians seem to exhibit more of a bebop or pre-bebop influence in their playing than the post bop style of jazz, as the isolation resulting from the international sanctions imposed on the apartheid state limited outside cultural influence and access to global trends and music education resources. Davidson attributes the development of the South African jazz style in part to this isolation, stating that musicians wishing to learn to play the music were forced to do so aurally and orally as there were no sufficient programs and materials for jazz instruction in the schools and tertiary education institutions (Davidson 2012, 25). For this reason, South African jazz musicians developed a more aural-centred approach to composition and improvisation as

opposed to the largely more theoretical style of their American and European counterparts, resulting in performers with “a less stylized and contrived approach to music making” able to solo “unhindered by any notion of preordained stock phrasing techniques and mass-produced ‘schooled’ approaches to improvisation” (Davidson 2012, 25).

Winston Mankunku

In addition to the analysis of Rachabane’s style, Davidson identifies certain tropes evident in the sound of legendary South African tenor saxophonist, Winston Mankunku. Citing his transcriptions of Mankunku’s melodic lines from his 1968 album *Yakhal’ Inkomo*, Davidson attributes the South African flavour of Mankunku’s style to “his grouping, phrasing, unique use of short repetitive ideas, linear virtuosity and melodic approach that would favour horizontal dominance over having to justify note selections from a purely vertical point of view” (Davidson 2012, 23).

All of these qualities, along with those identified in the style of Barney Rachabane, align with the tropes identified in Hugh Masekela’s performance on “Grazing in the Grass”.

Collectively, they reveal a set of stylistic traits distinctly different from those identified in the solos of Bob Mintzer and Bruce Cassidy, who play in a style characterized by tension created by “disjunct rhythmic groupings that seem to attack the flow of the music”, “long lines of ‘outside’ notes that ‘spike’ against the cyclical harmony” and “ghost chord tonalities”¹⁴ resulting in improvisations that are “intensely chromatic in terms of the chord progression”, but as Davidson observes, “one is left feeling that the inspiration for the melodic ideas lay squarely within the realms of modern stylistic cerebral manipulation” (Davidson 2012, 29). This is not to say, however, that either party is incapable of performing in the other’s style, as Davidson suggests by referring to instances of witnessing Rachabane’s displays of technical, chromatic improvisation over challenging American jazz standards such as “Stella by Starlight” and “Like Someone in Love” (Davidson 2012, 29). But it does reveal an observable difference in the American and South African approach to jazz improvisation, and thus helps illuminate some of the possible factors involved in creating the feel of each particular style.

¹⁴ Ghost chords are areas of tonality in which a chord other than the one indicated in the music is implied by the improviser choosing to play certain notes that pertain to a different chord. Generally, these implied chords/tonalities are related in some way to the given chord or key area.

Conclusion

In view of the analyses presented in this chapter, it can be said that the South African feel can be described using certain traits of style such as repetition, short melodic motifs, behind the beat feel, polymetric phrasing, cyclical two or four bar harmonic progressions, a focus on diatonic, melodic improvisation as opposed to chromatic playing and complex implied harmony, and the use of pedal points and repetitive arpeggiated motifs. More importantly, it seems the unique South African sound is often more related to the less quantifiable elements of interpretation such as inflection, articulation, tonal smears, scoops, fall-offs, and the use of extreme staccato. Also, it can be said that the various styles of South African jazz share many overlapping tropes and thus cannot always be clearly defined and categorized. Furthermore, these styles are so rhythmically intertwined with other styles of popular music from across Africa and Latin America that it is almost impossible to unequivocally affirm any exact origin and claim of exclusivity of any of the rhythmic traits of South African jazz. In addition, from the analyses presented it can be argued that the unique qualities of the South African sound are generally revealed more by the harmonic, melodic, tonal and rhythmic choices of all the musicians in the ensemble as opposed to any specific South African sounding groove or rhythm played by the drummer.

Chapter Three: Reworking the South African Jazz Sound: “Kwela Kong” by Todd Matshikiza

Context

As one further example of the particular set of observable techniques and less overtly quantifiable elements of the South African jazz sound, I would like to turn to the music of musician, composer, teacher and journalist Todd Matshikiza. Matshikiza’s compositions are useful in investigating the elements of South African jazz as it is well-documented that many of his works were often reworked by white composers before any public performance of them took place. This is especially true of Matshikiza’s most famous work and the focus of this chapter, the jazz musical *King Kong*. Tracing this process of editing and modification of the South African elements of Matshikiza’s compositions to fit European structures and tastes serves not only to highlight key characteristics of the South African sound, but also to illuminate how much of what we know as South African jazz has been mediated by other forces.

Todd Matshikiza was born into a musical family in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa and made a name for himself as a pianist and most notably as a composer. His talent for writing music across a variety of genres from choral compositions to jazz, and the ability to seamlessly merge traditional, classical and jazz influences helped him gain recognition as a composer, culminating in his landmark work, *King Kong*. Opening on 2nd February 1959, *King Kong* was an immediate success that helped launch the careers of numerous South African jazz icons such as Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela and Jonas Gwangwa. The show enjoyed a two-year run in theatres and venues across South Africa before being taken abroad to the United Kingdom for a series of shows at the Prince’s Theatre in London in 1961. Although both the South African and UK productions were largely met with good audiences and reviews and hailed as incredible successes in the South African media, for Matshikiza, the way in which his original music was tampered with remained a source of controversy and frustration.

Reworking and Censorship

In Matshikiza’s *New Statesman* article referred to in Chapter One, he laments the reworking of his compositions each time he was commissioned to write for a project that was in any

way affiliated with what he refers to as “the claw” – a term for the social engineering and constraints applied by the Nationalist government’s policy of apartheid. In the article he provides a clear example of how he believes the unique African quality of his compositions were stomped out by “the claw”. Referring to “Uxolo”, a work he was commissioned to produce by the Johannesburg municipality as part of the entertainment for the black contingent of the audience attending the city’s 70th birthday celebration, he writes in *The New Statesman*:

But I was cross when this conductor removed my tempi of five against four because he couldn’t ‘dig’ them. And when I wrote in consecutive fifths he changed them to fourths. Where I doubled my octaves he added thirds and told me he was giving the piece festival polish. (Matshikiza 1961, 315).

In the next paragraph, Matshikiza goes on to reveal how common this process of mandatory musical reworking was, stating, “But every time the small opportunity occurred, I was faced with the agony of the big white claw” (Matshikiza 1961, 316). He laments that even his seminal work *King Kong* was no exception to this, saying of the show: “Still I do not know if this musical is jazz, opera or Bantu. It left my hands before I could name it” (Matshikiza 1961, 315). Referring to how the South African recording industry affected the street musician, Matshikiza depicts how the sound of South African jazz was seized by white control stating:

The black composer had little or no work to do. Writing for the record companies became a specialised white job because the jazz had to have a selling flavour. And so the authentic mood of Sponono and Marabi died with all the potential of a distinct art form (Matshikiza in *The New Statesman* 1961, 315).

In a 1999 *Mail & Guardian* article celebrating the 40th anniversary of *King Kong*, entitled “An Incomplete Masterpiece Waiting in the Wings”, the final product of the original production of *King Kong* is described as “a compromise no one was entirely happy with” (Mail & Guardian website). The article elaborates:

In its native South Africa, it suffered from the restrictions of censorship (and pre-emptive self-censorship) as well as from all the other limitations that “separate development” imposed on all the players.

Of the 1961 West End production it states, “In England, its African soul was sucked out of it in order to make it, ironically, more palatable to Western ears. The end result was an unfinished musical, an incomplete masterpiece that is still waiting in the wings.”

King Kong Comparison

In the case of *King Kong*, the stark contrast between the recording of the soundtrack for the original production and the later 1961 recording for the London premier provide a clear musical picture of this process of musical reworking and meddling to make the product more palatable for white audiences. As there are many instances of this throughout the soundtrack, for the purpose of this study, I will focus primarily on the composition “Kwela Kong”. However, I will begin with a brief mention of the material that was added to the original list of songs recorded for the 1959 production.

Additional Compositions

Aside from the reworking of key compositions from the original production, when comparing the 1959 programme notes (Appendix B – figure 1) with the 1961 programme (Appendix B – figure 2), along with the two recordings, it is evident that a number of new compositions appeared in the 1961 production that were not in the original. These include compositions such as “Be Smart, Be Wise” and “Crazy Kid”, both of which can be said to contain little to no obviously South African sounding musical material. This is not to say that all of the songs featured on the original soundtrack have elements of South African jazz or traditional South African music. Certain songs that were excluded from the 1961 version such as “Strange”, “Better Than New” and “Mad” also do not sound particularly South African. Nevertheless, it is important to note that in the new original material composed for the London version of the show, very little of the South African jazz feel seems to have survived. According to the 1961 programme notes, Todd Matshikiza is credited as the composer of all the music. However, as these compositions do not appear on the original recording, it is difficult to gauge how much reworking of them occurred to suit the UK audiences. From the sound of them, though, and taking into account the modifications made to the compositions that did remain in the 1961 version of the show, it seems as if they were most likely either composed or reworked more in the style of the U.S.-American Broadway musical than any authentic South African jazz genre.

A similar criticism could be made of the recent revival of *King Kong* in 2017, as six additional compositions were added not by a well-known South African jazz composer, but by Charl-Johan Lingenfelder, a classically-trained composer with international experience working on musicals such as *West Side Story*, *Funny Girl* and *Cabaret*. Lingenfelder states in the programme notes that in writing the new material he aimed to base it on Todd

Matshikiza's original ideas that he accessed from bootleg recordings of Matshikiza's solo piano playing around the time of the original production (*King Kong* 2017 programme). However, my initial impression on hearing the additional music performed in the 2017 production at the Fugard Theatre in Cape Town, was that it was more closely connected to current Broadway and West End jazz musical compositional trends than the feel of the original production or any authentic marabi and kwela-influenced jazz writing of Matshikiza.

To return to the compositions on the 1961 recording that do not appear in the 1959 recording, several observations can be made regarding their stylistic features. "Be Smart, Be Wise" is written in the style of American Broadway musicals, with the vocal melody and performance reminiscent of American crooners such as Frank Sinatra. The pennywhistle is added, perhaps in an attempt to inject some authentic kwela flavour to the piece, but fails in this regard as it veers away from the South African style in terms of melodic and rhythmic traits, as well as in the harmonic choices in improvisation.

In "Crazy Kid" the pennywhistle is once again added, gesturing towards the classic South African sound of kwela. However, once again it is not played in the South African style. There are few repetitive arpeggiated motifs as well as little melodic development, and instead a blues-centred style of improvisation is heard, focussing on lines and emphasis of "blue notes". The composition is ostensibly kwela in feel, with the shuffling acoustic guitar and brushes on the snare drum, but in fact it follows the harmonic form of a typical American 12-bar blues, as opposed to the cyclical two-or-four-bar I-I-IV-V progressions characteristic of the South African kwela genre. The extent to which this hybrid sound of the American musical sparsely scattered with elements of South African jazz is related to Matshikiza's original compositions and intentions for all the music in *King Kong* is unclear. However, Matshikiza's general discontent with the reworking of his music should be taken into account when subjecting it to analysis.

There are, however, two added compositions that do seemingly have more obviously South African roots: "Tshotsholosa-Road Song" and "Gumboot Dance". To the British audiences these inclusions would probably seem to fit well in to the overall structure of the musical. However, to South Africans the addition of these items could seem trite and contrived. "Tshotsholosa-Road Song" is a traditional mining song of Zimbabwean origin. Sung by Ndebele miners commuting from Zimbabwe to the mines around Johannesburg, the lyrics are

a mixture of Ndebele (a language group predominantly found in Zimbabwe and along the South African border) and Zulu words centring on the experience of the train trip, the sound of the train and the hardship of working in the mines (Joop's Musical Flowers website). Although the meaning of the song has become synonymous with many revolutionary struggles across Africa, it is not specifically linked to the plot of *King Kong* and seems like a generic inclusion. The inclusion of the "Gumboot Dance" has a similar air of banality about it, as even before the 1961 production it had long been viewed as spectacle of South African traditional culture. Furthermore, it is originally a miner's dance used as a form of communication in the mines, and therefore is the second reference to mining in a plot that does not centre around the mines. Regarding the gumboot dance, Tyler Fleming states:

Created by Zulu laborers on the South African coastline (mainly Durban), it was far from a performance staple on the Reef, and where it was performed on the Reef was in mining compounds rather than in the streets of Orlando or Sophiatown. Thus it was simply out of place in a musical about urban African life in Johannesburg (Fleming 2009, 194)

In reference to these two additions, Fleming cites a critical review of *King Kong* that appeared in the *London American* newspaper in March 1961 which stated, "Only occasionally—as in the Gumboot Dance and the Road Song—does the stage throb with life and colour. It is in these moments that we glimpse the show that might have been" (Fleming 2009, 193). As Fleming points out, such assertions were informed by entrenched colonial ideas of what authentic African culture was:

Regardless of whether it reflected African popular culture in Johannesburg, the play suffered because British audiences did not want to watch a South African edition of what they believed was an American style; instead they desired what they considered authentically African, which was the stereotypical depiction of Africans as wild savages that British populations had been exposed to for centuries. (Fleming 2009, 190)

This ironically led to much criticism amongst the press and the public of the authentic South African elements of *King Kong* and praise for those seemingly "African" elements that were added to the original show for the specific purpose of entertaining the British audience (Fleming 2009, 194). Thus, the depiction of the experience of the new black urban working class in Johannesburg and the related development of the unique South African forms of American jazz were hailed as inauthentic, whilst segments such as the "Gumboot Dance" and the "Tshotsholosa-Road Song" that had little to do with black urban culture and music

delighted audiences and critics alike in their ostensibly authentic “African-ness”. Even though there was much political support for *King Kong* in London due to the growing anti-apartheid sentiment in the UK, this misconception of South African culture served to undermine the intentions of many involved in the production to use it as “a statement of African modernity and thereby counter stereotypes of Africans as savage, backward or uncivilized” (Fleming 2009, 177).

Furthermore, criticisms of the South African jazz sound appeared as the British jazz community struggled to align Matshikiza’s music with British notions of jazz. Fleming cites several reviews that seem to portray the South African jazz sound as something other than jazz and characterized primarily by “African rhythms”.

Though some applauded its “blending of pounding African rhythms and straight Tin-Pan Alley,” it appears that some reviewers found the South African approach to jazz to be misleading or poor. One review flatly remarked, “[I]t’s not a jazz opera or even a jazz musical as claimed by the company,” while another described the musical as “bursting with life and seething with native rhythm (which is not the same thing, of course, as jazz)”. (Fleming 2009, 195)

This essentialising of the South African jazz sound to “native rhythm” and the refusal to accept it as a legitimate form of jazz can be said to be a result of the colonial conception of African cultures as “other”. Thus, any music from Africa must be viewed as exotic and inherently incompatible with Western art forms. Whether this sentiment influenced the reworking of Matshikiza’s music for the UK production of *King Kong* is debatable, however, certain changes to the music do reveal drastic alterations from the original production that transform the music into something very different from the what is heard in the original recording. This is most notable in Matshikiza’s popular composition “Kwela Kong”.

From a musical point of view, “Kwela Kong” presents the listener with the most drastic reworking of Todd Matshikiza’s original composition, bearing in mind that even the 1959 original recording I am comparing the London version to was also contorted from Matshikiza’s original intentions. Written in the style of one of the most iconic forms of South African jazz, kwela, the title of the composition aspires to very clear connections to the kwela tradition. For this reason, I will be using “Kwela Kong” as the main case study in my musical analysis of the two versions of the *King Kong* production.

Tempo

From the outset, the first most obvious difference between the 1959 and 1961 recordings is the tempo. The first recording, which I will refer to as “the original” recording (even though it was also reworked by Stanley Glasser) is at a noticeably slower pace than the later version, roughly 122bpm, whilst the 1961 recording is almost 20bpm faster, generally staying at about 140bpm. Moreover, in the original recording, the musicians play with a definite “behind the beat” feel. This is most clearly heard in the phrasing of the piano, the double bass and the saxophone section, but can be said to permeate the performance of the entire ensemble, as well as in the phrasing of the soloists. In the later recording there is more of an urgency in the ensemble to keep pushing the time forward and stay on top of the faster tempo. This is often referred to in jazz performance as playing “ahead of the beat” and can be heard most clearly in the ‘walking basslines’ of the double bass and in the drum kit rhythms. The original notation Matshikiza sketched of the melody of “Kwela Kong”, as archived in the Cory Library, Grahamstown, South Africa, includes an indication that is difficult to decipher but looks either like ‘deliberate’ or ‘delicate’ (Appendix B – figure 3). This performance direction calls for an unhurried, slow to medium tempo with a light feel – something that is heard in the 1959 recording but directly contrasts the feel of the 1961 recording.

Instrumentation

In terms of the articulation of the characteristic kwela shuffle feel, there are two important elements missing in the later recording of *King Kong*. Firstly, the key element of the original kwela style, as stated by Allen is the shuffle strummed by an acoustic guitar - “*Kwela* rhythm is defined primarily by the guitar rather than the drum-set and has been described as a “lilting shuffle” (Allen 1993, 130). Referring to the early forms of kwela, she highlights the importance of the guitar in the music stating that kwela derived from the early 1950s when “groups of youngsters busking on the streets played only pennywhistles and guitars” (Allen 1993, 45). Furthermore, she adds that the original form of the kwela rhythm section consisted of just one guitar, and that other instruments such as a string-bass and drum kit were added when recordings of the music began (Allen 1993, 45).

In the 1959 recording of *King Kong* an acoustic guitar features prominently in the overall mix and can be heard from the outset strumming the characteristic shuffle pattern, which is complemented by the drummer playing the same triplet shuffle with brushes on the snare drum for the first half of the song, switching to drum sticks later on in the song for the last

chorus section. In the 1961 recording the rhythm is driven by the bass, piano and drums, which alludes more towards Count Basie style swing bands than the original kwela ensembles. There is very little guitar audible on the track besides in the introduction where an electric guitar can faintly be heard ringing out one long chord at the start of each bar underneath the piano solo.

Secondly, instead of the quiet brush snare shuffle, the drum kit plays a driving US-style swing groove with sticks on the ride cymbal and the hi-hat playing on beats 2 and 4 of the bar. The consistent backbeat usually played with a rim-click on the snare drum in kwela drum grooves (heard in the second half of the original recording) is replaced with swing band style snare comping¹⁵ on random offbeats. The sound of the brush shuffle on the snare is mimicked by the vocals in first eight bars before band starts. However, this is the only short reference to the original kwela style of drumming as throughout the piece the drummer continues in a typical US big-band swing style fashion building in volume and intensity to the final big Buddy Rich style swing band ending. The contrasting subtle, restrained use of brushes played quietly on the snare drum in traditional kwela music is outlined in saxophonist Barney Rachabane's statement to Allen:

Barney Rachabane describes the modification of a snare drum to produce the right sound for a *kwela* recording: "You put a cardboard [from a cardboard box] on top of the snare drum and you use brushes there is a certain sound that's wanted. You get a very different sound, a *kwela* or *mbaqanga* sound which you couldn't really imitate". (Allen 1993, 94)

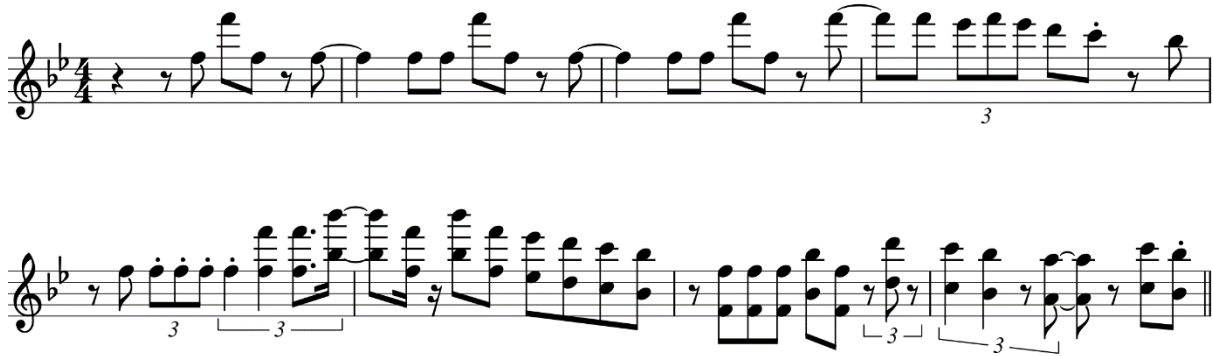
Piano Solo Introduction

Further differences in style can be heard in the introductory piano solo. In the original recording the piano solo is more motif/ riff based, consisting of a simple two-note pattern repeated three times and answered by a different phrase occurring on the fourth repeat. This is then followed by a second call-and-response style pattern, starting with a technique common to many styles of South African jazz phrasing in which a repetitive note is played in short succession on the same pitch as the first note of the phrase about to be played. This phrase makes use of behind the beat repetitive quarter note triplets to create a brief polymetric passage, which is then answered by a variation of the same phrase voiced in octaves that acts as the response to the call of the previous quarter note triplet line. The entire

¹⁵ Comping is a term used by jazz rhythm section players that refers to providing accompaniment for the ensemble or soloist by playing appropriate, improvised rhythmic and harmonic supporting material.

8-bar solo is entirely diatonic in construction and is accompanied by a single chord per bar held in the left hand.

Figure 3.1. “Kwela Kong” piano solo (1959 recording)



In contrast, the opening piano solo in the 1961 recording is less repetitive and motivic in nature. Although it is clearly based on fragments of the original solo, the motifs are padded out with a lot more notes and the solo takes on more of a melodic line improvisational style as opposed to the call-and-response structure of the original. Furthermore, it is played with far more intensity and volume than the original solo and does not have a relaxed “behind the beat” rhythmic feel. Additionally, “blue notes” are added in the fifth bar of the solo, resulting in a less diatonic and more blues/swing character to the sound. This reflects a change in the harmonic structure of the introduction in which the tonic chord in bar five has been changed from a diatonic major triad to a dominant 7th chord. Again, this type of chord quality substitution is commonly used in American swing but can be said to disrupt the marabi-influenced harmonic character of “Kwela Kong”.

Piano Scores: Annotations/ Criticisms

Matshikiza’s personal copies of the official published versions of the solo piano arrangements of the *King Kong* scores housed in the Cory Library in Grahamstown, South Africa, reveal numerous hand-written annotations by him in which he identifies and criticises the changes made to his music by arranger David Sherriff (Appendix C – figure 1 and figure 2). These appear on most of the individual compositions. With regard to “Kwela Kong” there are three particular bars that have been circled and a note (presumably directed at the arranger) written on the front cover stating, “David, you haven’t a clue what it’s all about here” (Annotation, *King Kong* piano score).

When comparing the piano score to the original recording, one can immediately understand Matshikiza's frustration, as a number of key elements of the kwela style and South African jazz feel have been removed, resulting in a diluted, simplistic, Americanised version of the song. The first part to be circled by Matshikiza are bars 9 and 10. I assume that two of the objections Matshikiza could have had here are the notation of the melody, and the harmonic accompaniment. In Matshikiza's original hand-written notation of the melody (Appendix B – figure 3) the notes in these bars are written in quavers, which in a kwela style would be interpreted as swung eighth notes. In Sherriff's version, the swung quavers are written with a dotted quaver followed by a semiquaver. This was often, and sometimes still is, a common practice in transcribing swing quaver rhythms, but in fact it has a very different feel to playing them as triplet quaver patterns. Furthermore, the way in which South African jazz musicians tend to play swung eighth notes with a slight straight eighth feel could make this notation of the melody seem very different from the intended feel of the original.

More importantly, it seems the chord sequence below the melody has changed from the typical marabi style I-IV6-Ic-V7 to the more simplistic I-V7-I-V7. The dominant 7th chord is circled individually which suggests that Matshikiza could have been pointing out that the I-V7 movement commonly found in swing jazz and jazz-influenced show music does not allow for the harmonic movement and tensions needed for the South African sound. The key harmonic features such as the add6 chord followed by chord I in first inversion typical to many styles of South African jazz are removed. These tensions are clearly outlined by the upright bass in the original recording, but the piano arrangement does not include an appropriate walking bassline with correct voice leading, just a one-bar descending step-wise sequence repeated over the two chords. In his original transcription, Matshikiza notates the bassline in a two-feel as opposed to the four-note walking bassline. This is more common to the marabi style of bass playing, which Matshikiza was clearly influenced by. Generally, it seems through his treatment of melody and harmony, much of Matshikiza's jazz composition is influenced primarily by the pre-bebop genres of jazz.

The next part that is circled are the chords and bass notes indicated at bar 22 (Appendix C – figure 4) where the bass moves chromatically from G to Gb over an Eb to Ebm chord progression. This is again highlighted when the same figure repeats on the next page (Appendix C – figure 5). This may be a stylistic objection, as although the minor chord substitution (of Eb to Ebm) to create the extended descending chromatic bass movement from

the previous bar is a common harmonic device in western jazz, it is not often found in kwela music, which tends to stick to repetitive cycles of major chords, add6 chords and dominant 7 chords with little use of substitutions, minor chords and chromatic movement in the bass. Additionally, it is also uncommon in the kwela or marabi styles to find bridge sections built on a different set of often more complex chords.

The last criticism highlighted by Matshikiza in the “Kwela Kong” piano score is a tonic chord triad halfway through bar 33 (Appendix C – figure 4). The triplet phrase leading into the top note of the triad is the opening line of Kippie Moeketsi’s alto sax solo in the 1959 and 1961 recordings. Transporting this recognisable line into the piano score is clearly what Sherriff had in mind, however, when the top F is combined with rest of the Bb triad and the G in the bassline sequence it creates a G minor 7 chord which resolves down to the dominant chord, F7. As this minor 7 chord falls on a strong beat of the bar it interrupts the progression by creating a momentary harmonic progression of I-vi7-V-I-V. This minor 7 passing chord movement is a commonly used technique in Western musicals, but again is quite foreign to the authentic kwela style.

In addition to the notes made by Matshikiza on the score, there are further “problems” that could be suggested. Firstly, the style direction above the first bar of the piece states, “Marabi Beat (Kwela)” (Appendix C – figure 3). This is problematic in that, as noted by Allen, “The most important rhythmic difference between *kwela* and *marabi* or *mbaqanga*, is that the former is "swung" whereas the latter two styles are based on a driving straight beat” (Allen 1993, 130). Although in some cases the harmonic structures and melodic content can to a certain extent be seen to be fairly interchangeable between these styles, the beat generally is not. Therefore, an indication of beat that is both marabi and kwela would confuse musicians familiar with these two distinct styles. Secondly, the extremely simplified manner in which the introduction’s piano solo is notated (Appendix C – figure 3) bears very little resemblance to what is played on either recording, thus diluting an important section of the song which in the original recording functions to establish the distinct feel of kwela.

Exoticisation of South African Jazz and Township Culture

In the production of *King Kong* for the run of UK shows, there are a number of additions and modifications that can be said to exoticise South African jazz and township culture rather than just enhance the quality of the music. An example of this can be heard in the reworking

of the introductory section of “Kwela Kong” for the UK production, in which the addition of loud whistling and shouting from the cast occurs for the duration of the introduction over the piano solo. Whistles and shouts, as Allen states, are found in certain forms of traditional musics in Africa, and have been incorporated into a number of kwela recordings, such as the whistles in “Habo Phati” by Spokes Mashiyane and his All Stars, and the shouts in Peter Macontela’s “Little Bob” (Allen 1993, 84). However, as Allen points out, the whistles and shouts generally perform a rhythmic function in traditional African styles, falling on the upbeat (the quavers between beats). Regarding the 1961 recording of “Kwela Kong”, the shouts and whistles are not performed in any rhythmic pattern, but more importantly, they are so loud and overemphasised that they overpower the music for much of the introduction. Such over-exaggeration of this element of traditional African musics and kwela, along with the inclusion of the gumboot dance sequence, could be seen as an addition aimed at exoticifying township music and culture for the entertainment of the UK audiences.

In the original recording of “Kwela Kong”, there are no shouts or whistles in the introduction. The only time the odd whistle can be heard in the original recording is in the final “shout chorus”. A line appearing in the glossary of the programme notes for the 1961 UK production under the heading “Kwela and Patha Patha” alludes to this exoticisation of South African music: “The dancers perform with such abandon – to wild, almost barbaric music, with interjections of whistling and shouting” (*King Kong* London programme notes 1961). On the same page, the exoticisation of kwela music is elaborated further in denigrating terms under the heading “Penny Whistle Troupes”:

Johannesburg is one of the few cities that still has street minstrels – ragged urchins from the townships who perform on the pavements for coppers tossed to them by passers-by.... The music is improvised – none of these urchin musicians have ever learnt a note of music – and the playing is usually accompanied by exuberant dancing and acrobatics. (*King Kong* London programme notes 1961)

Besides the blatant condescension of this statement, it can be argued that it is also another misrepresentation of South African jazz and jazz musicians of the time. Although, a large portion of kwela musicians and street performers did not have access to formal musical training, by 1961 many of the dance bands performing styles such as kwela, marabi and African Jazz etc. were comprised of musically literate performers who in addition to the local styles of jazz regularly played published arrangements of American big-band hits as part of their repertoire (Allen 1993, 21).

Reworking of Stylistic Traits

In terms of the rest of the ensemble, certain key differences can be heard in the style of the alto saxophonist and the saxophone section. In the original recording the tone of the alto is noticeably rougher and earthier in quality, and most of the notes of the melody are tongued. This style of articulation is what Merz argues leads to an ever so slightly less swung feel in South African jazz (Merz 2016, 34). In the 1961 recording the alto has a much smoother and softer tone and the eighth notes in the melody are delivered in a legato style as opposed to being tongued. Generally, the dynamics, accent points and shortened third note of the melody reveal a smoother, more conducted U.S.-American-sounding swing style.

In her observations of the unique approach to embouchure by kwela pennywhistlers, Allen highlights the role of tone in the kwela sound stating, “The timbral qualities of the pennywhistle (when blown with the *kwela* embouchure) subscribe to the African timbral sensibility of incorporating a “buzz” (Allen 1993, 239). Additionally, there is a strong behind the beat feel in the delivery of the melody in the original as opposed to the later recording which adheres more strictly to the metronomic pulse. The behind the beat feel and difference in tonal quality are both worth noting. Though certain personnel changes were made to the band for the UK production, the lead alto saxophonist, Kippie Moeketsi, remained. The second alto changed from Gwigwi Mrwebi in 1959 to Gerry Ndabezitha in 1961 (*King Kong* London programme notes 1961). In view of this, one can assume that the drastic change in tone, articulation and feel by the saxophonists can largely be attributed to external coaching and conducting rather than a sudden conscious change of style by the musicians themselves.

Alto Saxophone Solo

Although the tone and feel of the saxophones differ vastly between the two recordings, the style of the alto saxophone solo is one of the few constants of the South African feel heard in both versions of “Kwela Kong”. The solo, presumably performed by Kippie Moeketsi, starts with two devices common to the kwela sound. Firstly, an arpeggiated eighth note triplet run starting on the dominant tone of the tonic chord and landing on the same tone an octave higher. This note is sustained from beat three of the first bar all the way through to the end of the second bar, functioning as a pedal tone which accentuates the 5th chord tone of the first chord and the 9th tension of the succeeding chord. This use of a pedal tone at the start of a solo is a commonly used improvisational technique heard in much South African jazz. As

heard on both recordings, the pedal tone is played with shifting intonation and much tonal colour.

Moeketsi continues in the kwela style by ending the pedal phrase on another arpeggiated figure, descending to the 5th of the tonic chord which becomes the root of the following dominant chord. He then adds a splash of chromaticism, emphasising the flattened 3rd and 7th (blue notes) of this chord, echoing the backing of the saxophone section who play the same phrase but without the flattened 3rd, and ends the solo on same long note pedal tone he started with. Throughout this section of the song, both the soloist and the backings from the band deliver their lines with a relaxed “behind the beat” feel.

Figure 3.2. “Kwela Kong” alto saxophone solo (1959 recording) – 1 min 3 secs



The reason that this solo retains so much of the South African jazz feel in comparison to the rest of the arrangement raises the question of how much interference occurred in the improvisational sections of the music in the UK run of shows. In this particular example there seems to be a freedom in the tone, phrasing and articulation of the alto saxophone for the short, eight bar duration of the solo that is not heard in the rest of the performance of *Kwela Kong*. Whether this is intentional or not highlights another commonly found generalization relating to racial connotations in South African and other African music – that African music is improvisational and European music is compositional, thus Africans should improvise and Europeans should compose. However, investigating whether such a notion had any influence on the choices in arrangement and musical direction in the productions of *King Kong* would call for a close examination of all the improvised sections of the entire score, which falls outside the scope of this study.

Rhythmic Phrasing

Another difference between the two recordings is the reworking of certain rhythmic phrasing in the arrangement that is characteristic of the South African jazz sound. An example of such rhythms can be heard in the brass section in the original recording but seems to be altered in the later recording. In the last chorus of the 1959 recording the trumpets play strong repetitive

anticipations on the eighth notes before beats 1 and 3 of the bar thus articulating the upbeat feel common to much South African jazz. In the 1961 recording, these repetitive trumpet stabs¹⁶ have been moved onto the downbeats (1 and 3), thereby shifting the sound away from the heavily syncopated upbeat feel and alluding to more traditional American big band style composition techniques. The performance of these downbeat stabs in 1961 recording sound slightly rushed and almost uneven at times, prompting the question of whether the ears of the musicians were still wanting to lean towards the upbeat placement, as commonly played in much South African jazz.

In terms of tone, the overall sound of all the instruments can be said to be more dull, muted and understated in the original recording in comparison to the overly bright, harsh sound of the 1961 recording. This could possibly be attributed to different recording and mixing techniques used in the respective recording processes. However, the trumpet lines in the last chorus often seem to be doubled and voiced in a way that creates a sweet, smooth (commercially appealing) sound reminiscent of glossy American swing bands like the Glen Miller Orchestra.

Additional Material

The last point of comparison I would like to mention between the two versions of “Kwela Kong” has to do with the final chorus of the song in which a large amount of additional material is added in the 1961 recording. Whilst the original recording ends at 2 minutes 25 seconds, the later version continues for a further forty seconds. From 2 minutes 20 seconds onwards, three additional themes are introduced in the brass section. These themes, notated below, are played fortissimo and function to build the intensity of the final part of the song as it roars on in true US big band style to an ear-splitting, brash blues finish.

Figure 3.3. “King Kong” additional trumpet theme 1 – 2 mins 20 secs



¹⁶ A term commonly associated with big band style jazz arrangements that refers to short, rhythmic patterns played by a section of the ensemble, usually the brass.

Figure 3.4. “Kwela Kong” additional trombone theme – 2 mins 34 secs



Figure 3.5. “Kwela Kong” additional trumpet theme and ending – 2 mins 48 secs



The emphasis on the flattened 3rd blue note in the figures, the use of extreme volume and trills on upbeat long notes, along with loud cymbal crashes and backbeat snare drum, ending in a big, loud long note with flashy drum fill ending gives the piece a definitively U.S.-American flavour. The very last melodic phrase in the last two bars is the same as the original but the last chord is more emphasised in the typical U.S.-American swing style and contains more emphasis on the dissonant tones in the chord. Again, I must point out here that it is not the quality of the additional material that is being questioned, as it is clearly skilfully composed and could well have been written by Matshikiza originally and merely reworked by Glasser. Rather it is the manner and style in which the extra forty seconds of music serves to firmly place the 1961 version of “Kwela Kong” in the genre of U.S.-American-style big-band swing as opposed to South African kwela music.

To what extent Matshikiza was involved in such rewritings is hard to tell from the available evidence in the programme notes, supplements and records. However, if one is to judge purely from a listening standpoint, comparing the two recordings and keeping in mind Matshikiza’s comments about the constant tampering of his work by “the claw”, it seems to be that the “Kwela Kong” he had envisioned has for better or worse been transformed into something quite different from the first recording and original sketching of the melody. In the later recording, the whole ensemble sounds more controlled and conducted, which works for a West End theatre production but can be said to take away from the authentic, relaxed feel of the South African jazz sound. The dramatic difference between the South African character of the original recording and the clearly more U.S.-American-influenced style of the second

recording suggest that the changes in performance were a result of conducting and instruction rather than an intuitive musical response by a similar group of musicians that appeared on the original recording only two years earlier. This notion of the use of South African jazz techniques being a conscious choice that could be either encouraged or discouraged is evident in Merz's analysis of the articulation style of lead alto-saxophonist Kippie Moeketsi. In addressing Moeketsi's use of the unique style of articulation which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is commonly found in South African jazz, Merz states:

Interestingly, this style of articulation is only apparent in improvisations. In recordings featuring Kippie as the lead player in a section, the phrasing is the same as if it had been recorded by U.S.-Americans of the same period, even on original compositions by South African composers ("Hamba Gwi" and "Fudwa," for example). From this we can infer that it was a conscious stylistic choice for Kippie to develop this passive/assertive style of articulation, and not merely a misinterpretation of what he was hearing on records. (Merz 2016, 34)

Given Merz's observations, it is interesting that in the specific case of the original recording of "Kwela Kong", Moeketsi chooses to employ more of a South African style of articulation even as the lead within a saxophone section; the notes of the melody are almost entirely tongued and delivered with a rough, breathy tone. This contrasts with the 1961 recording where the eight-notes are mainly slurred and delivered in a smooth, clear tone, referencing the U.S.-American bebop style in which only the offbeat eighth-notes are tongued. In view of this, it can be said that the difference between Moeketsi's performances on the original recording and the 1961 recording of "Kwela Kong" can be attributed to a conscious decision, made either by him or somebody else, to downplay the South African sound for the ensemble sections and lead lines in the later recording.

Conclusion

In view of the amendments, omissions and additions to the original score of *King Kong*, the analyst must recognize the tendency to place the composer on a pedestal from which any tampering of the original work is immediately dismissed as a negative and inferior contribution. For this reason, I will reserve judgement on whether all of the reworkings of Matshikiza's original material are either destructive or constructive in terms of their musical value. However, I do believe that in the case of compositions such as "Kwela Kong", which by definition aim to showcase the unique sound of South African jazz, any reworking should be carried out within the parameters of the genre if it is to enhance the original score instead of damaging or diluting it. If one is to examine "Kwela Kong" within the parameters of the

authentic kwela genre, it can be said that the reworking of the compositional elements of the music, as well as the performance direction, serve to dilute the piece to such an extent that it is shifted more towards the genre of Broadway style US big band swing as opposed to South African kwela jazz. Furthermore, it is done in such a manner that can be said to exoticise rather than enhance the style and culture surrounding kwela music.

Conclusion

This study has shown that in view of the long period of migration and the consequent process of cultural and musical assimilation of African traditions into the United States and Latin America, it can be argued that many of the rhythmic features heard in U.S.-American jazz can in theory be linked to African sources. However, due to the interwoven character of the African and European influences in U.S.-American jazz combined with the uneven power relations between African slaves and the colonizers of America during the slave trade, defining each characteristic as European or African becomes a complex and subjective task. Consequently, the fact that South African jazz has been influenced by both local traditional music and U.S.-American jazz makes the task of connecting individual traits in South African jazz to definite European or African influences equally challenging.

The commonly encountered notion of “African music” and South African jazz as genres defined purely by their rhythmic attributes has been shown to be a misconception informed in part by generalisations regarding Africa and essentialist views and studies of the unique elements of the variety of traditional and neo-traditional music across the African continent. Therefore, the findings of the investigation of this study into the rhythmic elements of South African jazz suggest that the most unique tropes of the music can often be found to lie more in the harmonic structures, tonal inflections and melodic, compositional and improvisational devices and techniques used than any overriding rhythmic trait.

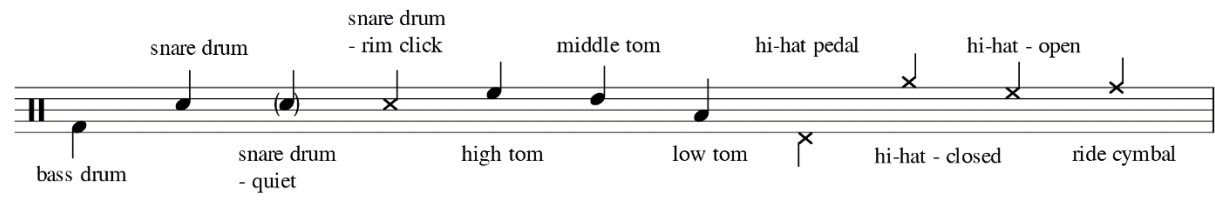
Furthermore, the interrelatedness between the rhythmic content of the different styles of South African jazz and the rhythms of other African and Latin musics, as well as U.S.-American jazz shown in this study muddy the waters to such an extent that definitive assertions regarding any uniquely South African rhythmic traits of the individual styles become more of a matter of opinion than a clear, fixed set of parameters. This is further exacerbated by the overlapping nature of the styles of South African jazz coupled with a lack of accurate, well-documented analysis and archiving of the music during the apartheid era in which the music was developing. In addition, the emphasis on the social function of the music in relation to the oppression and constraints of apartheid can be said in many musical and historical studies of the music to have dominated and possibly clouded the musical analysis of the styles.

A clear view of the history of the development of the various stages and styles of South African jazz has been obscured by the forces of apartheid and apartheid-era interference in what music was allowed into the public realm through broadcasting and mass performance. As revealed in the reworking of the music of Todd Matshikiza, this interference has been shown to have aesthetically compromised some of the great works of original South African jazz.

The perspectives and analyses presented in this study have begun to provide some clarity regarding the notion of the “feel” of South African jazz and could serve as a model for further musical analysis of the genre. This dissertation is of course limited in its scope and therefore highlights a number of areas demanding further research. In view of the significant impact South African jazz has had on global styles of jazz and modern popular music, the genre deserves further scholarly attention, specifically in terms of informed, in-depth musical analysis.

Appendices

Appendix A: Drum Kit Notation



Appendix B: King Kong original programme notes and “Kwela Kong” melody sketch

Figure 1. King Kong original programme notes – 1959 production

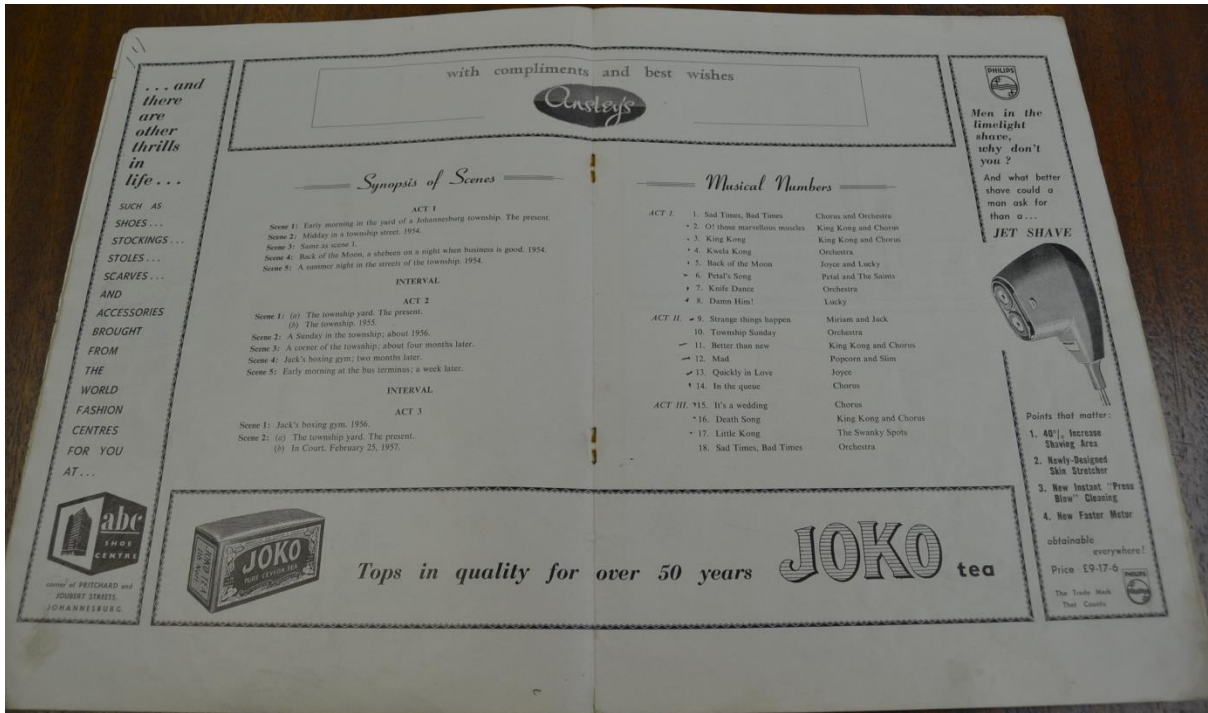


Figure 2. King Kong original programme notes – 1961 production

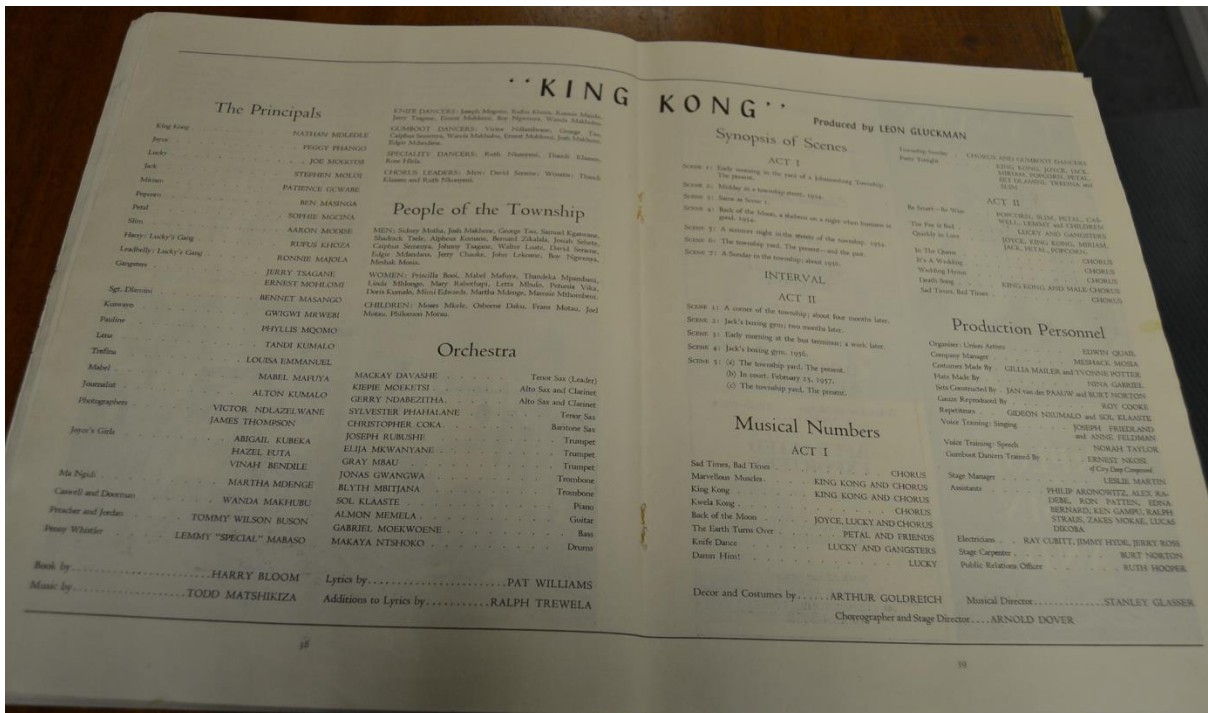
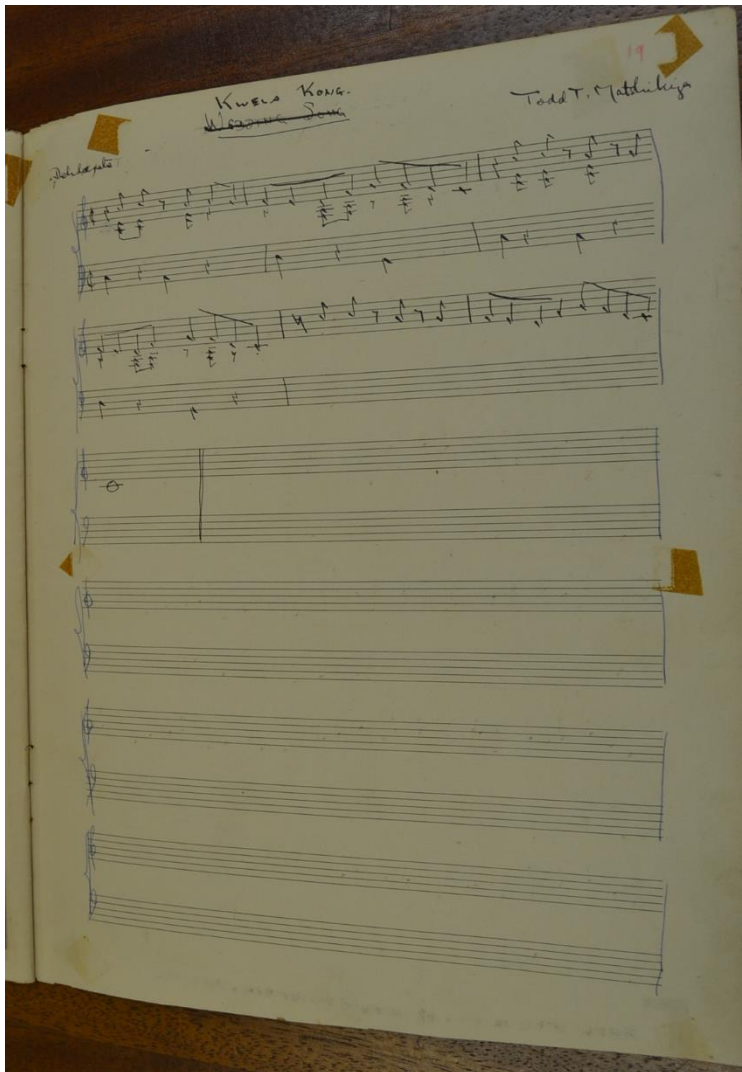


Figure 3. "Kwela Kong" – Todd Matshikiza original sketch



Appendix C: Published piano score for “Kwela Kong”

Figure 1. “Kwela Kong” piano score cover

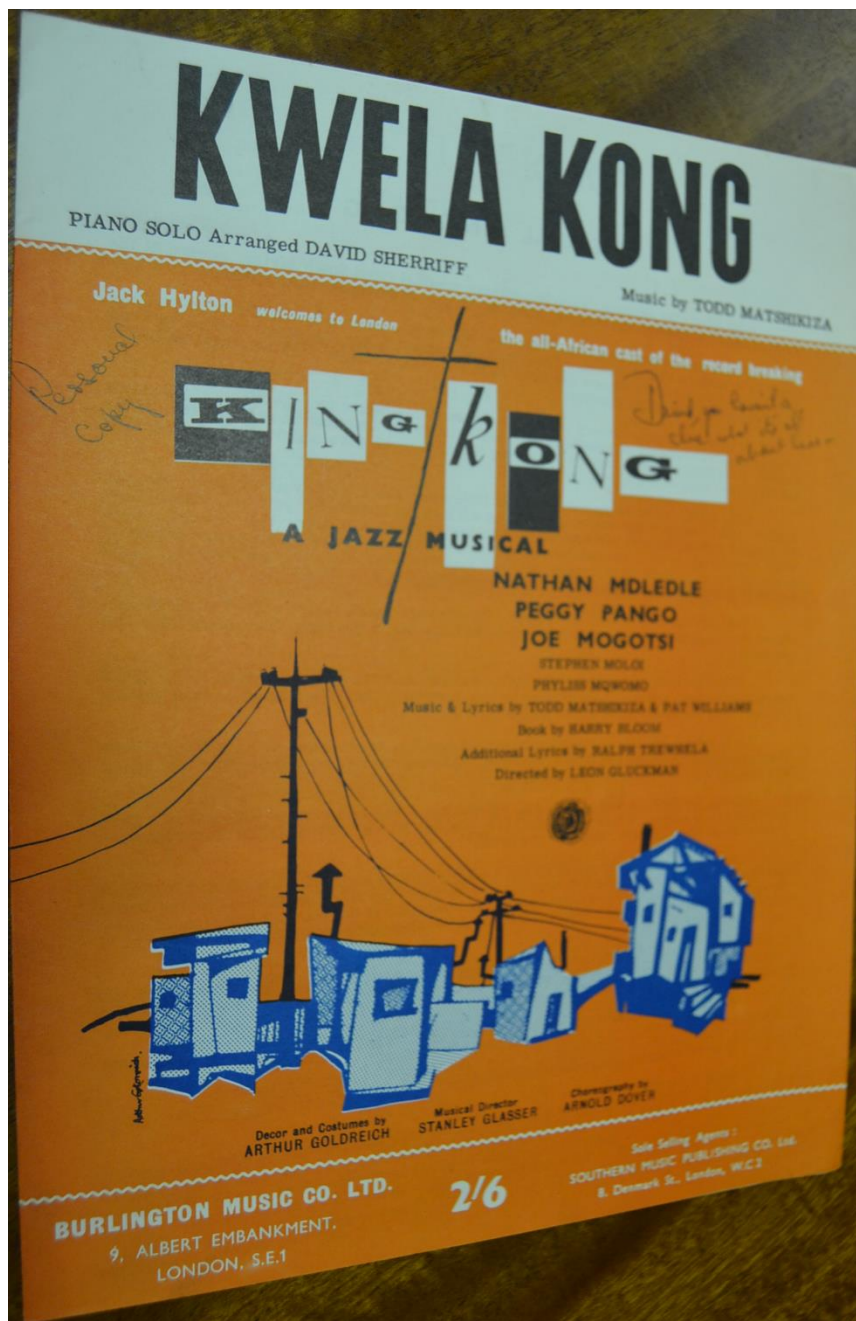


Figure 2. "Kwela Kong" cover comment

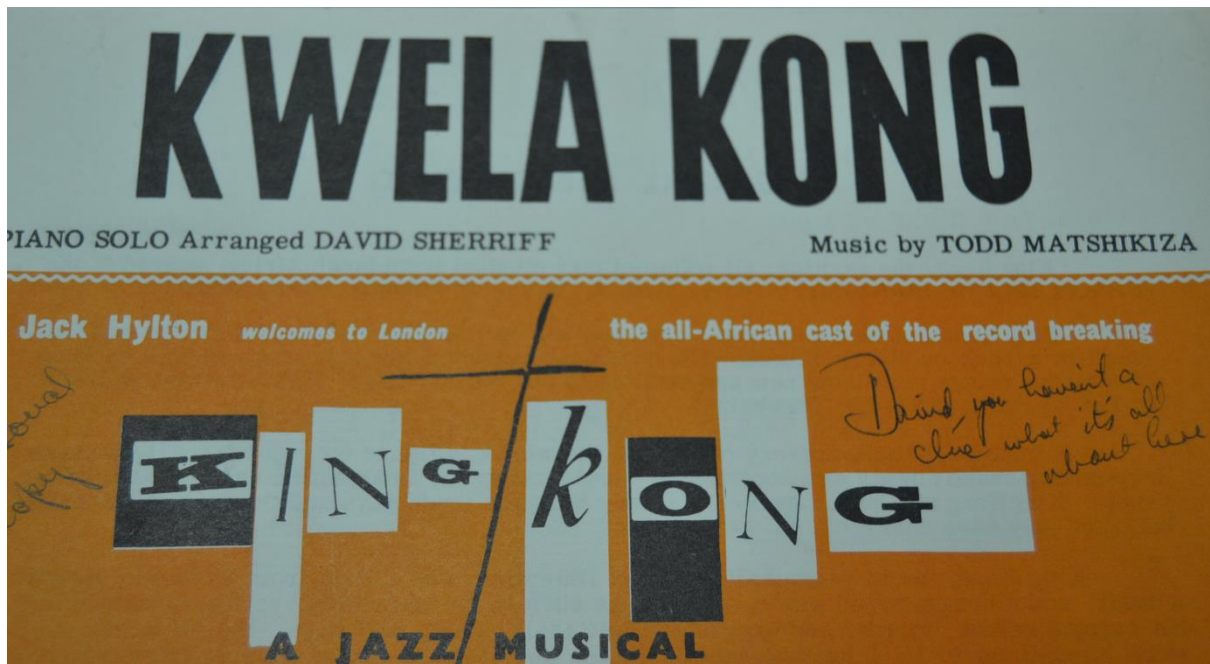


Figure 3. "Kwela Kong" piano score page 3

KWELA KONG 3

(From The Musical Production "KING KONG")

Piano Arrangement DAVID SHERRIFF Music by TODD MATSHIKIZA

Marabi Beat (Kwela)

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Figure 4. "Kwela Kong" piano score page 4

The image shows a page of a piano score for the piece "Kwela Kong". The page is numbered "4" in the top left corner. The score is written in B-flat major and 4/4 time. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system shows a complex texture with many chords and moving lines. The second system has a circled section in the bass line. The third system continues the accompaniment. The fourth system includes dynamic markings like "mf" and "cresc.". The fifth system has a circled section in the treble line. The score is annotated with various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Figure 5. "Kwela Kong" piano score page 5

The image shows a page of a piano score for the piece "Kwela Kong". The score is written in B-flat major and 4/4 time. It consists of six systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first two systems feature complex, rhythmic patterns in both hands. The third system is marked *mp* and features a sequence of chords: B \flat , B \flat 7, E \flat , E \flat m, B \flat , Gm, Cm7, and F7. The fourth system continues with B \flat , E \flat , E \flat m, B \flat , Gm, Cm7, and F7. The fifth system is marked *mf* and includes "cresc." and "ff" markings, with chords B \flat , F7, B \flat , E \flat , B \flat , and F7. The sixth system is marked *f* and "ff", featuring triplets and chords Cm7, F7(add Ab), and B \flat . The page number "5" is visible in the top right corner.

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