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CONFLUENCES: CROSS-CULTURAL FUSIONS_____

IN MUSIC &
DANCE

Proceedings of the First
South African Music and
Dance Conference
Incorporating
the 15th Symposium
on Ethnomusicology

16-19 July 1997

University of Cape Town
South Africa

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Conference Chair:
Associate Professor Elizabeth Triegaardt

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PREFACE

CONFLUENCES was the first dance and ethnomusic conference to be held in South Africa, and incorporated the fifteenth annual Ethnomusicology Symposium. Hosted jointly by the University of Cape Town Ballet School and the UCT Ethnomusicology Department, it was envisaged that it would stimulate an exchange of ideas and foster a confluence of the disciplines of music and dance by bringing together experts in both fields from around the world.

Conceived by Danie Fourie, lecturer in dance musicology in the Ballet Dept, and nurtured by the enthusiasm of colleague and lecturer in composition and dance ethnology, Jasmine Honoré, this project came to fruition as a result of the hard work put in by the conference organizational and working committees and the generous sponsorship received from the following sources:

The Anglo American and De Beers Chairman's Fund Educational Trust
The Balletomanes Society
The City of Cape Town
The Human Sciences Research Council/Centre for Scientific Development
The National Arts Council
The Oude Meester Foundation for the Performing Arts
Sharp Electronics
The South African Music Rights Organization
The UCT Ballet School
The UCT Research Committee
The UCT Student Fund for Visiting Speakers
The UCT Visiting Scholar's Fund

We are very proud of the success of **CONFLUENCES**, which has opened many avenues of collaboration between UCT and dance and music departments as far afield as Los Angeles, Toronto, Surrey and Perth. As our Department is in its infancy as a research centre, this gathering of eminent scholars and performers has done much to inspire us with the desire to expand our horizons and look beyond South African shores to imbibe a culture of enquiry, discussion and documentation which will propel us into the mainstream of dance and music academia.

Our experiences in organizing this conference will stand us in good stead when we embark on the next one in 1999, and, hopefully, the few hiccups encountered this time will be smothered, so that **CONFLUENCES 1999** runs more smoothly and leaves the delegates wanting to come back yet again to our beautiful country.

ELIZABETH TRIEGAARDT
Associate-Professor/Director - UCT Ballet School

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**'MAKING A BEDROOM OUT OF A PUBLIC BUILDING' - HYBRIDITY AND
NOMADIC SUBJECTIVITY IN SHOBANA JEYASINGH'S DUETS WITH
AUTOMOBILES**

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Duets with Automobiles was commissioned by the Arts Council and the BBC in 1993 directed by Terry Braun, with music by Orlando Gough.(1) It is the only work of Jeyasingh's that has been created entirely for camera. The medium has certainly been exploited by filming in a range of settings from inside and outside three London buildings, where the juxtaposition and interaction of three female dancers with the geographically situated architecture, facilitate Jeyasingh's intention of creating 'an icon of Indian womanhood... appropriate to urban women in the 1990s' (Rubidge, 1995, p.34).(2) This paper examines the extent to which her project is informed by two interrelated concepts; Homi Bhabha's 'hybridity' and Rosi Braidotti's 'nomadic subjectivity'.

Jeyasingh has significantly used buildings as metaphors when talking about the language of the Indian classical dance form, Bharatha Natyam, which she has compared to 'an awesome public building' (*Aditi Newsletter*, Spring 1997). She claimed that what she was doing in her work was 'making a bedroom out of a public building' - 'a space in which the human being could be seen in all its... nakedness of emotions' (*Aditi Newsletter*, Spring 1997). In her choreography Jeyasingh is continually negotiating the distance between the formality, authority and sense of history that an 'awesome public building' suggests and the personal, human 'intimacy' and homeliness of the 'bedroom'. These negotiations, are both symptoms of and informed by Jeyasingh's nomadic subjectivity and her hybridity as a diasporic artist.

Jeyasingh's company was formed in 1988 following her seven year solo career in Bharatha Natyam. One of her resource packs states: 'The Company's work questions inherited notions of what Indian dance is and what its possibilities are, stressing its belief that Indian dance is open to personal, contemporary and innovative use' (Rubidge, 1993 in *Making of Maps Resource Pack*). So, although Jeyasingh's work is rooted in Bharatha Natyam vocabulary and style, she develops it in various ways, for example, by extending the solo form to group choreography and by using predominantly contemporary music.

Jeyasingh's status as a diasporic artist importantly informs her work. She was born in India, grew up in Sri Lanka and Malaysia and now lives in Britain. The implications of this are explored in the introduction to the monograph accompanying her *Romance with... footnotes* video which includes references to Salman Rushdie's *Imaginary Homelands* (1991). Rushdie states: 'It may be that, ..., exiles... emigrants or expatriates are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back... but... our physical alienation from India... inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; ... we will... create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but..., imaginary homelands.' (Rushdie, 1991, p.10). Jeyasingh's desire to 'make a bedroom out of a public building' could be her attempt to create an 'imaginary homeland'. The monograph introduction continues "home" for this new [South Asian] diaspora is no longer one place but two, and movement back and forth is more... a

possibility...the need to negotiate between the different terrains in which the British Asian finds herself becomes more...acute, and...questions of identity become as shifting and multiple as they are urgent'(Holmstrom, 1995, p.6).

The diasporic tensions evident in 'movement back and forth' and negotiation between the 'different terrains in which the British Asian finds herself' are stated at the outset of *Duets*. The first shot is of St. Paul's cathedral seen through a window frame with a woman, her back to camera, silhouetted in the foreground, looking out. St. Paul's marks the city skyline out as London, historical London, part of the British cultural heritage. After a few seconds the woman slowly half turns to camera and then looks back at the view. She looks Indian. She then half turns back whilst contemplating herself slowly running her hand and forearm along the windowledge, and raising her hand to support her chin. This choreography could be said to reflect diasporic movements 'back and forth' because of the way the woman looks at the cathedral, looks back intimately to camera and then becomes absorbed with her own actions.(3)

Placing the woman in the frame might suggest connections with British Imperial history. The identity of London and of the Indian woman are constructed by their juxtaposition and the role that race and history play in investing them with power. The grandeur of St. Paul's architecture could be said to dominate the scene investing London and British culture with power over the Indian woman. However, the next sequence of shots might suggest other readings. After the woman turns to camera running her hand along the window ledge, there is a full-length view of St. Paul's through a glass wall this time, in a golden, possibly evening, light. The Indian dancer, back to camera, silhouetted against the cathedral runs the palm of her hand over its surface through the glass. St. Paul's, seen in the sunset, might suggest the remnants of an imperial past and that the dancer is contemplating the future of a new hybrid existence in a city which is hers. In this reading, informed by Bhabha's concept of hybridity, the power relations are different. Bhabha is concerned to dismantle binary oppositions of, for example, colonial authority and anti-colonialist opposition, and 'undo a given order of priorities' through 'subversion' and 'intervention' challenging established hierarchies and entrenched cultural values(Parry, 1994, p.12). Jeyasingh's choreography also challenges entrenched cultural values. This opening sequence sets the tone for *Duets* by juxtaposing the historic formality of the recognisably British public building with the intimacy of the looks and gestures of the Indian dancer, without placing these two elements in opposition. Instead the dancer softly caresses the building, making it part of her 'home'.

Jeyasingh has acknowledged the influence of Bhabha's notion of hybridity. His 'concern is with the production of hybridity through the *process* of a colonial and postcolonial relocating and reinscribing, or the translating and transvaluing of cultural difference "in the Third Space of enunciation", where it is reiterated differently from its prior context'(Parry, 1994, pp.13-14). In *Duets* the cultural difference of Bharatha Natyam is relocated and reinscribed through its placing in the London buildings. This setting means that it is 'reiterated differently' and in the process, 'translated and transvalued'.

In the next sequence of shots another important trait of Jeyasingh's choreography in *Duets*, which illustrates ways in which she negotiates different diasporic terrains, is evident. After the dancer moves the palm of her hand down the glass wall, there is a brief glimpse of three

dancers in a modern building; one leaning against a pillar touching it with the sole of her foot and another lifting the third straight up from the floor in a jump. The next shot is of the original view of St. Pauls through a window with the same Indian woman looking out and resting her chin in her palms, her elbows on the windowsill. There follows a shot of an Indian dancer in the same contemplative position viewed from outside through a square window-like hole in an interior wall of a modern building. Here the choreography and filming literally present different perspectives from various viewpoints inside and outside.

These plays with perspectives, which occur throughout *Duets* illustrate the multi-perspectives of the diasporic artist. Caren Kaplan has stated that people 'who move between cultures, languages, and the various configurations of power and meaning in complex colonial situations possess what Chela Sandoval calls "oppositional consciousness," the ability to read and write culture on multiple levels'(Kaplan, 1987 p.187). She continues, quoting bell hooks as saying: 'Living...- on the edge - we developed a particular way of seeing reality. we looked...from the outside in and from the inside out.'(hooks quoted in Kaplan, 1987 p.187). These ideas of different perspectives are reiterated in Bhabha's work. He has stated: 'we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion....there is a sense of disorientation,...movement...;back and forth.'(Bhabha,1994 p.1)

In *Duets* Jeyasingh explores the multiple and shifting nature of questions of identity, specifically of the perspectives of her dancers, and their existence as contemporary, urban, Indian women. A little way into the piece, there is a shot of a dancer standing next to a circular white stone pillar curving her arm above her and placing her palm on the stone. This is an intimate gesture transforming the Bharatha Natyam style of the movement. Instead of the emphasis being outward, on the frontal display of the solo dancing body as in traditional Indian dance, here the focus is inward, the body is turned sideways and the palm touching the stone connects the dancer to the modern London building. As she retraces her circular pathway with her arm, lowering her hand and spreading her fingers in a mudra, another dancer takes hold of her wrist and pulls her towards her. The first dancer lets her weight be caught by the second facing her, by placing her hands on her shoulders. The first is then turned and she leans back towards her partner who takes her body weight again, before sending her back towards the pillar. Touching it she turns and slides her back and the sole of her foot down it. The contact with the pillar and the interchange of weight between dancers are illustrations of Jeyasingh's interest in human contact and intimacy. The hints of female solidarity suggested also have connections with Braidotti's project to 'evoke a vision of female feminist subjectivity in a nomadic mode'(Braidotti, 1994, p.1).

As the dancers complete their interchange of weight, they are joined by a third and all begin to sink into full plie, where they are seen with hands together in front of their chests in Bharatha Natyam style in the next shot in an open space in front of the distant London skyline viewed through a glass wall. Staring out confidently to camera, they rotate their hands in unison to form clenched fists which they keep as they turn and lower themselves diagonally onto their right knees. The image conveys their strong female presence. Jeyasingh has indicated that the clenched fist was an important motif throughout *Duets* signifying strength and determination(Jeyasingh, 1997). Next a single dancer leans forward on her knee and bows her head to the ground, where she rolls over onto her back and is seen in close-up, lying on the

floor. Much of her body is touching the floor and the proximity emphasised by the almost intrusive close-up shot suggests an intimacy between the dancer and the building. She seems 'at home', inwardly confident, confirming her identity as a contemporary, urban woman. All three dancers are then seen from outside through the glass sitting, staring confidently out. They look to the side in unison. The shot changes briefly to a view of the London traffic, locating the dancers clearly in a modern metropolitan environment. The dancers then briefly turn the other way before re-establishing their gaze straight ahead and pausing before rising and running off.

The interdependency of women has been identified as a central theme in Jeyasingh's work in the *Romance with...footnotes* monograph, which states that Jeyasingh's 'double consciousness' of the Indian classical tradition and of contemporary urban cultural concerns is articulated when 'she introduces a new...relationship between her dancers through...extensive use of touch and weight giving' (Rubidge, 1995, p.38). The monograph continues: 'She deliberately subverts the image of goddess or submissive, coy female...prevalent in the classical tradition, substituting...images...which more clearly express the behaviours of the contemporary Indian woman' (Rubidge, 1995, p.34). Certainly in the excerpts just described there are examples of the dancers' interdependency through giving and taking weight and confident looks to camera suggesting strong, contemporary women.

These features of Jeyasingh's choreographic style, which concern the portrayal of a particular kind of female subjectivity and solidarity have links with Braidotti's theory of a specifically female nomadic subjectivity. Its appeal lies in its 'yearning' (4) to cut across 'the boundaries of race, class, gender, and sexual practice' to construct 'new forms of interrelatedness' (Braidotti, 1994, pp.2 & 5). Certainly Jeyasingh's use of weight taking and support between her dancers is a 'new form of interrelatedness' for them. Braidotti's project is explicitly a feminist one, she states 'my task is to attempt to redefine a transmobile materialist theory of feminist subjectivity that is committed to working within the parameters of the postmodern predicament.' (Braidotti, 1994, p.2). She emphasises interconnectedness and the 'ability to flow from one set of experiences to another' (Braidotti, 1994, p.5). These statements echo those in the introduction to Jeyasingh's *Romance...with footnotes* monograph where movement back and forth and the negotiation of different terrains are emphasised.

Jeyasingh's quest to create a contemporary, urban identity for Indian womanhood is illuminated by ideas about nomadic subjectivity. Braidotti states: 'the nomadic subject...allows me to think through and move across established categories and levels of experience: blurring boundaries without burning bridges' (Braidotti, 1994, p.4). She has reclaimed the idea of the nomad as a positive metaphor for someone who is, in Bhabha's terms 'unhomed' rather than homeless, and is able, by thinking through and moving across boundaries, to create 'homes' anywhere. Jeyasingh is continually thinking through and moving across established categories of the Bharatha Natyam dance style which represents a cultural history of traditions and conventions about what an Indian woman should be and do. As a nomadic subject she is forever blurring and creating new borders and boundaries and negotiating spaces between them to create new 'homes' but without 'burning bridges' to Bharatha Natyam. Bhabha writes of these spaces in between as a 'third space' which 'displaces the histories that constitute it,...sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives...a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation' (Bhabha, 1991, p.211).

In *Duets* a literal and metaphorical third space exists between the dancers' bodies and the architecture. This interface provides room where identities can be discovered, forged and played with. For the diasporic artist however, as stated in the *Romance...with footnotes* monograph introduction, 'the exploration of this interstitial space can be seen as a series of creative conflicts: between a global, "post-modern" critical hegemony, and the critical codes of a particular history and tradition; between carving out a territory in the mainstream and making marginalisation itself a creative condition; between a shifting relationship with the host country(home) and a changing relationship with a notional "back home"' (Holmstrom, 1995, p.6).

These complexities are all apparent in *Duets* in the relationships between dancers' bodies and the architecture. The dancers' bodily shapes containing geometrical patterns, lines and curves often within a circle in Bharatha Natyam are carefully placed inside or alongside circular domes, promontories and pillars or next to the lines of windowframes, walls and highrise blocks. But in order to 'make a bedroom out of a public building' Jeyasingh goes beyond formal, aesthetic concerns and extends the Bharatha Natyam language in a personal, emotional direction. The buildings become intimate spaces of touches, caresses, embraces, listening and sleep. A recurring motif is the downward movement of the palm of the hand usually on glass walls, but it also caresses stone pillars and wooden and marble floors. The dancers roll, lie, kneel and place their heads on the floor as if listening or asleep, run, hug and lean on rounded stone pillars. These intimate, inward gestures are emphasised by close-up shots, sounds of bare feet slapping out Bharatha Natyam rhythms on wood and marble floors, choreographic repetition and other visual devices such as silhouettes.

One example of a bodily relationship with the architecture that recurs in *Duets* and illustrates the complexity of the 'creative conflicts' between home and 'back home' is when the dancers caress and hug pillars. On the one hand this literal embrace of the modern urban building appears to be suggesting a metaphorical embrace of contemporary urban life, there is a sense in which intimate gestures such as these show the dancers making themselves at home in these empty offices, inhabiting them, humanising them and making imaginary homelands out of them. However, Jeyasingh has indicated that she also had in mind the image of a *yakshi*; a female tree spirit often seen in classical Indian architecture touching a pillar or the building with a part of her body, usually her feet. This 'young fecund sort of female often with very big breasts' would be standing, carved into pillars of buildings symbolising a source of energy since 'she's the creative principle making the tree or pillar come to life' (Jeyasingh, 1997). Throughout *Duets* references are made to this tree spirit through dancers sliding their feet down or hugging pillars. Bound up in these gestures are ideas about female energy or strength from the *yakshi* that relate to Braidotti's notions of female subjectivity, references to classical Indian architecture 'back home' and the transformation and translation of the gesture by its reinscription on the pillars of a contemporary London building. The gesture could be said to transform the building by making a metaphorical 'home' or 'bedroom' out of it at the same time as breathing energy into it or humanising it through reference to *yakshi*. The dialogues and interactions between these different cultural ideas and images illustrate the complexities of hybridity and nomadic subjectivity being explored.

There are many ways in which 'new identities' for the dancers and the buildings are suggested in *Duets*, since they mutually construct each other. For example, just before the weight taking

duet, there is a series of shots of the dancers seen from outside the buildings through glass walls. This is followed by an interior view of two dancers one in the foreground and one in the background performing a *natya arambe*, literally an opening or beginning dance, against the backdrop of the city skyline. Next, the glass walls with reflections of traffic traversing them are seen from outside and three dancers are just about visible in the top right corner of the frame performing a step to the side in plie, a tilt and a lunge in unison in Bharatha Natyam style. This series of pictures of the dancers alternating from inside to outside the building has presented different views of them in relation to the architecture. Literal movement back and forth between different imagined spaces or notions of 'home' might be suggested; from dancers inscribed on the urban landscape, when viewed from inside the building, and the London traffic inscribed on the dancers, when viewed from outside. The buildings and the dancers mutually inscribe and construct each other and illustrate Bhabha's ideas of 'inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*' (Bhabha, 1994, pp.38-39). These constructed spaces are racialised in the process. The Indianness of the dancers, evident in their colour, costume and Bharatha Natyam choreography, is inscribed on the city skyline when they are viewed from inside. When they are viewed from outside, with the glass edifice of the building foregrounded, the dancers, hardly visible, become overlaid with the reflections of London traffic; their Indianness is not nearly as apparent as it merges into the kaliedescope of metropolitan images.

For Braidotti the nomadic subject exemplifies a 'move against the settled and conventional nature of theoretical and...philosophical thinking.' (1994, p.4). For Jeyasingh, nomadic subjectivity results in her moving against the settled and conventional ideas about Bharatha Natyam and what an Indian dancer should be and do. As she is forever having to reiterate, she is not an Indian dancer. She was trained in Bharatha Natyam, but her choreographic project is specifically to extend and develop that form to suit her and her dancers' contemporary experience of living in urban Britain in the 1990s. Like Bhabha and Braidotti, she is concerned to dismantle the oversimplified binary oppositions of East and West and to reveal the complexities and interconnections that exist on the borderlines in the many spaces between. Jeyasingh has stated 'it's not a matter of choosing between this or that, we are already in a situation where the interconnections are so complex that we have enough work to keep track of that' (Jeyasingh, speaking on the *Romance with...footnotes* video, 1994).

Towards the end of *Duets* the complex possibilities of this 'third space' with new areas of meaning and representation become particularly evident. Relations between space, power and difference are not simple and straightforward. When a dancer kneels down on the classically, geometric designs inlaid in a marble floor and traces with her palm some of the diagonal and circular lines of the pattern, she appears, in an act of reverence, to be making connections with the precise curved and linear pathways she has just traced in her performance of classical Indian dance. The 'mapping' refers to a parallel historical journey whose geometrical traces remain in the cultural products of dance, architecture and design. However, Jeyasingh, is also making a statement about the contemporary fluidity and movement of cultures and borders that currently allow such comparisons to be made. Talking of her work she has said she is concerned with 'the changing borders raging all around', the dynamism of journeys', and 'a pattern of belonging that is multi-dimensional' (Jeyasingh, 1995, pp.191-193). About *Making of Maps* (1992/3), Jeyasingh said that it started as 'a process of inventing my own heritage'. One of the images that informed the piece was of someone playing music on a radio, twiddling the knob and sampling music from different countries. Jeyasingh wanted to express some of

this 'amazing accessibility and openness of the universe that was there for the taking' (p.193). Her mapped statements about traced connections between race, space and power, have resonances with the positioning, controlling and colonising characteristics of real maps, inherited from history and demonstrated in dance, architecture and design. But they also challenge notions of identities and heritages fixed by borders by pointing to the fluidity of contemporary urban existence.

This extract from *Duets* is a rich illustration of Bhabha's statement that: 'what is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments...that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood... that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself' (Bhabha, 1994, pp.1-2). Bhabha's emphasis on the importance and value of language and culture in his work, that 'there is no knowledge...outside representation' (Bhabha, 1994 p.23) is also illustrated in this extract by the hybridity evident in the dialectical articulation of the Bharatha Natyam dancer's performance and the pattern on the marble floor. Here two cultural manifestations, which are in themselves hybrid, by their dialogue 'initiate a new sign of identity'.

At the end of *Duets* the three dancers are seen in everyday dress, sitting on the ground in the sun, leaning against a large concrete pillar of a building; they are outside a building and they are not dancing. The building has not been seen before, there are no familiar marks of identification. The three Indian women are chatting, they look up as someone passes by and then continue their conversation. They could be in Bombay (one shields her eyes from the sun), or Birmingham, Manchester or Madras. London is no longer the only possibility. The anonymity of the setting might suggest that these women are 'unhomed' or 'unhomely', in Bhabha's terms, meaning 'everything that ought to have remained...secret and hidden but has come to light' (Freud quoted in Bhabha, 1994, p.10).

What Jeyasingh said about the end of *Making of Maps* (1993) might also apply here. Talking of the role of urban sounds in the piece, she said 'For me it was very important to bring back the sounds of the city,...it was the only way to end the dance. The whole dance was...a questioning journey that an Indian dancer in Britain was asking about where she belonged, so it was fit and proper that the dance actually started with the street sounds because that is where we live,...in these big cities, at the same time...we carry the very Indian part of us, ...but...we don't make this journey to India and stay there, we've got to come back and find a resolution, find a peace within the situation which we find ourselves in now. So it's very proper that the dance comes back to the everyday sounds of London, or Birmingham,...,or wherever we live, and that we find a new way of dancing with the music of the everyday.' (Jeyasingh speaking on the *Making of Maps* video, 1993). Ending *Duets* with 'the everyday' reminds the audience that these dancers are also contemporary women who live in cities. They have the inward assurance as nomadic subjects to inhabit the in between spaces of hybridity and through their developing relationship with the culture of their roots, the traditions of the 'awesome public building' of Bharatha Natyam, they have shown in *Duets with Automobiles* that they can be at home in and make a 'bedroom' out of this 'public building'.

Footnotes

(1) In interview, Jeyasingh wanted to emphasise the important role played by Braun, the director and filmmaker, in the creation of *Duets with Automobiles*, which she considered was a true collaboration. She stated: 'Terry gave me the room to make...what I wanted, he also wanted the same thing' (Jeyasingh, 1997). The film was made totally in situ and in dialogue with the camera and Jeyasingh was present in the edit room throughout. To indicate this collaboration Braun and Jeyasingh share the same frame in the title credits.

(2) When discussing *Duets with Automobiles*, Jeyasingh stated she would no longer use the word 'icon', that it was too closely connected with a particular traditional image of an Indian dancer. She has 'moved on' from that idea. She also said that if she were making *Duets* today she would change the costume and make-up removing the *bhindis* from the dancers' foreheads. The costume she would make less silky and in a less bright colour. She stated that it would be enough for her that the dancers looked Indian through their skin colour (Jeyasingh, 1997).

(3) In a way, as Jeyasingh has stated, St. Pauls is a 'strange icon of the West' because when it was built people thought it was too Eastern and oriental looking because of its dome. She said: 'Whenever I look at St. Paul's, for me, it's a very ambiguous icon, because I see St. Paul's immediately connecting to the Taj Mahal and to Santa Sofia in Istanbul. I wanted to pitch the Indian dancer against the image, I...wanted her to caress it softly' (Jeyasingh, 1997).

(4) Braidotti acknowledges bell hooks' notion of 'yearning'.

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BETWEEN DESCRIPTION AND DECONSTRUCTION

"We had the experience but missed the meaning,
And approach to the meaning restores the experience
In a different form....-T.S. Eliot, The Dry Salvages

If one were to summarize the essential differences between the best 19th and 20th century dance criticism (the differences between the writing of say, Gautier on the one hand and that of Denby or Jowitt on the other), the key contrast would surely be the latter's greatly improved capacity for describing the exact contours of the body in motion. Gautier provides the reader with a wonderfully vivid sense of the mental images the dance evoked in his mind's eye ("Taglioni reminded you of cool and shaded valleys where a white vision suddenly emerges from the bark of an oak"), but alas, very little sense of what the choreography itself actually looked like. The best 20th century dance critics haven't--by any means-- abandoned the evocative phrase or the visual analogy, but unlike Gautier, they also strive to provide the reader with a palpable sense of the dance as a thing-in-itself, independent of the imaginative faculties of the perceiver.

Few would fail to applaud this new emphasis on description. And who would underestimate the immense difficulty of the task? The ability to see movement clearly and to describe it evocatively is a rare and wonderful gift. Good dance criticism is a multi-faceted endeavor. It involves-- at a minimum-- description, interpretation, and value judgment. To see something clearly and then describe it evocatively may sound less glamorous (intellectually speaking) than brainy exegesis. But accurate and evocative description are probably the rarest of all critical achievements. As John Ruskin once wrote

The greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something and tell what it saw in a plain way. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think, but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy and religion--all in one. 1

Unfortunately though, in dance criticism, this sort of "seeing" is too often achieved at the expense of other, more "reflective" critical activities. It often seems as if good descriptive dance criticism demands a laser-beam intensity of vision that "locks on" to the work so tightly that it prevents the

mind from taking the next step, and arriving at generalized conclusions that are interpretive, theoretical, and contextual. The best descriptive criticism (e.g. Deborah Jowitt's weekly columns in The Village Voice) most often takes the form of impressionistic connoisseurship--vividly, even lovingly attentive to visual detail, but virtually devoid of ideas and fearful of arriving at generalizations (on the assumption that to do so is to vitiate the sensory immediacy of the work.) As a result, the dance world has produced very few "practical" critics whose work compares favorably with that of Harold Rosenberg, Clement Greenberg, Lionel Trilling, R.P. Blackmur, Eric Bentley or Charles Rosen--critics of painting, literature, drama, and music whose talent for empirical description is enhanced by a love of ideas, an awareness of social context, and a willingness to generalize about the significance of highly particularized experiences.

This is one of the reasons why the publication, in 1988, of Deborah Jowitt's Time and the Dancing Image was an event of no small importance. Jowitt's book is a splendidly written introduction to dance history, concentrating on the way in which the image of the dancer and the very shape of the dancing body changes in response to transformations of the culture-at-large. But the broader significance of the book has less to do with its intrinsic merit (or even with its specific arguments) than with what it tells us about Jowitt's own evolution as a dance writer. For the past quarter-century, Deborah Jowitt has personified (both as practicing critic and as peripatetic teacher of criticism) the dominant "school" of descriptive American dance writing. But early in the preface to her book, she endorses a very different view of criticism:

dancers and choreographers don't exist in a vacuum, however cut off from life their rigorous daily discipline can make them appear to be. Those of us who write about dance sometimes find that in our anxiety to capture and chronicle a notoriously ephemeral art we do it an inadvertent disservice: we focus so intently on it that we sever it from the culture that spawned it and which it serves. 2

Not exactly a Mea Culpa, but a confession--however belated--that criticism of an essentially descriptive nature can perform an "inadvertent disservice." I suspect it's modesty rather than guilt that prevents Jowitt from admitting the extent to which her own example has perpetuated this "disservice;" but one can only hope that her new critical orientation will prove as influential as her

earlier one. Alas, one book does not a movement make, but it's encouraging that similar murmuring can be detected in other quarters as well.

To what can we attribute this growing dissatisfaction with a criticism myopically focused on description? Well, in one sense, dance writing is merely trying to keep pace with dance: Consider to what extent to which American choreography of recent years has repudiated many of the "formalist" impulses that were reasonably well served by a descriptive criticism. Descriptive critics like Jowitt and Marcia Siegel came of age during the formalist heyday of Balanchine, Cunningham, and Paul Taylor. An aesthetic that emphasizes movement-as-an-end-in-itself has more to gain (and less to lose) from an essentially descriptive criticism than does the dance theatre of Pina Bausch or those non-Western dances, so central to today's multi-cultural mandate, which cannot be adequately "described" without paying a great deal of attention to the cultural fabric into which they are woven.

But it's my belief that the descriptive bias-- however well it may have served the needs of formalist dances in which movement is declared autonomous of meaning-- was never principally a response to formalism. It was also in part a consequence of the unique conditions under which dance criticism has been written (That is: unlike painting, sculpture, or literature, choreography does not "sit still," inviting the critic to examine it in a spirit of leisurely detachment. Thus "mere" description--which can seem so pedestrian in the criticism of the other arts--is an important means of lending the dance some semblance of permanence.)

But there's more to this story. Traditionally at least, the bias toward description has been part and parcel of another, even deeper bias: a bias against ideas. As we'll soon see, many people-- including many dance critics and intellectuals-- are attracted to dance precisely because the experience of viewing it seems to inhibit, rather than promote, the impulse toward reflection.

Now, at this point, I need to make a confession: I speak as someone fundamentally unsympathetic to the sort of jargonized, overly methodologized "theories" that have come to dominate academic approaches to the arts over the past fifteen years. Perhaps it's a blessing in disguise that dance studies--despite the steadily increasing influence of deconstruction, post-structuralism, and gender-politics--remain comparatively "under-theorized," that they haven't gone the way (or at least not all the

way) of film and literary studies-- where graduate students are infinitely more conversant with Lacan, Kristeva, and Derrida than with Antonioni, Mizoguchi, and Bresson or with Proust, Joyce, and Dostoevsky. (When Oscar Wilde wrote that critics would become the artists of the future, his tongue was planted in his cheek. But when the pioneer of deconstruction, Paul de Man proclaimed that "Poetry is the foreknowledge of criticism", he wasn't kidding.) I for one am not eager to see the sensuous surface of the dancer's body vaporized beneath the blowtorch of deconstruction (which typically produces more heat than light.) Still, for better or for worse, the fact remains that the relationship between dance and theory remains very different from the relationship of say, literature and theory, or the visual arts and theory. Before we decide on whether this state of affairs is a good thing or a bad thing, we need to try and explain why it exists in the first place.

Against Interpretation

Susan Sontag's notorious essay of 1964, "Against Interpretation" never directly mentions dance, but it has great implications for both dance and dance writing. Consider this central paragraph:

In a culture whose already classical dilemma is the hypertrophy of the intellect at the expense of energy and sensual capability, interpretation is the revenge of the intellect upon art. Even more. It is the revenge of the intellect upon the world. To interpret is to impoverish, to deplete the world--in order to set up a shadow world of 'meanings.'..The world, our world, is depleted, impoverished enough. Away with all duplicates of it, until we again experience more immediately what we have. 3

Clearly, for Sontag, it is the peculiar achievement--perhaps even the spiritual mission-- of certain art forms to hold interpretation and reflection at bay, to impede them --or even ward them off. What they offer us (in its stead) is something infinitely rarer and more valuable: sensory immediacy. ("What is important now is to recover our senses. We must learn to see more, to hear more, to feel more," adds Sontag.) 4

Alain Robbe-Grillet, one of her intellectual heroes, makes a closely related argument in For a New Novel:

At every moment, a continuous fringe of culture (psychology, ethics, metaphysics, etc.) is added to things, given them a less alien aspect, one that is more comprehensible, more reassuring. Sometimes the camouflage is complete: a gesture vanishes from our mind, supplanted by the emotions which

supposedly produced it, and we remember a landscape as austere or calm without being able to evoke a single outline, a single determining element. 5

Both Sontag and Robbe-Grillet are prescribing an antidote to what Ortega y Gasset once called "the progressive dis-realization of the world," the cannibalizing of the world by consciousness. "What we decidedly do not need now," wrote Sontag in the same essay, "is to further assimilate Art into Thought."6 Sontag and Robbe-Grillet both seek to reinvest the physical world with a sense of "etre-la" or sheer "thereness."

But how does one embark upon this arduous, if not utopian, task? For Robbe-Grillet, the answer was a style of excruciatingly detailed description, virtually devoid of anthropomorphizing adjectives. That's what he's getting at when he complains that "We remember a landscape as austere or calm without being able to evoke a single outline, a single determining element." By contrast, his legendary paragraph describing the surface of a tomato (in his novel The Erasers) keeps our attention focused obsessively on the physical characteristics of the object. ("The peripheral flesh, compact and homogeneous, of a fine chemical redness, is uniformly thick between a band of shiny skin and the semicircular area where the seeds are arranged...") 7

Sontag recommends a similar strategy for criticism:

What kind of criticism, of commentary on the arts, is desirable today? For I am not saying that works of art are ineffable, that they cannot be described or paraphrased. They can be. The question is how. What would criticism look like that would serve the work of art, not usurp its place? What is needed first, is more attention to form in art. If excessive stress on content provokes the arrogance of interpretation, more extended and more thorough descriptions of form would silence...Equally valuable would be acts of criticism which would supply a really accurate, sharp, loving description of the appearance of a work of art. This seems even harder to do than formal analysis... 8

Ultimately, she calls for "essays which reveal the sensuous surface of art without mucking about in it." 9 Has anyone ever provided a better description of what critics like Denby and Jowitt do so brilliantly? The best descriptive dance criticism may well offer us the clearest example of what Sontag was advocating.

It's especially instructive to compare the current state of dance writing with the current state of writing about film. We might begin by noting the privileged place in her aesthetic pantheon that

Sontag assigned the cinema in "Against Interpretation." Remember, this was 1964, long before the semioticians and the post-structuralists had launched their (now successful) invasion of film studies.

Here's what she says about film in "Against Interpretation":

Ideally it is possible to elude the interpreters... by making works of art whose surface is so unified and clean, whose momentum is so rapid, whose address is so direct that the work can be ...just what it is. Is this possible now? It does happen in films, I believe. This is why cinema is the most alive, the most exciting, the most important of all art forms right now...In good films there is always a directness that entirely frees us from the itch to interpret. 10

But now in the Age of Theory --aided and abetted by the availability of video cassettes and the resulting ease with which one can conduct frame by frame analyses-- film too has been caught up in the hermeneutic net. And for many intellectuals, this amounts to nothing less than a loss of innocence, a fall from grace. One thinks of Pauline Kael's classic dismissal of Siegfried Kracauer's Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality:

Siegfried Kracauer is the sort of man who can't say 'It's a lovely day' without first establishing that it is day, that the term 'day' is meaningless without the dialectical concept of 'night,' that both these terms have no meaning unless there is a world in which day and night alternate, and so forth. By the time he has established an epistemological system to support his right to observe that it's a lovely day, our day has been spoiled. 11

It may well be that dance is now the only art that still serves the anti-interpretive function formerly assigned to film. (As Martin Leonard Pops once put it, "Anatomy presupposes a corpse, but the living body of dance is never still enough for a proper dissection.") The descriptive bias insures that dance will continue to perform that anti-interpretive function. But it also, perhaps inadvertently, insures that dance writing remains intellectually insular, virtually estranged from the realm of ideas that routinely enliven discussion of the other arts.

Dance and the Thoroughly Modern Intellectual

Writing about dance rarely appears in magazines geared toward generalist intellectuals (e.g. The New York Review of Books, Harpers, The Atlantic, The New Republic...) This is not, I hasten to add, because the readers of these publications are afraid of coming into contact with so "physical" an artform. Dancers and choreographers often envision intellectuals as people who who are uncomfortable with their own bodies and thus fundamentally unsympathetic to dance. We like to believe that existing

bodies of knowledge exclude a knowledge of the body. What a charmingly dated caricature! It ignores the reality of that peculiarly contemporary intellectual who is breathlessly eager to establish his or her Dionysian credentials-- the sort of intellectual who, upon hearing the word culture (as defined by Matthew Arnold) is more likely to reach for his popcorn than to brush up his Shakespeare. The choice, for such people, is not between Milton and Madonna. The point is to embrace both without compromising one's seriousness or one's funkiness. Like the angels in Wim Wender's film "Wings of Desire," this sort of intellectual has grown weary of the ethereal and hungry for the material.

Certainly, among the fabled "New York Intellectuals", a passion for Balanchine is de rigueur. Granted, their commitment to (and knowledge of) dance may not extend beyond the obligatory seasonal pilgrimage to the New York City Ballet. But my point is that such people are by no means dance-ophobes (although they may be ballet-o-manes). In fact, they would feel incomplete, or at least impoverished, without their periodic Balanchine fix. "Concerto Barocco," "Agon," and "The Four Temperaments" offer the promise of instant access to a realm of "pure" wordless physicality.

Thus a passion for dance is absolutely essential for the modern intellectual. But is there a comparable passion for ideas about dance? No, not as long as dance is viewed as the art that holds interpretation in check, the last remaining link to some lost, pre-verbal, Dionysian paradise. This brand of anti-intellectualism is of course very different from the sort that Doris Humphrey attributed to the dance community when she wrote "The person drawn to dance as a profession is notoriously unintellectual. He thinks with his muscles; delights in expression with body, not words; finds analysis painful and boring; and is a creature of physical ebullience." 12

In fact, this is a mode of anti-intellectualism peculiar to intellectuals; and it has little or nothing to do with old fashioned philistinism, "no-nothing-ism", or traditional forms of Anglo-American empiricism and positivism. Philip Rieff was describing this condition when he complained (in The Triumph of the Therapeutic) that "Many (intellectuals) have gone over to the enemy without realizing that they, self-considered the cultural elite, have actually become spokesmen for what Freud call 'the instinctual mass'." 13 And when it comes to writing about dance, we find something upon which the least intellectual members of the dance world (those who've never known the life of the mind) and the

hippest, most "advanced" intellectuals (those who feel that they've outgrown the life of the mind) can agree. When it comes to writing about dance, these two varieties of anti-intellectualism merge into a single stream.

PRACTICAL PROPOSALS

But surely, there must be some middle ground between anti-interpretative description and dauntingly theoretical "deconstruction." Unfortunately--at the moment--the only existing alternative to the descriptive bias would seem to be the triumph of "theory." Here we pause for my favorite joke of recent years: "What do you get when you cross a deconstructionist with a mafia hit man?" Answer: "You get an offer you can't understand!" In the "age of specialization"--where the generalist reader or writer is automatically regarded as an amateur or a dilettante--one's "public" becomes an extension of one's self: a small cabal of other like-minded specialists. And compounding the sense of folly is the fact that today's esoteric theoretical apparatus is so often deployed in the service of the cultural left--which displays an "anti-elitist" hostility toward the traditions of high art--and correspondingly, an egalitarian embrace of popular culture. What a ridiculous paradox! The very people who complain most vociferously about "elitism" are themselves the real elitists when it comes to the utterly private language in which their ideas are encoded.

The great literary critic R.P. Blackmur once said that best sort of writing about the arts is "the discourse of an amateur." And by "amateur" Blackmur did not mean "uninformed." He meant the true connoisseur, someone motivated by a deep love of the art and a desire to communicate his or her enthusiasm to the widest possible public. This motivation is rather different from the activist goals of gender-politics or the tenure-driven pressures of publish- or -perish. (Which is not to imply that these motivations are mutually exclusive: Today, the impulse to "politicize" and the pressure to "professionalize" are often part and parcel of one another.)

Perhaps what's really called for is not the sort of writing that today's excessively "professionalized" academics would regard as theoretical, but rather something closer to the now vanishing tradition of belles lettres (which at its best, effortlessly synthesized description, interpretation, theoretical reflection and value judgment). I don't know that we even possess a name for such writing today. We might refer to it as accessible scholarship, erudite journalism, or serious but non-specialized prose

aimed at a broad based, well-educated readership. Call it what you will; but there's no denying that writing of this sort has gone--or is rapidly going--the way of the spotted owl, the snail darter, and other endangered species. This sort of writing is more interested in ideas than in theory per se. But--I hasten to add--this is not an argument on behalf of popularization or dumbing-down. As Frank Lloyd Wright once wrote: "Things should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler."

With the possible exceptions of Andre Levinson and Lincoln Kirstein, dance writers have rarely achieved--or even aspired toward--criticism of this sort. Although at their best, Arlene Croce, Joan Acocella, and Alastair Macaulay can all lay claim to this "belletristic" tradition. Here for example is Arlene Croce on Balanchine's "The Four Temperaments":

When, in the opening statement of the ballet--the first part of the Theme--we see a girl, supported on her points, turning from side to side and transferring her weight from one foot to the other as she turns, we see her do it with a finicky grace: she lifts and lowers the free foot, curls it around the standing leg, and carefully flexes it before arching to full point. We see, in short, a foot becoming a point--nature being touched to artificial life...The 'story' of "The Four Temperaments" is precisely that story--the subjection of persons to a process and their re-emergence as human archetypes... 14

Or--for a more recent example of what I have in mind--consider Joan Acocella writing about the way Twyla Tharp's dances have benefited from the participation of Mikhail Baryshnikov:

What she (and he) achieved was a kind of apotheosis of her disorderly order. Plump-line pirouettes suddenly melting off sideways, grands battements so grand, so forceful, that they knocked the body off balance--not so much, however, that it didn't recover in an instant, and launch itself into some other feat of embattled perfection--and this moreover, while sliding and diving down the beat like an otter down a snowbank; it looked like a dream. And what Tharp learned with Baryshnikov she brought back to her company, pushing her dancers to greater heights of skill and daring. It was a dream--a symbol, an idea. And that fact, not just the wit and beauty of the dancing, accounts for Tharp's immense popularity with audiences of the seventies. Her work was an idea about America: that you could indeed have freedom and order at the same time. It was also an idea about history: that you could question the past without losing it. 15

Note how effortlessly Croce and Acocella move from precise, evocative description to the realm of generalization. They offer us a sensuous portrait of the ideas at the core of Balanchine's and Tharp's achievement. And note that in praising Croce's and Acocella's work, I'm not suggesting that dance

writing will benefit from becoming less descriptive (only that it shouldn't settle for description). The ideal dance writer regards description as a necessary, but not sufficient, component of the critical task.

Similarly, the ideal critic realizes that theory need not, should not, must not, become synonymous with abstract system-building. Alvin Gouldner once defined theory as "the capacity to make problematic what had hitherto been treated as given; to bring to reflection what before had only been used..." 16 The real function of theory is simple: it promotes reflection. And "dance theory" should examine the ideas that are generated when one reflects systematically upon the sensory experience of dance; it shouldn't bury dance beneath ready-made notions purchased from the mail-order catalogues of Derrida, Foucault, and Company.

In conclusion, I fear it may sound as if I'm trying to have it both ways--or perhaps every which way. That's because I'm arguing on behalf of the center or middle ground between two equally undesirable extremes. Dance writing today is either too descriptive or not descriptive enough. And in academia, dance writing has leapt from description to the rarefied realm of theory without having passed through the humble, but more fertile intermediate stage of ideas. Ideas require thinking. Today's theoretical heavy artillery often functions as a pre-fabricated, follow-the-numbers substitute for thought. What we really suffer from is a shortage of genuine dance intellectuals, whom we might define as critics for whom ideas are as palpable as pirouettes.

The End

Notes

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From Graham to Cunningham: An Unsentimental Education

"A person appears comic to us if in comparison with ourselves he makes too great an expenditure on his bodily functions and too little on his mental ones."--Sigmund Freud, "Jokes and the Comic"

"The distinguishing characteristic of the dandy's beauty consists above all in an air of coldness which comes from an unshakable determination not to be moved."--Charles Baudelaire, "The Dandy"

The Persistence of Dandyism

One would have thought the 1960's an ideal (perhaps the ideal) time for a first encounter with the primitive mysteries of Martha Graham. The cultural signposts all seemed to point in her direction: A renewal of interest in myth and ritual, the meteoric rise of "Dionysian" intellectuals like Norman O. Brown, the pervasive body-consciousness, a sexualizing of the culture at large. Why then, upon first encountering Graham's choreography, during the summer of 1967 (the notorious Summer of Love, no less) did I find her work so... unlovable? Why did I behave so inappropriately, biting my tongue in a vain attempt to stifle a bad case of the giggles?

No doubt , the narrow (some might say, ideological) confines of my sensibility were at fault. I was a precocious seventeen year old, eager to appear More-Sophisticated-Than-Thou. It was essential to my fragile, still evolving sensibility that my enthusiasms all be certifiably MODERN. But Graham's work seemed most distinctive for its atavism, its willed primitivism. Hers were dances that harked back to the primordial ooze. Thus it wasn't altogether apparent to me why modern dance was called modern dance.

What is apparent in retrospect (even though I couldn't have described myself this way at the time) is that I was already one of those fanatical high modernists, those purists who believed in the autonomy and separateness of every art form. I wanted dance to do something unique to dance. I didn't want choreographers "using" the body to tell stories , especially not stories that had already been given shape and urgency by great playwrights and novelists. So obviously, there was going to be a "problem"

with Graham. The very names of her characters, so literary, so burdened with overly generalized Meaning, tended to put me off: He Who Summons, She of the Ground, The One Who Speaks, The One Who Dances... All of which made me feel like The One Whose Head Ached From Allegory.

But what really threw an obstacle in my path wasn't so much this ideological commitment to purity of medium, but rather my temperamental commitment to coolness, distance, and irony--an "unshakable determination not to be moved." We think of the 1960's as a very "hot" decade, but that's only half true. Those who came of intellectual age in the '60's wanted to have it both ways (perhaps every which way): immediacy and distance, sensuality and irony. And as a result, any adequate account of the sixties and its cultural history will have to consider the cult of cool. Cool in both the literal and the figurative sense of the term: hip, with-it, the- last- word- in- sophistication, etc . But also cool as a matter of temperament, if not literally, temperature. As in: " Don't feel anything and if you do, don't show it." Graham, it seemed to me at the time, was not cool. Worse than not cool, unfashionably "hot." (It's worth recalling that for Marshall McLuhan, one of the decade's chief taste makers, "cool" was the ultimate compliment. Hence television was defined as a "cool" medium. Print culture was demonized as "hot.")

In fact, from this cool (and distinctly aloof) point of view, Graham's work struck me as both oversized and overwrought, a casebook example of Freud's criterion for comedy (where the body is a little too much in evidence-- or at least more in evidence than the mind). Stark Young's notorious wisecrack about Graham (that she looked as if about to give birth to a cube on stage) succinctly summarized my sentiments.

Perhaps because the work seemed so heavy (literally and figuratively), so humorless and devoid of irony, I seized on any moment that might provide some comic relief. No matter how unintended. Actually... the less intended, the better: Tiresias in "Night Journey" bouncing on his seer's staff like a pogo stick. Or Oedipus, in the same work, throwing his weight around so stiffly that he functioned as little more than a priapic prick. I think too of those little agitated knee runs Graham was so fond of.

When The Penitent in "El Penitente" or Medea in "Cave of the Heart" pitter-patted to the left or the right on their knees, my response was to either laugh or wince or both. The situations the characters found themselves in called for emotions of the most elemental sort; but that bourree-on-the-knees seemed a bit prissy for the occasion. I also had a terrible time figuring out exactly what was supposed to be happening in many of these dances on a strictly narrative level. And a mind unsure of who's doing what to whom can distract one's attention from the serious business of looking. This was nowhere more of a problem than in "Deaths and Entrances" which I found both inscrutable and interminable. "Too many entrances and not enough deaths," I quipped to myself.

Let me be clear about something: I'm not particularly proud of this behavior. In fact, I now consider it a grave lapse (or under nourishment) of taste. "Dark Meadow"--which I didn't discover until years later and which I'll discuss at some length in the next chapter--now strikes me as one of the great masterworks of the century. But I freely confess to this youthful aesthetic blind spot (in the interests of self-edification) . I hope that this brief re-tracing of my own aesthetic learning curve will reveal something of interest about a sensibility that was by no means unique to me, a mode of thinking and feeling that became quite fashionable in the mid- to- late 1960's. This sensibility can best be portrayed as a latter-day variety of dandyism, the phenomenon that Baudelaire described in his classic essay of 1863. One hundred years later, dandyism with its "air of coldness," "its unshakable determination not to be moved", became a major, if undeclared, theme in the life of the '60's counter-culture.

Certainly it was central to the great transition that had already occurred in the visual arts: a move away from the hot, romantic, angst-ridden ethos of abstract expressionism toward the cooler, more impersonal detachment of pop and minimal art. But what interests me here is the effect that this latter-day dandyism had on the dance going tastes of people like myself.

The dandy's determination "not to be moved" is, above all, a fear of being emotionally overpowered, a fear of seduction. Perhaps laughter is the inevitable (if lamentable) response of the dandy to work that is unafraid of trafficking in large , overheated emotions. Laughter induces (or is induced by) a

distancing of emotion--what Henri Bergson once described as a "momentary anesthesia of the heart," a condition woefully at odds with the "primitive" sense of awe and wonder that Graham was so determined to conjure up.

And that's why Graham, at least at the time, didn't strike me as "cool." At least not in the manner of my other, recently acquired, certifiably "modern" enthusiasms (circa 1967, as I was about to enter college): The Peter Hall/RSC production of Pinter's The Homecoming, Andy Warhol's silk-screens of Marilyn Monroe and Jackie Kennedy, films such as Resnais' "Last Year at Marienbad," Antonioni's "Red Desert" and "Blow Up," Michael Snow's "underground" classic, "Wavelength," and virtually everything by that most Brechtian of directors, Jean Luc Godard. Favorite novels included Robbe-Grillet's The Erasers, William Burroughs' The Ticket That Exploded, and Thomas Pynchon's study of techno-paranoia The Crying of Lot 49.

I used the word "Brechtian" a moment ago, in relation to Godard. "Brechtian" was perhaps my favorite adjective of those years (although my ideas about Brecht were drawn more from his manifestoes than from his plays). The critic (or more properly, essayist) whom I read with the greatest enthusiasm was Susan Sontag--whose essays "Against Interpretation," "The Aesthetics of Silence," and "One Culture and the New Sensibility" had, no doubt, a great deal to do with shaping the sensibility I've just sketched. More about these "cool" passions a little later.

By contemporary standards of taste, this is a pretty rarefied catalogue of enthusiasms. (In fact, the collective emotional temperature is so ice-cold that some may wonder about my use of the word "enthusiasm.") The shared sensibility is hard-edged, ruthlessly anti-sentimental, objectivist, and unapologetically brainy. Dance, you may have noticed, is conspicuously absent from the list. But what sort of dance would have been at home in this celestial pantheon?

Deep down, in my clandestine heart of hearts, I loved ballet: the space-devouring leaps, the ultra-high extensions, the superhuman majesty of it all. And at its best (which is to say, in the work of Balanchine), the speed and the clarity-- qualities that both quickened the pulse and sharpened the eye.

Frank O'Hara, in a tribute to Maria Tallchief, once wrote "...her breathing limbs tear ugliness out of our lives." I felt much the same way about Suzanne Farrell. But the late 1960's was not the time to admit to a fascination with something as traditional-sounding as "Ballet." I was still intimidated by the externals: its history (the fact that it had a history!), its existence as "an institution," its presumed connection to, and dependence on, the citadels of wealth and power. How, one wondered, could anything performed in a great Edifice Complex like Lincoln Center possibly be relevant (oh, that awful '60s word!), up-to-the-second, etc.

Of course, I would eventually realize that not being wholly indebted to the present is a virtue rather than a vice. But this, remember, was still the late 1960's. Where, oh where, could one find the icy, dandified virtuosity of ballet outside the world of institutionalized art and beyond the precincts of tradition? The answer, for me at least, turned out to be the work of Merce Cunningham.

Human Bodies and Inanimate Objects: Savoring the Surface

The timing of my first encounter couldn't have been more propitious: May of '68: the month of months in the year of years, in the decade of decades. (Well, at least it felt that way at the time!) But even from the jaded (and perhaps a wee bit envious) vantage point of the '90's, 1968 remains the annus mirabilis of the decade that's become synonymous with radicalism of every kind, aesthetic as well as political. I don't mean to imply that the impact Cunningham's work made on me in May of '68 was largely attributable to its fortuitous historical context. But the heady, intoxicating, convulsive character of the moment surely played a part. The site of my initiation--my *sacre du printemps*--was The Brooklyn Academy of Music. Cunningham's season at BAM opened on May 15, one day after the official beginning of the "worker-student" alliance on the barricades of Paris.

The political connotations of the moment were full of resonance for me; but I want first to focus on aesthetic impressions that were less dependent on the political passions of the moment. In the course of the next seven days in May, I had the great good fortune to see an astonishing number of the works

that I still regard as some of Cunningham's greatest accomplishments: "Scramble," "Rainforest," "How to Pass, Kick, Fall and Run," "Winterbranch," "Walkaround Time," "Untitled Solo," "Place," and "Variations V." Over the course of the next year, I became acquainted with other works that made a comparably indelible impression: "Tread," "Crises" "Canfield," and "Signals."

What first struck me about the company--and what distinguished Cunningham's dancers most clearly in my mind from Graham's-- was their dandified detachment: not an "air of coldness" per se, but their collective sense of hyper-alertness: the high carriage, the flexible head, the level gaze, the sang-froid. One of Cunningham's movement signatures was the highly propulsive off-center jete, in which the dancers seemed to hurl their bodies in several directions simultaneously (but remaining-- this is key-- supremely balanced all the while.) Frequently off-center, but rarely off-balance is one generalization we can safely make about Cunningham's choreography. Typically, the head cocks backwards, the ribcage wrenches to one side, the left arm sculpts the third dimension and the right arm (defying Newton, embracing Einstein) explores the fourth. With Cunningham, body sculpture is not just a matter of which direction the dancer is traveling, but also which way the performer faces while moving there. (Many choreographers think in terms of four directions--upstage, down stage, left, and right. Cunningham routinely utilizes at least eight: e.g. the legs move on a diagonal upstage left while the head turns down stage left.)

The company members in 1968 were a remarkably diverse and idiosyncratic lot. Carolyn Brown was the paragon of classical purity, an ice queen who could give Suzanne Farrell a run for her money. Gus Solomons Jr., the only African-American member of the company, was a long-limbed, lyrical contortionist. British born Valda Setterfield exuded an odd mix of regal elegance and blunt prosiness (watching her was a little like imagining a member of The Royal Family doing her own shopping at the local grocery store). Even when dancing with great speed, she never seemed to be in a hurry. (Clearly, the emotional temperature of Cunningham style has something in common with British reserve).

Sandra Neels, more exuberantly "All American," was a pert brunette with long, lean, legs who excelled at lyrical adagios. And Cunningham was...well, a cunning ham, a great comic actor as well as a lithe, blithe, impish mover. Unlike the other male dancers who had been featured performers with Graham, Cunningham was always more Ariel than Caliban, light and brainy rather than monumental or "earthy."

Cunningham wasn't the only member of the company who exhibited a variety of cunning. Many of his dancers exuded a sly dexterity that called to mind the great tricksters in literature. There was something...ambidextrous about them. The isolation of one part of the body from another made them masters of rubbing the head while patting the stomach. And this sense of fragmentation began to intensify when one realized that the dancers merely shared the same space and time with the music, but that none of their movements were triggered or guided by it. (I was reminded of that scene in "Blow Up" when David Hemmings teaches a very stoned Vanessa Redgrave how to move against the grain of the music she's listening to: how not to go with the flow.)

In Cunningham's "Untitled Solo," (originally choreographed in 1953 but revived for the '68 season), the head, arms, and legs appeared so oblivious to one another that they could have been grafted together from three different bodies, moving at three different speeds. Indeed, "the Cunningham body" often looked as if it had been assembled by a practitioner of cubist collage. It emphasized the flexing and unflexing of the joints. And its great clarity of articulation derived in part from the way its allegro passages called attention to the jointedness of the body. Cunningham's dancers could move from whiplash fouette to penchee arabesque without apparent transition. (The resulting effect was not unlike those jarring jump cuts in Godard's "Breathless": an exercise in rapid continuity without flow.)

Of course, there were also quiet, comparatively tender, adagio sequences in many Cunningham pieces--as well as suspended balances that evoked an eerie tranquility. Yet the stillnesses remained pregnant, active-- not so much suspended animation as animated suspension. And there were often extended silences that sensitized one's ears to the soft brushing of feet against floor. But the dominant

quality was one of darting to and fro, what the balletomanes would call "elance." (The most characteristic moments involved rapid shifts not only of direction, but of weight as well.)

I referred earlier to literary tricksters. One of them, that great Elizabethan "overreacher" Mosca (in Ben Jonson's *Volpone*) could have been describing Cunningham dancers like Carolyn Brown or Sandra Neels when he spoke of

your fine, elegant rascal that can rise
And stoop, almost together, like an arrow;
Shoot through the air as nimbly as a star;
Turn short as doth a swallow; and be here,
And there, and yonder, all at once...

With their unpredictable entrances and exits that seemed to tug at the outermost corners of one's attention, Cunningham's dancers did indeed seem to be here and there and yonder all at once. And their faces! Unlike those of any other dancers I'd seen. They avoided the pert, strained, plastered-on smiles of the ballet dancer as well as the dramatized angst that sometimes made modern dancers look hopelessly melodramatic. What one saw was the thought-process-made-visible: a complete concentration on the task at hand.

Above all, they didn't seem silent in the way that Martha Graham's dancers did. They looked smart and wise (a little mischievous, no doubt), maybe even "smartass." As if they had chosen to be silent, as if it was cool to be silent. In other words, they weren't silent because they were too emotionally overwrought to speak (or even worse, because they feared they might have nothing to say).

No other dance company--certainly none that I knew of at the time--exuded a comparably mute cool, the sort of "advanced" (and highly "dandified") sensibility that, up until then, I associated almost exclusively with the world of painting and sculpture. This "art world" connection was an essential component of what made the company unique for me. And it took a variety of forms: For example, even on the most conventional of proscenium stages, it often seemed as if the dancers were performing in an art gallery or museum. Perhaps because the lighting never tried to "partner" the dancers or to focus one's attention in particular ways, the space often felt clean and open. In other words, as in the gallery

or museum, one's eyes enjoyed the liberating freedom to roam, to cruise, to savor those elegant surfaces.

Of course, the museum analogy is no mere metaphor--for the dancers, especially in those days, often shared the space with curious objects designed by the very same artists whose work was found in the leading galleries: Johns, Rauschenberg, Warhol, Stella, Morris, Nauman--the list goes on and on. But this was more than mere sophistication-by-association. Decor played an active (never merely decorative) role in many of these dances. Indeed, in a number of the works I first encountered between '68 and '70, the decor would interfere in some way with one's perception of the dancing, throwing visual obstacles in the path of vision--in effect, demanding that we "look harder." For "Walkaround Time," Jasper Johns designed movable vinyl rectangles emblazoned with iconography from Duchamp's "Large Glass." These translucent "windows" often mediated the audience's relationship to the performers. In "Scramble," one's view of the dancing was sometimes obscured by Frank Stella's mobile aluminum frames, over which were stretched pieces of brightly colored cloth. Quintessentially, in "Tread," (decor by Bruce Nauman) the down stage edge of the proscenium was lined with ten massive electric fans, half of which whirled at high speeds throughout the performance. (Whenever one would view a dancer through the blades of the spinning fans, his or her body would briefly appear to be vivisected, an apt visual metaphor for the dissociation of body parts so central to Cunningham's choreographic style.)

For me, the strangest, most intriguing (and for a while at least, most inexplicable) element of Cunningham's performances was the utter autonomy of the design elements, their essential obliviousness to one another--their unshakable determination not to be moved, swayed, or in any way affected by the other. This was probably most apparent in the lighting designs for works like "Winterbranch" and "Canfield." In both pieces, the play of light throughout the stage space was essentially indeterminate. Put bluntly: light didn't serve the customary end of illuminating the dancers. If lighting instruments happened to fade up as the dancers darted past them--well and good.

But the dimmer board had its own agenda, independent of the audience's (perfectly understandable) desire to see the dancing.

For "Canfield," Robert Morris designed a vertical column adorned with blazingly bright white lights focused on the back wall of the stage. Moving on a trolley that glided from side to side, it began by establishing a predictable back and forth rhythm. But then --as if breaking down internally or simply becoming "indeterminate"-- it would unexpectedly reverse direction (just like a Cunningham dancer!). By displaying a "will of its own," --and no special propensity for focusing on "the human element", let alone the dance element-- it erased many seemingly important distinctions between the animate and the inanimate. It displayed all the brutal impersonality of a bank surveillance camera , recording blankly, without "human interest", oblivious to anything--no matter how conventionally significant--that might lay just beyond the perimeters of the viewfinder. A totally disinterested gaze that any aspiring dandy might envy! And another variation on the fixed, unblinking stare of the camera in Andy Warhol's films from the early '60's. (The most sophisticated variation on this strategy occurred in Michael Snow's "Wavelength" where the camera takes a full forty-five minutes to zoom glacially, but inexorably, toward one inanimate spot on the wall of a room, utterly indifferent to what sounds suspiciously like a murder occurring just outside the frame.)

This attitude of "indifference" was equally evident in Pauline Oliveros' sound score for "Canfield"-- which assigned the musicians the task of scientifically testing the acoustical properties of the performance space. As the lights dimmed out at BAM, one could hear Cage, David Tudor, and Gordon Mumma communicating with one another over walkie-talkies. With a cool and scrupulous objectivity, they discussed the acoustical possibilities of the opera house. Indifferent to the "dance performance" occurring in their midst, they proceeded with an overt series of experiments, a disinterested "sizing up" of the space, an icily objective examination of its acoustical dimensions. There was something a little scary about the single-minded way these sound -crazed fanatics went about their mission. You sensed that even if someone were to yell "Fire" in this crowded theater, they'd continue to go about their business in a business-like way. I distinctly recall Gordon Mumma blowing short blasts on a

bugle while scrupulously turning a full 360 degrees. The sound ping ponged off a variety of surfaces (including the bodies of the dancers). That some of these "surfaces" were human appeared to be of no special concern to him. Cunningham seemed to be contemplating that most frightening of all possibilities: a post-human world. Like Warhol and Michael Snow, he evoked , without any apocalyptic melodrama or self-pity, an "inhuman" landscape that refuses to lend human beings or human consciousness any special pride of place.

Granted, it may sound perverse to praise a choreographer for de-emphasizing the differences between his highly trained dancers and the inanimate objects with which they shared the stage. But for me, this was the practice that lent Cunningham's dances their special flavor, their mentholated cool. Cunningham was a Pygmalion in reverse, choreographing dances in which performers seemed to acquire the emotional reticence and palpable physicality of objects. One thinks, quintessentially, of Cunningham dancing with a chair strapped to his back in "Antic Meet." It was only a matter of time, it seemed, before Cunningham choreographed a dance called "Objects." (A work with that title premiered in 1970.)

And how very different this approach to the inanimate was from the world in which Martha Graham set her dances: a "magical" place of primitive animism-- where objects, active and transformational, were no less alive than people (e.g. the stretch of rope that serves variously as suicide noose and umbilical chord in "Night Journey," that shimmering, wiry cage that Medea dons in "Cave of the Heart," the bar of metal that functions alternately as crucifix and banner in "El Penitente," the section of cloth in "Clytemnestra" which does triple duty as queenly robe, Agamemnon's "welcome mat" and funeral drape). In other words, in Graham's work, the decor, no less than the characters, felt organic and alive. Both seemed to possess an inner dynamism.

But in Cunningham's pieces, dancers aspired to the quiet, inanimate elegance of objects. We need to remember that for many artists in the 60's, "the object" had achieved virtual cult status. Indeed, objects were the privileged icons of high modernism. "In the early 'sixties the formula was art=object" declared Mel Bochner. Rainer Crone put the matter more aphoristically when he argued that

in Warhol's silk-screen portraits of the widowed Jacqueline Kennedy "the emotions of mourning become object." This helps to explain why Cunningham's work, unlike Graham's, could (and inevitably would) insinuate itself effortlessly into the company of those cool passions I alluded to earlier: the work of Robbe-Grillet, Pinter, Antonioni, Michael Snow, Susan Sontag, etc.--all of which, in one way or another, seemed to endorse or promote a cult of the object and the potential sensuousness of its surface.

For example, in Robbe-Grillet's and Alain Resnais' film "Last Year At Marienbad," it was often impossible to tell whether one was looking at a living actor, frozen in object-like immobility or at a genuinely inanimate object, a mannequin. But again, in this context, to treat people like objects was not to "objectify" them in the current, highly pejorative, politically incorrect sense, but rather to liberate them from the limitations of strictly psychological modes of explanation. And at the same time, to "objectify" people was also to re-invest them with what Robbe-Grillet liked to call "etre-la," a sense of sheer thereness, a sense of palpable physicality. In his great essay, "Towards A New Novel," Robbe-Grillet made the definitive argument against allegorical modes of representation, complaining about the process by which physical realities are transformed (or "de-formed") into "mere" symbols and metaphors, thereby forsaking their concreteness:

At every moment, a continuous fringe of culture (psychology, ethics, metaphysics, etc) is added to things, giving them a less alien aspect, one that is more comprehensible, more reassuring. Sometimes the camouflage is complete: a gesture vanishes from our mind, supplanted by the emotions which supposedly produced it, and we remember a landscape as austere or calm without being able to evoke a single outline, a single determining element.

The physicality of the landscape is subsumed by the adjectives we use to describe it. In Robbe-Grillet's novels and films, by contrast, objects are divested of meaning (which he referred to derisively as "the fog of meaning.") "Around us, defying the noisy pack of our animistic or protective adjectives, things are there," he noted with elegant matter-of-factness.

Cunningham's determination to cut through the "fog of meaning" was especially evident in his male/female partnering. Traditionally, in both ballet and modern dance, one of the functions of the pas de deux or the duet was to signify romantic and/or erotic entanglement. But in Cunningham's work, partnering is often executed in such an impersonal way that it's divested of such connotations. (Even when bodies are pressed tightly together, the dancer's attention seems focused on something other than his or her partner's flesh.) The audience's attention thus shifts to what the movement "is," not what the movement "means."

By contrast, the moment a body on stage began to function as a representation of Medea, Jocasta, or Clytemnestra, its locus of reality moved elsewhere , into an imaginary, less physically palpable realm-- one somewhere other than here (and now). That Cunningham and Cage harbored similar concerns becomes evident from the program note that Cage wrote for the 1968 BAM season: "By not relying on psychology," he argued, " this 'modern' dance is freed from the concerns of most such dancing. What comes through, though different for each observer, is clear (since one can only approach it directly--not through an idea of something other than itself).

Cunningham's dancers thereby exemplified the beauty (but never the superficiality) of surface: clean, sensuous, self-sufficient, rarely invoking inner depths or hidden mysteries. (Oscar Wilde could have been talking about Cunningham's choreography when he warned "Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril.") And as a result, Cunningham's dancers seemed utterly unlike most actors in the theater, whose protean, chameleon-like transformations suggested that they were always hiding something or that their "essence" lay elsewhere ("I have that within which passes show," says Hamlet.) Here, the reigning sensibility was closer to Frank Stella's description of his own paintings from that period: "Only what can be seen is there." Perhaps Cunningham was echoing Stella when he said of his choreography: "What is seen is what it is."

There was though, at least one theater experience in the late 60's that affected me in much the same way Cunningham's work did: Peter Hall's glacially elegant production of Pinter's The Homecoming performed by The Royal Shakespeare Company. For me, the heart of Hall's and Pinter's strategy was

summed up in an exchange between the play's one female character, Ruth (who rarely speaks) and two of the brothers, Lenny and Teddy, who've been engaged in a bit of pseudo-philosophical banter (e.g. "take a table. Philosophically speaking, what is it?"). Lenny prattles on and on about "this business of being and non-being," but Ruth emphasizes the concreteness of the here and now :

You've forgotten something. Look at me. I...move my leg. That's all it is. But I wear...underwear...which moves with me...it...captures your attention. Perhaps you misinterpret. The action is simple. It's a leg...moving. My lips move. Why don't you restrict...your observations to that? Perhaps the fact that they move is more significant ...than the words which come through them. You must bear that...possibility...in mind.

No doubt, part of what appealed to me about this passage is that it, in effect, proposed a "formalist" approach to the interpretation of movement. Ruth's speech in Pinter's play, just as surely as Cunningham's dances, helped me to understand what Susan Sontag must have meant when she wrote in "Against Interpretation," (an essay that became for many of us a virtually sacred text in the late 1960's), "Transparency is the highest, most liberating value in art...Transparency means experiencing the luminousness of the thing in itself, of things being what they are." As in Pinter's The Homecoming, this savoring of surface is as much a sensual, as a cerebral, pleasure. And in Sontag's oft-quoted, aphoristic conclusion to the essay, she maintained, "In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art."

Accordingly, one of the qualities I found in Cunningham's work was an erotics fit for a dandy, a sensuality more visual than tactile, one designed for the observer whose eyes derived pleasure from their sheer mobility, scanning and cruising at will. Cunningham's work exuded other forms of cool eroticism as well : "Rainforest," with its luxuriously sexy, gently wafting, helium-filled, silver-mylar pillows (designed by that king of cool, Andy Warhol) seemed to me an urban "Scheherazade," the last word in chic sensuality. I think too of Cage sipping Champagne as he read quirky anecdotes in "How to Pass, Kick, Fall, and Run." (A small, but telling recollection: The sharp thud of the cork popping from his champagne bottle struck me as one of the most elegant and aristocratic sounds I'd ever heard.) How very different this dandified sensuality was from the fashionable narcissism of the emergent dance boom! Cunningham's dancers--unlike many others that I could mention (but won't)--

never wallowed so visibly in their own physicality that they seemed to be nuzzling or licking themselves on stage.

Another distinctive aspect of Cunningham's eroticism: it had little or nothing to do with "the natural." By contrast, the body, especially the naked body, functioned in much of the art of the late 1960's as the very symbol of the "natural." This, after all, was the decade in which the dress rehearsal was less common than the undress rehearsal. The "naked truth" was no mere metaphor in the 1960's. In retrospect, you don't have to be a semiotician to realize that a body minus clothing is still a product of its cultural conditioning. (Even naked, we continue to move in ways that are dictated by the clothes we've discarded.) But unlike most of the great pioneers of modern dance, Cunningham never embarked on a quest for "the natural" way of moving. In fact, his style often seemed willfully inorganic. Given the chance-dictated nature of movement sequences in his work, it's not surprising that the ordering of phrases rarely seemed guided by a "natural" sense of flow (or even by anatomical logic).

Not Going With The Flow

Accordingly, the Cunningham company also avoided any trace of hippie-dippie, touchie-feellie, ersatz ritual: no mystical rites of initiation, no facile invocations of oneness with the audience. A far cry from those exotic (but sanitized) theatricalizations of "primitive" ritual that were so much a part of the dance boom at its peak. (Remember those hideous Gerald Arpino ballets with titles like "The Sacred Grove on Mt. Tamalpais?") And of course, 1968 was the year that The Living Theater toured the U.S. with its most utopian work, Paradise Now, featuring "the rite of universal intercourse" in which the audience was invited to join the performers in an extended group grope.

By contrast, Cunningham--with his insistence on preserving the autonomy of every element--countered that tendency of the counter-culture that was all about fusion, audience-interaction, going with the flow, etc. (Those fans in "Tread" that blew air in your face, seemed to saying "Keep your distance... Do not under any circumstances mistake what you see on stage for a participatory rite.")

But the culture at large in the late '60's seemed intent on fusion, not separation. The dominant sentiment of the period was probably best summed up by the opening lines of The Beatles' "I Am The

Walrus" : "I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together" (culture as a psychedelicatesen where all the ingredients flowed together in a sort of paisley update of Art Nouveau.) The most common artistic and technological embodiment of this craving for oneness was mixed-media of the sort that one found at "psychedelic discotheques," the multi-screen projection systems that wowed the crowds at Expo '67, or a good deal of inter-media art. Nam June Paik, a key proponent of such mixes, discerned a sexual metaphor beneath much of this multi-media mania: "Male human body has nine holes. Female body has ten. When all holes are filled, you have satisfaction. Purpose of inter-media art is to plug all holes as fast and efficiently as you can."

Without a doubt, the best-known mixed-media dance work that sought to plug the holes was Robert Joffrey's "Astarte." Certainly when it came to publicizing the many connections between dance and the counter-culture, it left no hole unplugged. In fact, on March 15, 1968--exactly two months before the beginning of Cunningham's season at BAM-- a psychedelized photo of Trinetta Singleton as "Astarte" graced the cover of Time magazine. Clearly, "Astarte" had succeeded in fingering the Zeitgeist. Here was a work dedicated to the blurring of boundaries : film/live action, audience/performers, inside of the theater/the outside of the street. While Singleton gyrated in her paisley leotard, Max Zomoso -- dressed in jacket and tie and cunningly planted in the front row of the house (a symbolic surrogate for the audience)--gradually rose from his seat, enraptured by this ancient Moon Goddess. Slowly, as if hypnotized, he stripped down to his underwear, and surrendered to her primitive power. All the while, gigantic filmed images of Singleton were projected onto an undulating scrim curtain. "Astarte" ended with Zomoso drifting somnambulistically out the back door of the theater, while film footage purported to show him exiting, into an alley, totally tranced-out. This was it: the bridging of the gaps, the plugging of the holes between art and life, live action and filmed overlay, the space of the performance and the "real" world of the street.

By contrast, Cunningham's "Variations 5," with film projection by Stan Van Der Beek, seemed utterly unlike the garden variety (the "got-to get- ourselves- back- to- the- Garden" variety) multi-media of the period. This was not Fillmore East or the Electric Circus. The images didn't meld seamlessly into

one another. There was no attempt to clobber the audience into blissed-out submission. If "Astarte" epitomized the "mixed media" of the period, "Variations V" was an example of un-mixed-media. (Those whose idea of a good time was to drop acid and then crash the last ten, solarized minutes of "2001" -- sitting as close to the screen as possible-- would not find comfort here.)

If there was any sort of connectedness to be found in this work, it was not the tactile, sensory massage variety. In "Variations V," the dancers moved through a series of electromagnetic fields , triggering bleeps and blurts of electronic sound as they darted in and around antenna-like poles. When Cunningham's dancers reached out to touch someone, it was more likely to remind you of the old Ma Bell commercial rather than the sort of touch-therapy then being practiced at the Esalen Institute. This was the electronic inter-connectedness of long distance. In "Walkaround Time," when Carolyn Brown performed slow developpes on demi-pointe, she "swept" her working leg like an electronic antenna picking up otherwise invisible signals. (And a year later, when Cunningham choreographed a work called "Signals," the title felt entirely appropriate-- maybe even inevitable.) In fact, in "Signals," the dancers would often stand in one place with feet firmly planted, while their torsos tilted and twisted like radar scanners. Furthermore, in that same work, one dancer wields a stick in a way that both delineates and enforces the physical distance between the performers.

Although we weren't quite ready to describe it as such at the time, this was dancing for the electronic age. Even the most cursory glance at the orchestra pit made it immediately apparent that we had entered a brave new world: the electronic paraphernalia included wave function generators, pitch sensors, signal modifiers, frequency shifters, VU meters, oscilloscopes....But what made this strange universe seem less forbidding to the layperson was the aura of happy chaos that permeated the pit: one saw a bunch of overgrown kids playing with their expensive toys. In fact, between Cage and his cohorts, it looked as if the Hardy Boys had commandeered their way into mission control at the Kennedy Space center--lots of dials and switches, crisscrossing wires, a maze of electronic circuitry.

In April of '69, prior to the company's next season at BAM, a controversy broke out that illustrates Cunningham's ambiguous relationship to the very idea of "music" for dance. Two different unions,

Local 802 of The American Federation of Musicians and Local 4 of The International Alliance of Stage Employees (the electricians) fought one another for jurisdiction over the activities in the orchestra pit. (The electricians claimed that the strange sound-producing equipment was too dependent on electronics to qualify as musical instrumentation.) Needless to say, the sounds that emanated from this high-tech pit were rarely acoustical. They were usually generated electronically in ways that eliminated the role that the body of the musician had traditionally played in the creation of sound on more traditional instruments. Sound from which the body has been excluded. (Even Pierre Schaeffer, whom we think of as the founder of "musique concrete," was opposed to the use of electronic oscillators as sound sources. He feared that the results would sound "inhuman.")

So what happens when an all-too-human dancer's body moves through that kind of auditory environment? What sort of movement is stylistically consistent with such sounds? Inorganic movement...choreography that never pretends or presumes to have discovered the most "natural" way of moving. And despite the clarity and concreteness of the physical images, both sound and decor often worked to impose a layer of mediation between the dancers and the audience. Cunningham seemed to acknowledge that the privileged place of physical presence in our lives had been challenged--perhaps irreversibly --by electronics. His dancers often seemed to inhabit the landscape of the sci-fi, techno-body that Thomas Pynchon described so evocatively in The Crying of Lot 49 (probably my favorite novel from the late '60s). In fact, Pynchon could have been talking about dances like "Signals" or "Variations V" when he said of his central character:

She walked in on soft, elegant chaos, an impression of emanations, mutually interfering, from the stub antennas of everybody's exposed nerve endings.

Not that Cunningham was the only choreographer to acknowledge this new electronic universe. But he responded to the Zeitgeist with deadpan acceptance rather than moralistic condemnation. By contrast, the dance theater pieces of Alwin Nikolais (which also employed electronic sound scores) often took the form of neat and simple-minded allegories about the dangers of mechanical reproduction, the invasions of the body snatchers, etc. --conventional, soft-headed, humanist "messages." And

ironically, even though the bodies of Nikolais' dancers were often completely disguised beneath body tubes, stretch jersey, slide projections, etc., the end result was much more familiar and recognizably "human" than Cunningham's world where (as we've seen) the most fundamental differences between human beings and inanimate objects were virtually ignored.

But the most revealing contrast was, once again, with the work of Martha Graham. While Graham and so much of the modern dance world exuded a sentimental primitivism, a longing for lost Edens (or at least a yearning for a long lost sense of "the organic," the natural). Cunningham seemed fully reconciled to the city. What might have struck Graham as urban blight became for Cunningham a potential delight, a source of complexity. There were no rhapsodies to the world of lost unity or wholeness; but rather a celebration of fragmentation and simultaneity--an acceptance, in other words, of the world we actually inhabit.

JAZZART DANCE THEATRE: 'THE PEOPLE, THE PASSION, THE POLITICS' OR 'DANCING TOWARDS A NEW CULTURAL ORDER'.

CLARE DEMBOVSKY

[The paper following forms part of a 'tri-partite' presentation: a paper, a discussion with Jazzart company members, a performance of *Bolero* (1996-97 version).]

INTRODUCTION:

This paper is a part exploration into the work of Jazzart Dance Theatre, situating the company in its socio-political dance context. For the purpose of 'Confluences' I address the ever changing pathways of Jazzart's *Bolero*; the studio as a meeting point for cultural workers involved in the struggle to free South Africa from its racist bondage; and the concept of empowerment through a dance form 'of the people, for the people, by the people'.¹

Post-structuralist multiplicity intersects with fragmentary interweaving textual strains evoked by the splintering effect of endlessly proliferating texts, intertexts and contextualisations. Whilst the names of all the Jazzart creators might not appear overtly in this script, their narratives have informed the textuality of this paper. Likewise I consider how my inter-changing experiential ventures with Jazzart permeate my textual narrative, adding to the rich tapestry of fabrics I weave into this albeit partial narrative.

Though I prepare the writing from afar, threads of linking footage and word-thought-deeds abound in the web intricacies of my bodymind. My eclecticism - as I draw on ethnographic politics, mapping theories, intertextuality, feminist notions of 'the personal and political' - deliberately subverts monolithism, as I attempt to merge the strains, viewpoints, perspectives into a synergy of democracy, collaborating with creators of the Jazzart map to present this paper.

Jazzart Dance Theatre's *Bolero*, originally *Untitled*, set to the music of Ravel's *Bolero*, offers as its creation point the time period 1989. Continually reworked to accommodate the influx of new company members' physical and cultural experiences, the on-going process of change, re-working and re-evaluation of *Bolero* in its increasing performance contexts is acknowledged. Thus the performance represents another *Bolero* version - that of a new young dynamic company of 1996-97.²

The *Bolero* analysis narrative that I undertake draws on three versions of the work (1989, 1992, 1995). An analytical interplay between these versions constitutes a flow through a network of inter-relating social, political, historical and performative contexts, that situates Jazzart Dance Theatre within a 'dance as empowerment' debate. Rejecting any notion of a totalising narrative within a linear historic telos, what is offered might appear fragmented, decentred and moreover unstable, as the constantly changing juxtapositions of the dance, the politics, and my position in relation to these, reflect the sites I roamed as I engaged with the source materials.

My argument focuses on the role Jazzart Dance Theatre played in the reconstruction of an ideology alternative to the dominant hegemonic oppressive regime, through the cultural medium of dance theatre.

To perceive the politico-cultural climate in which the first *Bolero* was created, I consider the contextual information of a country in the midst of political upheaval, a time when Nelson Mandela had not yet been released, a time when P.W. Botha still clutched desperately onto the reigns of oppressive leadership, when the country was still in the grips of yet another renewal of the nationwide state of emergency.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE COMPANY AS REFLECTED IN THEIR MISSION STATEMENT:

In a Jazzart file (compiled circa 1992-3) the company is described as a 'racially mixed ensemble ... Its membership is of necessity predominantly Black, and the focus of their work is largely issues that concern Black South Africans'.

An extract from a mission statement reads as follows:

The dance vocabulary used by the company is an eclectic one. They work extensively with release and contact, and draw largely from traditional and urban Africa, with the strong use of rhythm ... The company operates according to non-racial, non-sexist and democratic principles. It is politically non-aligned and seeks to serve disadvantaged communities in particular.³

The aims read:

1. To contribute to the quality of life in society and participate in broader initiatives to develop the cultural life of our city, our region and our country.
2. To develop forms of dance theatre which are meaningful and appropriate to the life experience of the communities served by the company, and which challenge or affirm values, attitudes and aesthetic tastes.
3. To experiment with forms of dance theatre which integrate different disciplines and which draws on and celebrates the cultural diversity and richness of our society.
4. To develop and sustain new and informed audiences, thereby cultivating the potential for new markets to support dance theatre.⁴

A 1997 compilation of Jazzart 'facts' for archive / publicity purposes, reveals an identical mission statement. Retrospectively elaborating on the 'struggle' years 1986-1992, a section on the 1986 history illuminates:

Mid-1986, Alfred Hinkel, the present Director, took over. The company was renamed Jazzart Dance Theatre. A commitment to active cultural involvement in the struggle for a democratic South Africa was made. The acclaimed Abamanyani (1986) project, with its multi-racial cast, mix of dance, live music and singing, and the theme of struggle and celebration set the tone.

Despite not having funding, the company gave performances and taught workshops and classes in the disadvantaged communities, largely in collaboration with "people's" cultural organisations. They also participated in the debates around "people's" culture maintaining the need for accessibility and artistic standards.⁵

VENUES, AUDIENCE, ACCESSIBILITY::

In 1989 a 'commitment to active cultural involvement in the struggle for a democratic South Africa' implied concomitantly a policy of 'non-collaboration'. Where the company performed became part of the politicised debate. Thus, in the first instance, the 1989 version of *Bolero* was introduced at the University of Durban Westville, which offered an alternative to the boycotted Grahamstown Festival. The fact that two years later (1991) Jazzart Dance Theatre performed at the Grahamstown Festival, and in 1992 became part of the state-subsidised Performing Arts Board, Capab, was regarded as politically contentious, by some. To others the move signified part of a transformation that saw Mandela negotiating with de Klerk; a period when Jazzart decided 'to engage as opposed to boycott'.⁶

The company's regular performances in the communities redressed the imbalance inflicted by an elitist theatre system inaccessible financially, geographically and materially to the majority of people in South Africa.

THE PEOPLE WHO CREATED / DANCED THE WORK:

Creators of Jazzart work during the 'struggle years' speak of an impassioned commitment to what they were doing, why they were there. It was a time of confrontation, not only of 'the other', the pernicious prejudices, but of the self as well.

TRAINING:

Based on the premise that 'everyone can dance', and using what Hinkel terms 'the natural pathways of the body' a technique involving release work, contact improvisation, incorporating Alexander teachings and the concept of 'pathways' evolved. 'Everyone can dance' implied a challenge to notions of Eurocentric aesthetics with its 'emaciated *White* ballet body'.

CHOREOGRAPHIC PRINCIPLES: DEMOCRACY: WORKSHOP, COLLABORATION, AND THE EMERGENCE OF FORM:

The choreographic method that underpins all Jazzart Dance Theatre work is that of the democracy and collaborative nature of workshop theatre. Thus the notion of the single authoritarian choreographer, imposing steps and ideas on an unthinking, disempowered, subject-object, makes way for a joint decision making process by a group, a/the community.

Hinkel's challenging statement read as an acceptance speech following the AA Vita Life award for choreography of *Bolero* (Dance Umbrella 1990), elucidates:

The glorification of an individual choreographer is for us an archaic notion. We believe that within a country where professional skills are denied to the majority of people, it is a notion without wisdom.⁷

If the award reflected the broader dance community's questioning, Hinkel believed that this (questioning) could lead 'to the uprooting of an imposed dance aesthetic that mirrors an imposed culture, an imposed religion and an imposed government'.⁸

The improvisational and workshop process testifies to an ongoing dialectic with the politics of an emerging democratic social and cultural order, resisting and challenging the disempowerment inflicted by an oppressive regime.

What is interesting is not only the notion of the 'death of the choreographer', but the significance that these transforming ideologies have had on the form of the work, particularly, the emergence of an alternative 'oppositional'⁹ form, expressing the culture 'of the people'.

This multi-cultural identity, celebrating 'commonality'¹⁰ as well as a celebration of the rich diversity of cultures that is South Africa, should be evident in the analysis of *Bolero*.

ANALYSIS:

Only the openings will be addressed:

Darkness. Silence. And then the sound of marching, boots stamping out a steady rhythm. The ankle rattles vibrating on the boots sounds out a 'new order'. Out of the darkness emerges silhouettes of four performers executing intricate gumboot rhythms. Four additional dancers appear in the stage space, creating a circling movement dominantly upstage, as the strains of Ravel's famous *Bolero* echoes through the auditorium.

Within the first few minutes the audience has been confronted with the following 'unfamiliarities' of a South African stage: a contemporary dance company performing gumboot dance, the use of a well known classical piece of music by a contemporary company eschewing singularly eurocentric tradition; Ravel's *Bolero* in counterpoint with African rhythms; women lifting women lifting men lifting men.

Although at the time of writing in 1997 the notion of challenges to gender in contemporary choreography is hardly anathema, and in a South African context it is now 'fashionable' to mix African dance and contemporary dance, at this time (1989) it was by no means the norm. Moreover, by the time, a few months later, that the work was performed at the 1990 Dance Umbrella Festival (South Africa), Jazzart was the only contemporary dance company with Black women.

There are seven dancers in the approximately sixth Jazzart studio version (1992). This time they are clothed in tie-dyed coloured wraps and matching leotards that blend easily with the multi-coloured tin African drums stretched over with animal skin, suggestive of an African ethos to this tale.

The studio version opens as an African drum is pushed onto the stage by a White female dancer (Balu Searll). She taps the drum strongly (defiantly) and reaches her arm out and upwards, turns and bends to the floor, knees open, one hand touching the drum, the other arm again extended out and upwards, her eyes are downward cast. Throwing her extended leg over the drum in a *rond-de-jambe*, the turn, repeated motif of hand touching the drum, ends this short sequence with an 'embracing' of the drum, socio-cultural, historical, geo-political symbol of African cultural heritage.

Pather moves his drum, stepping over and leaning backwards maintaining physical hand contact with the instrument. The focus is on him, alternating with Linden, in overlaying video images that indistinctly delineate the two. It is at this moment that Dawn Langdown is seen, leading three women (Goodman, Ngebulana, Shaw). They advance forward, clad in gumboots, the visual and sound image militaristic. As the sounds of their boots and stamping movements forcibly resonates in the stage space, one recognises that the gumboot sequence is being performed by women. Originally a dance performed by men, seeing a group of women of mixed races performing this dance code challenges the notion of women's role in society, to work, the traditional role of women in dance, the dance vocabulary, and apartheid's separatism. *Bolero* explores the meeting points of traditional African dance emerging amidst urban mine vocabulary, pantsula playing through western dance theatre aesthetics, Bharata Natyam informing contemporary practice.

As though part of the ritual, the performers, the people watch each other, confronting, demonstrating, inter-relating, opening up communication.

As in the first version where two women explore their relationship to each other through leaning and supportive contact, here the image is dynamically re-constructed and developed in the echoing close contact movements of head rolling togetherness between Balu Searll and Busisiwe Ngebulana, and previously between Searll and Pather. It seems queer, 'other' to delineate Black and White dancers in the description, but the situation was 'queer', was 'other' when the co-existence of people was denied by law, and that which is obvious (inalienable human rights) placed on stage to appear both ordinary and extraordinary. The ritual further establishes a 'handing over', a sharing of the drum, the space.

The opening of the Nico Malan version (1995) differs considerably - not just by virtue of Capab's extensive technical capacities or live orchestra, but most significantly through the development of Bharata Natyam, Zulu traditional and contemporary vocabulary, as well as the dramatic change of costume design.

This *Bolero* opens with Jay Pather, silhouetted against a cold blue circular light that grows larger and larger, as Pather 'embodies' the Hindu god Siva, dancing the creation of the world and at the same time holding in the power of his hands the ability to

destroy it. 'Siva' moulds the universe in fluid iconographic hand gestures, waving, beating, pulling, lifting, tracing, holding, creating the ball of earth universe that grows until the cold blue changes to warm (burning) (sun) (fire) light of the world. At this moment the sounds of the booted stamps / marches are heard entering the space: the forces of destruction and creation obliterating, obfuscating, re-creating, re-defining, re-merging.

Intertextually, the (shadow) image of Siva interfaces with an interpretative translation of the shadow images of Khoesan paintings, suggesting the first inhabitants of Southern Africa. Where are they now? What forces have moved them to traverse a path towards annihilation? A subliminal suggestion? An agit-prop tool?

The gumboot sequence takes place in silhouette against the large red sun/world, arm-hand movements emphasised, the clapping, slapping of the boots, the foot stamps demarcating a/the space. Lyrical arm gestures tracing the space are juxtaposed against the militaristic stamps the marching sounds evoke. That these are not the marching boots of the Nationalist invaders, but the gumboots of a cultural expression of the people exacerbates the paradox, for one must contextualise the gumboot dance, despite the technical virtuosity, as arising out of the darkness of the mines, 'the hungry earth'.¹¹

The marchers quietly disperse to reveal a lone shadow (Sifiso Kweyama) outlining traditional Zulu dance vocabulary. As he 'fills' the sun-earth space, another world view is re-created.

The focus on Pather again reveals the dancer mapping the world, utilising classical Indian vocabulary. Certain motifs are picked up by the other dancers - the vibrating, shaking hand movements, the sideways lunge with flexed foot, the 'bow and arrow' pose, the rippling arm-hand movement gestures. The dancers have learned Pather's 'story', the way they have learned the western, African, Asian stories. The enculturation manifests in the movement language that now reflects an extended vocabulary, an embracing not only of 'another' culture/s but of the traditional (old) and contemporary (new).

The ritual has changed. The earlier tie-dyed costume has given way to a dramatic leather mood. I do not intimate that the ritual is over, or that the 'African world space' has been mapped out, just that the process is one of re-creating, re-defining, re-asserting, re-discovering, experimenting with identity (personal and 'national').

It is impossible thus to regard this version of *Bolero* outside a contextualisation of the changing South African milieu, placing the changed identity of this work in its 1995 creative orientation. The backdrop is, on the surface, the 'new South Africa', post-election (1994), the man imprisoned for twenty six years is now President Mandela, leading the party Stoffel Botha had described as inciting violence and revolution against 'alleged' oppression and police brutality ... *alleged* social and political injustices ... ' (my italics).¹²

A time, continuing, of the violence that besieges the country, the vestiges of apartheid too close to the surface of the utopian dream.

The 1995 PVC and chiffon, 'S & M' design coincided with Jazzart Dance Theatre's *Bolero* sharing the Nico Malan stage in a triple bill with Capab. Yet why an 'S & M' look for a 'predominantly Black company, involved in Black dance and dealing with Black issues'? Hinkel suggests that in 1995 the 'issue' was that these dancers were 'young contemporary African people living in Southern Africa'.¹³ The look reflected not Africa per se, or the political racial message of the earlier work, but a focus more pertinently on the personal, the sensuality and sexuality, the relationships. Thus people connect, their actions affect others, they confront, part, regroup. Their actions are confrontational, supportive, aggressive, celebratory. They explore their sensuality, their sexuality; they explore aspects of 'identity', of being human (free?) in contemporary multi-cultural African society.

Within the movement context of this piece the work continues to express the cross-fertilisation of movement styles and cultural heritages - co-existing, re-informing, merging, fusing - celebrating Africa in its multi-cultural, 'rainbowed' fusion.

Hinkel's (or Jazzart's) 1997 award¹⁴ a further testimony to the explorations and collaborations of the creators of Jazzart Dance Theatre mapping an enriched socio-political cultural expression of the people. It is a dance form that speaks of empowerment, forging a new identity, challenging, questioning, constantly shifting ...

Notes:

1. See Augusto Boal *Theatre of the Oppressed* London: Pluto Press, 1993 (1979).
2. Performance of *Bolero*, part of presentation. 'Confluences' July 1997.
3. Jazzart file (circa 1992-3).
4. *ibid.*
5. Jazzart file (1997).
6. Alfred Hinkel, interview, 1996.
7. Hinkel cited in Sichel, A. in *The Star Tonight*, 1990 (incomplete archival ref).
8. *ibid.*
9. See: Fleischman, M. 'Workshop Theatre as Oppositional Form' in *SATJ*, Vol 4 No 1, May 1990, pp88-118.
10. See Pather, J. 'Dance In Search of Commonality' in *Staffrider*, Vol 9 No 4, 1991, pp84-92.
11. Maishe Maiponya's play 'The Hungry Earth' in Hauptfleisch, T. & Steadman, I. (eds). *South African Theatre*. RSA: Haum Educational Publishers, 1987.
12. Stoffel Botha cited in Akerman, A. 'The last bastion of freedom under siege: A reflection on theatre' in *Culture in Another South Africa*, 1986, p56.
13. Alfred Hinkel, interview, 1996.
14. 1996-97 Standard Bank special award for contribution to dance.

Appendix:

Performers of *Bolero* (see versions discussed in paper):

1989 (University of Durban Westville): Dawn Langdown, John Linden, Jo-Anne Michaels, Gabriella Moser, Vanessa O'Connor, Tracey Peterson, Joy Raath, Corinne Shaw, David Thomsu.

1990 (Dance Umbrella): Susan Abraham, Michelle Breskal, Dawn Langdown, John Linden, Sonwabo Masepe, Gabriella Moser, Busisiwe Ngebulana, Vanessa O'Connor, Joy Raath, Corinne Shaw.

1992 (Jazzart studio): Debbie Goodman, Dawn Langdown, John Linden, Busisiwe Ngebulana, Jay Pather, Balu Searll, Corinne Shaw.

1995 (Nico Malan): Debbie Goodman, Sifiso Kweyama, John Linden, Simpiwe Magazi, Sbonakaliso Ndaba, Busisiwe Ngebulana, Jay Pather, Balu Searll, Mpotseng Shuping, Penny Swain.

1997 (Confluences): Ashley Abrahams, Ondine Bello, Ananda Fuchs, Sifiso Kweyama, Sandile Mbili, Sbonakaliso Ndaba, Heinrich Reisenhofer.

(This list does not comprise a full account of all *Bolero* performance dates and performers of the work)

Confluences of Gender, Race, and Sexuality in Modern Dance

Susan Leigh Foster

Part I

Matthew Bourne's sensationally popular "gay male" *Swan Lake*, the first long-run dance production in London's West End since Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*, premiered in Los Angeles this April in preparation for a world tour. Using the original Tchaikovsky score and modern and social dance vocabularies that only occasionally invoke ballet, Bourne has re-envisioned the famous romance between Prince and Swan Queen as the coming-out story of a gay Prince, dominated by his mother, who finds no satisfaction in the royal regimens or underground getaways which comprise his life. On the verge of suicide, he instead dreams himself into a world inhabited by magical creatures, male swans whose sensuous strength and sinuous vulnerability promise sexual and emotional satisfaction. Swan, one of this all male *corps de ballet*, reciprocates his affections in a series of duets, tender, passionate, and erotic, yet their attachment is finally severed by the two separate societies in which they are members. The Prince's court cannot accept his homosexuality, condemning him first to the asylum and then to the sickbed; Swan's cohorts cannot forgive his dalliance with a mere mortal. In the final scene Swan, hounded by his fellow swans, scoops the dying Prince into his arms and ascends heavenward, presumably towards a world where they might live happily ever after.

Exhilarating, epic, entertaining, the production elicits enormous sympathy for the gay male couple. The Prince's severely constrained life and inarticulable feelings resonate strongly with the closetedness of homosexuality in dance and in society. Swan's bravery and vulnerability evoke the kind of admiration reserved for the noblest of heroes. The *corps de ballet*, hairy chested, gangly, athletic, sweaty, and sexy, summons up an otherness -- magical, menacing, seductive, enthralling -- that the female entourage in the original production must have achieved but can no longer sustain. When they appear, one by one, cavorting to some of Tchaikovsky's most famous phrases, these male swans seem to burst through the closet's door. Rather than a diminution, through endless duplication, of their power, the addition of each swan connotes yet another celebratory coming out.

Part of the production's dazzling success is sustained by its witty references to the original ballet. Bourne's clever choreography keeps viewers in continual and delighted suspense as to how the well-

known scenario will be altered. Swan, for example, reappears in Act III, not as the black swan, but as a leather-clad bouncer who puts the make on the mother. Imaginative sets, costumes, and movement vocabulary drawn from social, club, and folk dance traditions as well as several schools within modern dance are also used to dazzling effect. Beyond this impressive display of craft, the dance's greatest achievement is its synthesis of wit, spectacle, and social cause. This is a dance with a clear and timely message delivered with such deft agility and beguiling seduction as to win over the most hardened homophobe.

For all my assertions as to the gay male meaning of the piece, critical coverage in both Britain and the U.S. has consistently ignored its brazenly open treatment of this taboo subject. Nor does Bourne commit to a homosexual reading of his work, claiming instead a more universal significance in which the Swan represents for the Prince the "freedom, the beauty and the strength ...that he's not got in his restrictive Royal life." Critical reviews sustain Bourne's intent by consistently failing to mention any homosexual references.

Both the dance and the uncanny neglect of its obvious homosexual content bring into sharp relief modern dance's closeting of homosexuality and even sexuality throughout this century. For one hundred years dancers and choreographers have resisted all allegations that their art alluded however discretely or remotely to sex. Early luminaries in the new genre of modern dance in the United States, Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis, went to enormous lengths to elaborate in and for dance a non-sexualized corporeality.⁶ Subsequent generations of choreographers and dancers have likewise cultivated the body as a musculo-skeletal system that responded to emotional but never sexual impulses. Only in the last ten years have dances begun to elucidate clear sexual identities and desires onstage, and in large part, this choreographic initiative has centered on gay male identity. Living through the gay liberation movement and the AIDS crisis, choreographers Bill T. Jones, David Rousseve, Nigel Charnock, Lloyd Newson, Javier de Frutos, along with Bourne and many others have begun to press hard on the closet's walls.

Modern dance's closet, one that housed what studies of human sexuality had only recently identified as the homosexual, formed as part of the very foundation of this new dance genre. In order to secure their experimental aesthetic claims, the earliest modern choreographers strategically positioned their dances as far from the sexual as possible. Because they were women, because they

were performing publicly new kinds of bodily movement, the presumption of immoral, illicit, or prurient elements in their work jeopardized the entire project. Their solution, to create a chaste dancing, insured success and at the same time provided a haven for homosexuality. Not only was homosexuality protected because the dances were never about sex, but choreographers and dancers could explore movement in new ways that might simultaneously encode the sexual, whether heterosexual or homosexual, and also articulate a non-sexual physicality. The anti-sexual environment of modern dance thus created an opportunity to negotiate identities, aesthetic and physical, other than those offered up in the equation, used to rationalize Nijinsky among others, between deviance and artistic brilliance. Modern dance's closet, even as it allowed viewers to project a sexualized identity onto the dancers, assured them that the choreographic basis for such fantasy did not exist because dance and dancers resolutely pursued a non-sexual investigation of human movement.

In order further to contextualize a work like Bourne's Swan Lake, I want to return to the founding moments of the modern dance tradition in the U.S. to examine how sexuality, masculinity, and race were configured:

Chaste Dancing

Alongside the wide variety of movement practices that engaged turn-of-the-century Americans as participants and viewers -- new forms of physical education and expressive culture, Delsarte exhibitions, pageants, folk dance performances, dances of the world as seen at the world fairs and expositions-- choreographers Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis began to elaborate an entirely new vision of dancing. This new approach to dancing and dance-making, a "high" art form radically distinct from ballet, on the one hand, and vaudeville, cabaret, or follies entertainments, on the other, promised a glimpse of the human soul, its changingness, its transcendent veracity. Duncan and St., Denis, not the first or only progenitors of this exceptional artistic initiative, stand as monumental emblems of its success. Offering contrasting visions of the soul's corporeal manifestations, Duncan in her austere Greek-like toga and St. Denis in her ornate, Orientalist veils invited audiences to celebrate a body unencumbered by the artifices of society, a body tuned to inner, spiritual rhythms. An extraordinary

accomplishment, especially for women, the new artistic genre they helped to found imbued the body with a dignity and beauty that gave life new meaning.

Responses to Duncan's dancing repeatedly betrayed the viewer's surprise at the remarkable chasteness of her performance. Her nearly naked body purveyed no erotic allure, no stimulation of physical desire. Through her gaze and gestures, she communicated her conviction that the body constituted a hallowed place. Through her shaping of and in space, she trained viewers to attend to the sculptural potential of movement. Not only did she resemble a work of classical art, but she articulated a new yet classical movement aesthetic. She did not promenade like a showgirl or pose fetchingly like a ballerina. Instead, she commanded viewers to focus on the way the body moved in tandem with the music, and she persuaded them that this movement tracked that of the soul.

To buttress the claims she was making choreographically, Duncan expounded verbally and in writing on her vision of a new American dance. She drew upon the dignity of the body summoned up in Hellenistic humanism and in the poetry of Walt Whitman. She fashioned an idiosyncratic feminism, one that championed the body's freedom from the constraints of dress and social comportment, and she embraced Nietzschean philosophy and its use of dance as metaphor for life and change. She also tapped the country's desire to witness a uniquely American artistic production. At the same time, she railed against ballet with its rigid patterns and barren imagery, and she denigrated African dance as exemplified by Negro dances for its lascivious simplicity. Both traditions resonated with sexual connotations that Duncan was eager to avoid. The ballerina as kept woman signaled the decadent trajectory of ballet's form, the inevitable product of a stultifying society such as Europe. The African dancer, possessed by a sexual frenzy, demonstrated a primitive and unrefined variety of bodily responsiveness, against which Duncan asserted her own naturalistic cultivation of the body. Duncan utilized both traditions to distinguish her new danced vision, effectively organizing racist and nationalist sentiments to reinforce one another.

Whereas Duncan epitomized a white America dancing, St. Denis incarnated as an amalgam of Orientalist types, bolstering nationalist and racist discourses, not through her depiction of the white body as universal, but through her effective colonization of other dance traditions. Tapping America's extensive interest in religious experimentation, the impetus to reevaluate spiritual practices in light of new exposure to world religions, St. Denis choreographed religious quests set in exotic Asian lands.

She deployed sumptuous spectacle as environs for her spiritual exploration, initially reinforcing viewers' expectations of standard exoticist entertainment. Yet her movement and phrasing, all uncannily dissimilar from other vaudeville performances, soon forced a different kind of attention. She paused for too long; she evinced too much concentration; the stunt never materialized. Instead, viewers witnessed the representation of spiritual awakening. And although the narrative of her quest propelled the body towards ecstatic obliviousness, St. Denis consistently subverted and sublimated any sexual connotations that her delirium might suggest.

Like Duncan's reception, St. Denis' reviews often commented on the quantity of exposed midriff, but went on to stress the spiritual essence of her dancing. To portray religiosity onstage and to do so convincingly provided the ultimate refutation of any sexual innuendoes. Yes, viewers might have reasoned, she danced the pilgrimage of an Eastern and not Christian devotee, but all religions shared a dedication to spiritual rather than carnal experience. Yes, she appeared in uncontrolled and uncontrollable ecstasy, but she always retreated into solitude after communing with her god. Yes, she assumed a foreign character, but after all, she was a white woman who merely represented this foreignness, demonstrating, as one critic observed, "a universal rhythm beneath the broken chaos of our modern industrial world which shall infuse new joy and rhythmic harmony into our common life."

The anti-sexual tactics developed in Duncan's and St. Denis' choreography, infused with racist and nationalist sentiments, provided the necessary defense against the inevitable charges that their performances purveyed only the trivial or lurid. By insuring the absence of sexuality, these women could display a new body-centered endeavor, found a new genre of dancing. Yet it is worth examining in greater detail just what kinds of assumptions Duncan and St. Denis were working with and against in their campaign to create a whole new kind of dance, a newly respectable view of dance. Why were viewers so surprised at how chaste their dancing was? What did they expect to see that Duncan and St. Denis repeatedly subverted?

The Cupidity of the Flesh

In the foreword to his The Dance of Life (1929), Havelock Ellis summarizes Victorian attitudes towards dance as dismissive, acknowledging that dance was regarded only as "gay and trivial, even tending to immorality." As a long-time dance enthusiast, however, Ellis believed that dance deserved

new consideration. Influenced by the works of Duncan and St. Denis as well as Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, Ellis launched into The Dance of Life decades after his pathbreaking studies of human sexuality as a way to examine life's vicissitudes and to extend his liberal attitudes towards sexual behavior into other aspects of social life. His most popular and best-selling book, The Dance of Life examined dancing, thinking, writing, religion, and morals in turn, treating dance as a metaphor for life's change that unified all these pursuits. His analysis of dance provides important insights into cultural presumptions towards dance, sex, and the body that influenced the ways in which Duncan and St. Denis would articulate a rationale for their new kind of dance.

For Ellis dancing expresses religious belief, amorous zeal, or aesthetic inquiry. The origin of all forms of dancing, however, regardless of their function, lies in the sexual impulses of animals. Of the two primary arts, dancing and building, dancing is perhaps the first since "The nest of birds is the chief early form of building, and ...the nest may first have arisen as an accidental result of the ecstatic sexual dance of birds." Species as primitive as insects evidence the inclination to dance as part of their courtship rituals. The urge to mate, that which inspires the spastic jerks of the chimpanzee's feeble legs, is the crude motion out of which "the heavenly alchemy of evolution has created the divine movements of Pavlova." Not only does dancing originate in mating impulses, but competence at dancing facilitates the conquest of woman by man:

"By his beauty, his energy, his skill, the male must win the female, so impressing the image of himself on her imagination that finally her desire is aroused to overcome her reticence. That is the task of the male throughout nature, and in innumerable species besides Man it has been found that the school in which the task may best be learnt is the dancing-school."

Thus dancing makes manifest the most primitive sexual urgings, heterosexual urgings, which are common across the whole evolutionary continuum from arthropods to bipeds.

Yet, Ellis argues, in order to develop the facility at dancing necessary for sexual conquest, the body must be disciplined, its most unruly parts must be subjected to the rigors of measure, proportion and rhythm. Dances of the world evidence different approaches to this disciplining process, but African dance distinguishes itself as the most complete, "in which the play of all the chief muscle-groups of the body is harmoniously interwoven. When both sexes take part in such an exercise, developed into an idealized yet passionate pantomime of love, we have the complete erotic dance." Desire fuels the

quest for a disciplined body through which its urgent messagings might be apprehended. Although "potent and dazzling images, all wrought by desire" have proliferated with the cultures of the world, both the mechanism of bodily cultivation and its message remain the same. Thus dancing, protean, evolving, takes different forms but remains continuous with its primitive origins.

Ellis' earlier studies of the sexual impulse had expanded on dance's role as a major form of arousal of the sexual instinct. He argued that sexual desire, that category of human experience that links animals and humankind, both primitive and civilized, is brought about by and cultivated through dance movement. In his Analysis of the Sexual Impulse Ellis presents an overwhelming array of ethnographic evidence in support of his theory that dancing is used by both civilized and savage peoples to arouse sexual excitement. After discussing the choreography of courtship practices among snails, octopi, spiders, preying mantis, cow-birds, tyrant birds, red-breasted marsh-birds, mallards, pheasants, ostriches, Ellis proceeds with pages of anecdotal reports drawn from anthropological and travelogue literatures on the relationship between dancing and sexual activity. He quotes descriptions of lascivious dances among the Muras of Brazil who hold "a Bacchantic dance in a great circle [that includes] a pantomimic representation of sexual intercourse;" the Wolofs who perform a dance in which "the woman tucks up her clothes and convulsively agitates the lower part of her body; she alternately shows her partner her vulva and hides it from him by a regular movement, backward and forward, of the body;" and the Austrailians of Dieyerie whose "women keep time by clapping their hands between their thighs; promiscuous sexual intercourse follows after the dance; jealousy is forbidden." Among the Torres Straits Haddon people, "the young men woo girls by being good dancers as a substitute for the old days in which whoever brought home the head of someone they had killed was considered the best catch." Women dancers living on the island of Nias in the Malay Archipelago perform "a lascivious undulation of the flanks while the face and breast are slowly wound round by the *sarong* [a sort of skirt] held in the hands, and then again revealed;" while the Tahitians perform dances "consisting of motions and gestures beyond imagination wanton," Those who organize ritual ceremonies that begin with dancing and end with sexual intercourse include the Alfuras of Seram in the Moluccas, the Kaffirians, the Gurus of the Ivory Coast, and the Minnetarees. Those who feature dancing at marriage ceremonies both to enhance the desire of the newly married couple and to promote feelings of courtship among non-married attendees include people living along the

Wanigela River in New Guinea and in Sumatra. Among the Marquesans such celebrations invite all the men present to engage in sexual intercourse with the bride.

Ellis makes several observations about human sexual practices based on this evidence: first, that dancing develops the musculature thoroughly and effectively; second, and as a consequence, dancing produces tumescence, that biological condition which marks an essential stage in the narrative of sexual fulfillment; and third, that because dancing leads inevitably to tumescence, it has been placed in the service of the sexual instinct by all species. The link between dancing and sexual excitation may be attenuated but never severed. Indeed, the distinction between primitive and civilized societies can be established in the degree to which civilized groups prolong and abstract the fact of tumescence as evidenced in their dances practices. Savage societies engage in realistic pantomimes of sexual arousal and coitus, whereas civilized societies elaborate a more remote, symbolic version of sexual excitation, one that nonetheless serves in some cases as a complete substitute for sexual gratification. Paradoxically then, civilized choreography which places sex at a great distance from dance by removing the overt sexual references, can and does stand in for the actual sexual act. For example, young (British) girls find that once sexual relations have been established, their ardor for dancing dissipates.

Underpinning Ellis' vision of dance is the biological presupposition that as muscular movement increases, the higher centers of the nervous system no longer dominate. According to Ellis:

"Muscular movement of which the dance is the highest and most complex expression, is undoubtedly a method of autointoxication of the very greatest potency. All energetic movement, indeed, tends to produce active congestion. In its influence on the brain violent exercise may thus result in a state of intoxication even resembling insanity."

As the body engages in intense physical exercise, it produces a state of congestion that reduces one's capacity to think and to control desire. Or perhaps, the prolonged and repetitious use of the neuro-muscular system simply diminishes brain activity. Whatever the case, dancing not only enhances heterosexual desire, but when practiced alone encourages an auto-erotic ecstasy, working on the nervous system simultaneously as a narcotic and a stimulant. Under conditions that fail to monitor dancing properly, such delirium may even approach insanity.

The act of dancing cultivates tumescence, creating either auto-erotic or heterosexual fervor. But even watching the dance produces this same effect. At its least, the spectacle of dance induces states of well-being and a sense of increased potency. If the numerous descriptions of savage dances cited by Ellis are any indication, viewing the dance may even arouse desire to participate in sexual acts. Whether as performer or viewer, participants in dance slide backwards along the continua of biological, social, and evolutionary development towards more primitive states of being. Biological notions of higher and lower centers of bodily control reinforce at the same time that they complement evolutionist theories of complex and simple species and of civilized and primitive peoples. By dancing participants and viewers activate lower nerve systems, revert to more primal needs, and respond to base, instinctual impulses. Dancing thus signals barbarism and all its attendant conditions -- unruliness, self-absorption, hedonistic indulgence in the sensate, and uncontrollable violence.

Little wonder, then, that choreographers such as Duncan and St. Denis marshaled their forces so carefully to refute all presumptions of equivalence between sex and dance. The mere fact of their bodily motion, female bodily motion, onstage summoned up the deviant, the savage, and the sexual. In order not to appear as fallen women -- women who had degenerated from civilization into barbarism, from mind controlled action into bodily determined frenzy, or from the human into the bestial -- they crafted bodily movement that insistently referenced non-sexual dimensions of human experience. In order to justify their art, they effectively tapped the same racist and colonialist impulses that motivated the descriptions of dance-as-sex that Ellis relied on for his research. Unlike African dance that simply enhanced as it displayed stages in the sexual act, Duncan's dances embodied civilization -- noble, refined, classical. Unlike the actual dances of Asia and the Pacific whose ritual frenzy belied their sexual investment, St. Denis' dances gestured towards a higher spiritual quest.

But in their resolute denial of the sexual, these choreographers also manifested the newly imagined subject, a subject capable of possessing a sexuality, that studies such as Ellis' had begun to reveal. Rather than investigate taxonomies of sexual practices, Ellis and the other turn-of-the-century sexologists had pursued sexuality as an individually distinctive coalescence of identifiable patterns of desire, arousal, and fulfillment into a singular entity. Both sexuality and the subjectivity that surrounded it operated as bounded autonomies, and choreographers such as Duncan and St. Denis gave embodiment to precisely this vision of identity. Their onstage personas, no longer trapped

within the familiar romances displayed by the ballet, enacted narratives of their own design that contoured the psyche's geography. Even as they seemed transported into the ecstatic space of communion with musical and spiritual universals, their bodies responded deftly, as admirable instruments of expression. Through their choreographic mapping of interiority, they gave embodiment to the kind of fulsome subjectivity within which something called a sexuality might dwell. The body served as emblem of this subjectivity, charting new territories of the natural and also as docile vehicle for conveying the subject's exploration of identity. It mimicked the structural integrity of sexuality, and in the very same moment demonstrated that this sexuality could be controlled, even denied.

Thus even as sexuality was achieving new status as a powerful motivating force within the individual, Duncan and St. Denis demonstrated how such a sexuality could be contained. Unlike the dancing girls of ballet and cabaret whose identities metonymically elided with sexual practices -- flirtation, promiscuity, prostitution -- both onstage and off, Duncan and St. Denis possessed a sexuality over which they exerted individualized control. Duncan, the mother of three illegitimate children, remained resolutely chaste in her dances; St. Denis, who flaunted her precarious control over bodily desires onstage, performed offstage as a devoted wife. Both artists exhibited to their public an alluring independence and a spiritual purpose that insured them from sliding back into deviant or uncivilized categories of behavior.

Through these founding gestures -- individual creative exploration, the display of whiteness, and chastity -- these women secured a new tradition of choreographic experimentation and a place for themselves within that tradition. This new tradition challenged the politics of danced spectacle by deflecting the objectifying force of the male gaze and ennobling the dancer on whose body all eyes rested. In this aesthetic and political labor, it joined hundreds of other Progressive Era initiatives to bring women and a female presence into the public sphere. Yet this labor did not challenge the conception of dance itself as feminine nor alter significantly the prejudice against men dancing. Dancing's decorous display of the body and its interest in emotional and spiritual life aligned it too strongly with the feminine ever to be considered man's work.

Tomorrow I will consider three moments in the history of modern dance's sexual and homosexual closet in which male choreographers worked simultaneously to assert masculinity and conceal homosexuality.

In the time that remains today, I want to return to Bourne's Swan Lake and to the dialectical relation it establishes with the founding moments of the modern dance tradition. Having provided a brief synopsis of the plot, I want now to focus on Act II and in particular on how the figure of the swan brings into sharp relief the founding gestures of modern dance that I have been describing.

Like their predecessors, the sprites, nymphs, sylphs, and wilis, that populated nineteenth century ballet stages, these swans exude an uncanny otherness. Half bird, half man, their head and arm gestures, suggesting the swan's darting beak or curving wing, emerge briefly and then disappear into fulsome leaps, gliding runs, and arcing turns. With languorous sinuosity, a wave-like impulse crosses their bodies, only to explode into sharp shifts of posture and weight. At the moment of fullest extension, the rib cage will jut out, a leg pull in, unsettling their bodies' vulnerable openness. Then they dart, then gallumph, then balance delicately, and with intricate precision, swivel into a new pathway gathering a new momentum. Their costume, with its stiff corset-like waist band, highlights the musculature of the torso, the softly rippling sequentiality of movement across arms, shoulders, and back. Their shaggy pants, enhancing the dynamism of their weight changes, the height of their jumps, appear comic one moment, noble the next.

This extraordinary synthesis of opposing qualities does not, however, account fully for the swans' otherness. Their foreignness and charisma grow out of a series of reversals in which they miraculously contravene their aesthetic heritage. First, they are not female, not feminine, and not effeminate. Their bold, strong motions, the size of jumps, the distances they cover quickly, all pronounce their maleness. Unlike the choreography for the traditional corps de ballet which erases individual identity, these swans aggressively affirm their individual existence onstage. Each approaches the Prince inquisitively and directly, and each performs the unison phrase with idiosyncratic flare rather than with the faceless anonymity of the female corps. Where the swan maidens of the original Swan Lake had endured the magical spell of the evil Von Rothbart, helpless, mute, and unable to extricate

themselves from their predicament, these swans live happily in their world apart needing no rescue. Although their bodies open into positions of exquisite vulnerability, they never collapse into the camp exaggeration of feminine gestures.

Second, these swans do not perform ballet nor do they execute the well-known choreography of Act II even though Bourne has created a solo for Swan to the swan queen's adagio, a duet for swan and Prince to the famous pas de deux, and a hilarious quartet to the well-know music of the pas de quatre. The swans' vocabulary contorts classical ballet stipulations for bodily geometry. Hips raise with legs; torsos duck and undulate; legs rotate inward and frequently extend at 45 degree angles to side front or side back. Where the ballet vocabulary constantly presses up and away from gravity, in order to inhabit the aerial, the swans give into gravity, then surge up out of its depths on curving pathways reminiscent of the modern dance choreographer Doris Humphrey's fall and rebound. The pas de quatre's squat, chicken-like dancers use full-body articulation rather than legs and feet alone to coordinate two and four part counterpoint that integrates comic gestures of preening and self-display. In their duet Prince and Swan do not observe the traditional gender roles assigned to their parts in ballet. Both carve through space along the same arcs traced out in the Prince's earlier solo, performing increasingly in unison over the course of the duet. Each lifts the other, their faces passionately close to one another. Their only difference, marking swan from human, occurs in the manner of their touch: the Swan never grasps the Prince but instead supports and guides him with forearms alone, a gesture reminiscent of wings. Throughout, all the swans sweat profusely, revealing, rather than obscuring, the labor through which their spectacular presence is achieved.

Finally, the swans are not worldly. They dis-resemble all other characters in the piece and in the worlds of ballet and modern dance. Unlike the reserved erectness of the royal entourage in Act I, the swans indulge in the weightiness of their motion. Unlike the swaggering strides and swishing hips of the glitterati at the Prince's ball in Act III, the swans uphold a fiercely Platonic sociality. They seldom touch, yet their athleticism is imbued with sensual grace that Shawn could not have dared to construct. Menacing and captivating, calculating and alluring, weighty and ethereal, they conjoin the kinds of oppositional attributes ascribed to nineteenth century ballerina Marie Taglioni or possibly achieved in the early works for an all female cast by Mary Wigman and Martha Graham. Yet those women represented the dark and troubled territory of the psyche, whereas these men dance their way out of a

fairy tale book, transforming childhood images of magical creatures into a virile and noble reality. They cavort, then pause to explore the sensuousness of movement's traversal across the body, then they conquer space, aggressively launching themselves into the air or across the stage. What continually astonishes in this celebration of a sensual identity is the fact that these are male dancers, their masculine musculature and agility imbuing the movement with sufficient rectitude to secure its maleness.

In their synthesis of so many opposing categories, the swans do not take on an androgynous sexual neutrality. Rather, they are sexually charged creatures who occupy simultaneously the positions of desiring subject and desired object. Where formerly a female character was required to focus the objectifying gaze of the masculine viewer, now male figures perform that function. Entering into the swans' world, the Prince is introduced to the pleasures of looking and being looked at. Both Swan and Prince enjoy the gazes of one another, surrounded and supported by the reciprocal gazes of the other swans. Their erotics of looking are further enhanced by the fact that the traditional relationship in ballet between the female corps de ballet and the masculine gaze of the viewer has been radically altered by the use of a male corps.

Although the swans elaborate an egalitarian vocabulary of motion and gesture, theirs is not a dance that everyone can share. Through their courageous habitation of the denigrated female role, their white male bodies are universalized, depicting an imagined community without social discord. Yet no African or Asian bodies integrate their swanery, nor do lexicons of movement that signify ethnic identity weave into their (white) modern dance movement. Thus even as they represent a world beyond prejudice, a world tolerant of difference, the swans constitute a remarkably homogeneous ensemble. Sustaining the traditional performance of whiteness in modern dance, Bourne's choreography uses the absence of racial and ethnic signifiers to moderate the display of sexuality so as to secure his aesthetic goal of a transcendental identity for the swans.

Not only does Swan Lake erase racial and ethnic difference, but it erases women almost entirely. Swan Lake eliminates the female corps de ballet, the site where female labor was displayed if trivialized, and retaining only the most stereotypic of female character types: the cold and wanton mother, the bimbo girlfriend, and the sexually promiscuous and ambitious princesses. At the same time, it incorporates feminine features into the masculine bodies of the swans, reinvigorating

patriarchal authority and endowing the male body with a new seductiveness. Erasing any anxieties that the presence of the female body might have provoked, concerning corporeal spontaneity, frailty, fleshliness, or unknowability, the swans cement the bonds of a homosocial world in which white male dominance is assured. The final image of the dance sums up this new world order: the failed mother weeps over her son's corpse while the transcendent swan replaces the maternal figure of the pieta, righteously condemning the feminine as he carries the Prince into the global capitalist future.

But no, this is not fully accurate, for after all, Swan, attacked by his cohorts, has likewise transmigrated from his world to another. Deviant, like the Prince, he is gay bashed by his own kind. And this is how the closet in Bourne's Swan Lake operates. Both the causal relationship between homosexuality and inadequate mothering that the dance depicts and the attack on Swan by his fellow swans issue from a framework of heteronormative assumptions about gay life. The Prince's homosexuality, created by the seductive mother's failure to respond to his over-sensitive neediness, is represented as a psychic maladjustment that finds resolution only in death. Swan's choice of the Prince, igniting the instinctual fury of the herd, transforms their gay men's society into the hate-filled mob of straight men that has terrorized gay men for centuries. Homosexuality is thus rendered deficient and pathetic on the one hand, unpredictable and bestial on the other.

Where initially, Bourne's retelling of Swan Lake seems to garner sympathy for the gay couple at the female character's expense, placing gay and feminist agendas in opposition, closer examination reveals that the dance conveys neither a gay nor a feminist politics. Both the patriarchy and the closet benefit from its postmodern choreography. Little wonder then that Bourne, a gay man, has always claimed that the dance moved beyond the historical specificities of gay politics, and little wonder that Swan Lake will tour the world as renowned exemplar of global capitalist cultural achievement. But to imagine the "corps de ballet" that offers a non-racist, non-sexist, non-homophobic alternative is no easy task. At least Bourne has prompted us to imagine the possibility.

Confluences of Gender, Race, and Sexuality In Modern Dance

Part II

Today I will examine three distinct closets in the history of modern dance as exemplified in the choreographic projects of Ted Shawn, Merce Cunningham, and Mangrove, a company based on contact improvisation. The field in which these men worked was, until recently, dominated by female choreographers and dancers, and it focused on the "woman's" work of investigating psychological interiority and cultivating the body. Dismissed by many as vulgar exhibitionism or ephemeral nonsense, it was marked as a feminine pursuit and denigrated accordingly. Beginning with Shawn, male choreographers in modern dance have necessarily contributed choreographic solutions that simultaneously pioneered within the field, asserted masculinity, and closeted homosexuality. Unlike female choreographers whose sexual identity, immersed in the gynocentric preoccupations of the tradition, never posed an obvious problem, male choreographers have contended with the prejudice that a man dancing is unmanly, hence deviant, effeminate, and probably homosexual. Analysis of these male choreographers' initiatives thus brings into focus the contours of modern dance's closet and the changing epistemology of that closet over the course of the twentieth century. In my analysis of the founding gestures of modern dance yesterday, I tried to show how sexual, gendered, and also racial configurations of identity worked in tandem to construct roles for the choreographer and the dance. Today, I will sustain that analysis in order to track the connections between masculinity and whiteness that each of these choreographic projects entailed.

A hale and rugged lyricism

By the late 1920's, with his professional and personal relationships to Ruth St. Denis in ruins, Ted Shawn retreated to a run-down farm in western Massachusetts that he named Jacob's Pillow, to embark upon his life-long dream of founding an all-male dance company. At the height of the depression, with no electricity, heat, or running water and little to eat, he and a group of young men set about creating a repertory of dances to be toured across the United States. At first using contacts with physical education programs in universities, and eventually playing at such prestigious venues as the Brooklyn Academy of Music and Carnegie Hall, they gave 850 performance in over 600 cities,

averaging 42,000 miles of travel each year. While on tour, they did the driving, set up the theatre, performed, struck the show and packed the truck, met with interested people, and then drove on to the next town. In the first year alone, they offered 111 performances, and Shawn personally "talked to 150 audiences at luncheons, assemblies, and club meetings; I had given 100 newspaper interviews, and 50 radio broadcasts."

Shawn's message at these gatherings, zealously delivered and easily apprehended, affirmed that "yes, men can and should dance." The organization of his arguments belied the prejudice that his company aspired to redress: that dancing was a feminine and therefore unmanly pursuit, and that those men who did make dancing their vocation were probably homosexuals. In support of dancing's manliness, Shawn, like Duncan, elaborated on images of the body in Whitman and in classical Greek dancing, but rather than emphasize the healthy and unfettered female body, he focused on the athletic and virile male body. He attributed the low esteem for dance as an art form to the absence of male participation, and, insisting on dance's importance especially for an active nation like the United States, questioned whether such a significant pursuit should be left in the hands of women.

To this masculinist line of argumentation, he added a racist assessment of Negro dance, expounding a complex evolutionist theory that connected the Negro to the sexual:

"The Negro brought with him all the primitive simplicity of the rhythm of the savage, the unsophistication in regard to his body and its natural functions....Because Negroes are very simple in their emotional structure and in their mental and spiritual development, their attitude toward the physical body is one of great naiveté and the natural movements of the body are not sinful to them. And so their dances are innocently sensual."

Because Negro peoples were less evolved, he argued, they exhibited none of the sexual connotations that more sophisticated whites would evoke when performing Negro dances. Shawn thereby reinforced stereotypic images of race and dance, but at the same time distanced his own choreography and company from such "savage impulses." In this way, Shawn reaffirmed the anti-sexual stance of modern dance and tacitly defended his work against allegations of homosexuality.

The concerts that "Ted Shawn and his Male Dancers" presented embodied this vision of virile, non-sexual, physical accomplishment even as they made use of the exotic capacities of world dances. Building on St. Denis' and Shawn's earlier approach to repertory, the concerts delivered a pleasing

array of visually contrasting short works whose distinctive costuming and movement vocabulary would be rationalized by a single theme. Olympiad, for example, presented dances based on movement themes from the shot put, hurdling, tennis, fencing, running, boxing, and basketball. Labor Symphony included renditions of labors of the field, forest, and sea, as well as mechanized labor. Primitive Rhythms presented dances based on themes from Ponca, Hopi, Sinhalese, Dayak, and Maori dances. Dance of the Ages grouped studies of different movement qualities into four sections, each associated with a different element - fire, water, earth, and air - and a different level of social and political organization - tribal, city-state, democracy, and beyond democracy. A typical evening's program would combine exotic and athletic dances so as to insure visual diversity at the same time that it reinforced strenuous physical achievement.

Where the dances representing foreign lands exhibited the unusual in costuming and movement, dances based on familiar activities such as sports or work rendered those activities strangely exciting. Viewers were presented with the challenging and engaging request to decipher the activity being depicted, whether it be fencing or sawing down a tree. By treating movement itself as material capable of being varied and transformed, Shawn, like Duncan and St. Denis before him, directed attention away from the dancing body as a preconceived source of sexual impulses and towards the spatial and temporal properties of the movement. At the same time, the selection of masculine topics and the vigorous rendering of those topics imbued the body with an almost hyper-masculinity.

Whether the choreography abstracted on the dances of a certain people or the characteristic movements of a certain activity, Shawn's dances cultivated a distinctively masculine movement style and set of procedures for moving bodies through space. Dancers traveled rapidly across the stage using small, rhythmic step patterns while maintaining a stiff torso, arms held rigidly in place. In many pieces dancers clenched their fists throughout in order to enhance the musculature of the upper body and to evoke images of brute strength. Never undulating or contracting but sometimes twisting in the manner of classical Greek sculpture, dancers locomoted and then posed, turned and then jumped, ran to a new place and posed again. The dancers' shaved armpits and chests further enhanced their resemblance to classical Greek beings in repose and in motion.

Repeatedly, dancers separated into two groups of four, formed columns, and crossed the stage towards each other in unison or cannon, indicating a kind of aggressive or competitive engagement.

This back and forth dialogue would dissolve into circular configurations, dancers running, leaping, or falling to the floor while delineating a large circle center stage. Almost all movement phrases were repeated two or four times to alternating sides of the body. Relentless, repetitive, symmetrical, the bodies sustained a vigorous display of motion and shape usually culminating in massive numbers of jumps. Yet as routinized as the sequences often appeared, the bodies maintained a distinctive physicality and individuality. They never achieved a perfect unison, nor did they exhibit the classical grace imparted in ballet training. They were not bodies attempting to approximate a perfect shape, but instead, bodies that had developed their inherent strength and agility.

Throughout dancers consistently retained a three to five foot distance from one another. Individual bodies seldom performed contrasting actions, and they never moved closer to or further away from one another than the prescribed distance between all bodies. Dancers never touched; they never assisted one another, leaned into one another, or moved through space arm in arm. Only when dancers were assembled together to create a single design configuration did their bodies make contact, their weight merge. These designs involved the entire group in symmetrical or sequential shapings that constructed a single image.

Shawn himself circulated around and through these younger bodies, exhorting, fostering, summoning their energies, commanding, or directing them. He alerted them to the drama, comforted them when they were down, revealed the future to them when kneeling, inspired them to rise and move, called them onstage, and designated their pathways through space. He appeared father-like, understanding, but also visionary and pioneering.

The overall effect of the evening's dances with their rugged exuberance, their direct, symmetrical, frontal engagement with movement convinced audiences immediately of men's vital place in the world of dance. Shawn's choreography used the abstract potential of dance movement to construct a democratic vision of individual creativity and individually developed bodies in which masculinity held a privileged place. As one critic enthusiastically explained, the concerts presented:

"Vigor limned by restraint; furious motion controlled and balanced and suggestive of mighty harmonies; muscular orderliness and pointed grace; a hale and rugged lyricism whose line is gentle as the contour of a mountain may be gentle; but never effeminate or Hogarthian;

energy; humility and bravura, suavity and simplicity; power; beauty. Which of these qualities apparent in Shawn's work can be called effeminate?"

The dances exalted the male body's noble restraint, grandeur, and potency, proclaiming loudly that nothing effeminate much less homosexual could survive in this robust environment. This message was so powerful that even the other dancers in the group referred to lead dancer Barton Mumaw, Shawn's lover for many years, as "the best dancer in the group" or as "the only dancer with prior training and dance experience."

By presenting an all male dance company, Shawn directly confronted audience prejudices against dance and homosexuality. By showing the noble, white male body engaged in vital, virile expressive work, he begged entirely the question of the dancers' sexual orientation. In stark contrast to the contorted repression of sexuality evident in Nijinsky's vocabulary, Shawn's dances cultivated an open, direct Greek ideal. And unlike Nijinsky's elite aesthetic accomplishments, Shawn's able-bodied youths compounded their high ideals with a populist enthusiasm that invited everyone to celebrate dance.

Simply an activity of movement

Whatever the gains in respectability for the male dancer following Shawn's eight year campaign, the conservative assertion of traditional gender roles following World War II resuscitated many prejudices against him. Still, in the relatively protected ecology of modern dance in New York City and with Martha Graham's formidable reputation as legitimation, Merce Cunningham emerged as a promising young male artist when he left her company in 1947 to pursue his own career as a choreographer. The post-war modern dance, a field dominated by women artists, also focused on the gynocentrically marked concerns of feeling and psychological intensity. Choreography, an introspective process, helped to reveal and communicate innermost motivations, impulses, and desires. As the only male choreographer to appear on many group concerts or in a given season of programming, Cunningham would have been subject to scrutiny regarding his masculinity and his sexuality: what made him choose dance? what might his dances reveal about the inner depths of his psyche?

Although suspicions regarding his sexual orientation undoubtedly circulated among dancers and viewers, confirmed for those who knew him by his ardent relationship with John Cage, Cunningham determinedly embarked on his choreographic career, supported by the general climate of advocacy

towards experimentation. His early repertory evidenced several distinct lines of investigation: haunting, psychologically probing solos; humorous, light-hearted or absurdist group works; and explorations of bodies in space and time. Solos such as Untitled Solo (1953) and Changleing (1957) conveyed the substance of interiority using a contorted, dissonant vocabulary that pushed at the limits of acceptable dance movement. Humorous group works included Banjo (1955) which he described as "an accelerated and heightened montage of familiar southern American motifs" and Antic Meet (1958), a dance that collaged absurd and preposterous situations involving multiple props, costumes, and well-known physical gags. The irreverent choreographic choices made in these pieces, with their humor and lavish theatricality, challenged the sacred boundaries between dance movement, pedestrian behavior, and comic routine, and inverted the expressive mandate embodied in his solos.

In his third approach to dance-making, Cunningham drew upon ballet as well as modern dance vocabularies and also his thorough knowledge of musical composition to elaborate on bodies' positionalities in space and through time. Dances such as Septet (1953), Suite for Five (1953-1958), and Summerspace (1958) displayed intricate step patterns, complex rhythms and changes of weight, and a radical treatment of dancers' dispositions in space. These dances contained no symmetry, and only rare unison. Often bodies remained erect with the spine occasionally curving forward, side, or back in conjunction with specific shapings of the arms and legs. Movement impulses never traveled sequentially from one region of the body to the next, nor did movements build towards climatic moments in a phrase. Throughout, the dances sustained an evenness of phrasing and phrase, with leaps or other grand gestures taking on no larger significance than the steps that preceded them.

Many of these dances applied Cage's theorizations of chance procedures as generative of new musical possibilities to the creation of dance movement and the organization of the dance. Summerspace, for example, used chance procedures to determine locations of entrances and exits, pathways through space, and the sequences of movement, ranging from simple to complex associated with those pathways. Chance was also used to designate lengths of phrases, number of dancers, and the simultaneity of dancers' performances.

In contrast to his brooding solos or zany theatrics, these dances focused especially on the spatial and temporal characteristics of bodies in motion. It was this focus that eventually prevailed as the epistemological grounding for his entire choreographic vision. Rather than characters and stories, his

dances would present bodies in motion. Meaning would be located, not in the psychological implications of bodily gesture, but in the physical characteristics of movement itself. Over the late 1950's and early 1960's, Cunningham formulated program notes that conveyed this aesthetic stance to a bewildered and sometimes resistant audience:

"Mr. Cunningham has said of his choreography that there are not symbols, no stories, no psychological problems. What you see is what is. Each spectator must determine the meaning of the dance for himself."

The lift of a leg or a leap might incite momentary exuberance; a gliding trajectory through space, a sense of calm. But these were fleeting associations between motion and emotion that each audience member could experience individually. Rather than encourage all viewers to connect to the universal meaning of the dance, Cunningham's work emphasized the viewer's role as independent agent. The dance offered a field of possibilities into which each viewer entered. Once there they could experience the dance, each in their own way. Because the dance rebuffed all efforts to find narrative continuity, it created neither storytellers nor listeners. Adamantly, it said nothing, but did something. Both its activity and agency were located within the physical possibilities for bodily motion.

Shawn, in his variations on well-known activities, had emphasized the capacity of movement to build upon itself, to generate meaning through reference to its spatial, temporal, and tensile characteristics. Yet his dances always evinced a message -- about the glory of work, the power of ritual, or the nobility of world dances -- which his dancers as expressive agents conveyed. Cunningham, in contrast, construed his dances as a window onto the indeterminate liveliness of life experience. His dancers, not the zealous messengers of a vital, masculine expressivity, attended with concentrated purposefulness to the movement directives that constituted the choreography.

In this focus on movement and on the individual response and interpretation to that movement, Cunningham found protection for his homosexual identity. Shawn's protective closet had disguised the individual sexual orientations of his dancers within the hypermasculinity of their performance personas. Cunningham's closet, in contrast, fractured bodies into parts of equal significance and value so that individuality could only be defined by the activities, all of equal value, in which the dancer was at each moment engaged. Where Shawn had exaggerated his dancers' masculine capabilities,

Cunningham neutralized all masculine, feminine, and sexual connotations by focusing on space, time, and motion.

Consider, for example, this glimpse into Cunningham's working process, documented by a German film crew in 1967: A white woman (Sandra Neels) and a black man (Gus Solomons) lie on the floor in close embrace. She lifts her right leg up circling it around his body and causing them both to roll so that she lies directly on top of him. Her weight does not settle onto his, however, since she continues the leg's gesture by standing on it, rising into a lunge, and finally pushing off the leg to turn and walk away. Approximately six seconds of choreography, Cunningham rehearses it for several minutes. He experiments with different placements of an arm or leg, and with the precise calibration of bodies as they roll from side by side to top and underneath. He slows the movement down; he lies beside the couple, going through her motions, demonstrating, inquiring, where arms and legs should be placed. Throughout, no one jokes or giggles. Their intimate coupling is treated as one of the infinite number of positions that bodies can inhabit. Cunningham maintains a businesslike and efficient attitude, soliciting through his quiet dedication an absolute and unwavering attention from the dancers.

Cunningham's approach presumed an absolute equivalence of male and female bodies, and also black and white bodies. Living in the kind of world constructed by his dances, homosexual conduct or Afro-American identity would carry valences no different from those of white, heterosexual behavior. Both homosexual and heterosexual object choices, black and white aesthetic choices, would hypothetically take place within the same open field of possibilities. Difference, his dances proclaimed, could only be located in the distinctive physical capacities of each individual body's joint flexibility, bone lengths, muscular mass, speed, or dexterity.

Through this determined inquiry into physicality, Cunningham perpetuated the tradition of a non-sexual dancing instigated by the earliest modern choreographers. Yet he also sustained its inherent racism. Solomons, the first black and one of the few non-white dancers ever to work with Cunningham, points up the whiteness of Cunningham's approach. The very project of locating identity in a physicality that denied racial difference could only be supported by a tradition that presumed its own universality. The window onto life's indeterminate experience that Cunningham's dances provided did not frame the racial or sexual prejudices operating in that life. Where Cunningham's maleness was de-stabilized by the profession of dancing, his whiteness remained an

unmarked and unchallenged category. His particular version of chaste dancing, even as it deflected inquiries into his sexual orientation, denied the racial inequalities embodied in modern dance and its cultural surround. Focusing on the problematic of race in Cunningham's work thus brings into sharp relief the precise structure of the closet he crafted.

As much as Cunningham advocated his open field of possibilities, denying the sexual and gendered referents of the dancing body, his dances did articulate gender difference, and also gestured towards Cunningham's masculine and even homosexual identity. Male and female dancers performed overlapping yet distinctive vocabularies of movement in which men typically partnered and lifted women. The uprightness and clarity of purpose, the erect and non-organic movement style allied his dances with the more masculine ballet tradition than with the feminine modern dance. Even Cunningham's emphasis on the practical, material elements of dance composition imbued his approach with a masculine rationality that distinguished it from the chaotic excavations of interiority conducted by his female colleagues.

Within this masculine environment, Cunningham circulated as the odd man out. He often remained alone or dancing off to the side, assigning himself the most unusual, preposterous or quirky tasks. In *Variations V* (1966) he strips a large, potted, plastic plant of all its leaves, later rides a bicycle, and still later, exercises on a blanket, doing sit-ups and a headstand, while three male/female couples perform nearby. Where Shawn constructed a fatherly authority, leading his dancers forward or brooding in their absence, Cunningham fashioned himself as maverick, incidentally isolated and then non-climactically re-integrated into the group's activities. But the dancers' and dance's insistence on movement meaning movement, their neutral and absorbed execution of each task at hand, effectively obscured his distinctiveness. This strategy, a personal and aesthetic negotiation of white, matriarchal modern dance on the one hand and vicious homosexual prejudice on the other, would sustain his work for the next forty years.

Coming into contact

In 1972 Steve Paxton, former member of Cunningham's company and participant in Judson Church experimental concerts in the early 1960's, instigated inquiry into a new approach to improvised partnering. Known as contact improvisation, the form asks dancers to create and focus on a moving

point of physical contact between two or more bodies. Privileging momentum and flow over bodily shape, dancers merge their weight, sliding, rolling across and over one another, treating all points on the surface of the body as sequentially connected and as potential next directions along which their point of contact might travel. Dancers are asked to attend to the internal sensations of weight and flow generated by this contact, "letting the dance happen." By maintaining awareness of this contact, rather than of the body's appearance or the dance's organization and coherence, they are able to develop the mutual trust, support, and quick wittedness necessary to dive into each instant's action and move wherever it takes them.

The practice of contact improvisation became increasingly popular throughout the mid and late 1970's, spawning local groups and national networks that organized various occasions for learning and presenting the form. Dancers convened at weekly "jams" or larger festivals and workshops to practice contact, learning techniques for falling into or supporting another's body, enhancing their ability to attend to each moment's action. At these jams, dancers of all degrees of experience generally worked together, encountering one another's weight, experimenting with qualities of touch, moving, then watching, and then moving again over a period of several hours. Performances, hardly distinguishable in structure or content from the jam sessions, showed the work in progress. Dancers cultivated the appearance of the pedestrian, smiling, scratching, rearranging their sweat pants in a thoroughly conscious yet casual way while audience members seated on the floor surrounded the dancers.

Deftly situated between art, sport, and sociality, contact improvisation functioned throughout the 70's as both aesthetic and social initiative. As dance, it contested the boundaries between pedestrian and art movement vocabularies more thoroughly than Cunningham or the Judson experiments, claiming that its cultivation of agility and spontaneity could make of life a dance. It promoted egalitarian access to and interaction within the form, constructing many opportunities for success while avoiding hierarchies of evaluation. And it offered an intriguing new experience of subjectivity wherein dancers became defined by the contact between them. Rather than two separate entities coming together, they merged with the momentum generated by both bodies, a momentum that took on a life of its own. Cunningham had asked dancers to immerse themselves in the physical activity of dancing rather than in the psychological or spiritual associations that movement might generate. Contact

improvisation similarly focused dancers' attention on physical physics, yet the active engagement of bodies one with another defied the traditional sense of bodily boundaries, re-organizing the dancers' sense of self as the product of the ongoing interactive process.

As sport, contact improvisation developed a spectacular bodily responsiveness, one that attracted an unusually large number of men into the practice. Dancers passed through or arrived at precarious positionings, defying gravity and charting whole new trajectories for bodies' pathways in space that resulted in breathtaking solutions to momentary physical dilemmas. At the same time, contact improvisation shared with sports a workmanly ambiance, devoid of drama or pretense, in which dancers simply focused on the task at hand.

As a sociality, a shared sensibility for public interaction, contact provided a focus for group activities, and it also served as model for communal living and sharing, group decision-making, and the sharing of power. Many practitioners of contact used the form as an organizing force in their lives, traveling from one group of improvisers to another, sharing the dance and their lives. A perpetuation of late 60's values of spontaneity and communality, contact's emphasis on going with the flow of events inspired many dancers, and they worked conscientiously to bring these qualities into their general conduct.

Contact improvisation reflected the communitarian values of the late 1960's and also the period's sexual tolerance and feminist concerns, yet it preserved the chasteness of the modern dance tradition. Like Cunningham, contact improvisation gave equal valence to all parts of the body. All sections or joints contained an equivalent potential for moving even as they moved differently. Cunningham's approach, however, segmented the body and cast its parts into spatially and temporally coordinated locations whereas contact improvisation charted sequential pathways of touch across the entire body. As a result, Cunningham's partnering work took on the appearance of highly unconventional ballet: female dancers, usually erect or cantilevered off the vertical but referring to it, constructed idiosyncratic shapes, maintained these shapes as male dancers using inventive holds moved them to a new location, and then re configured as discrete, self-propelling entities.

In contrast, contact improvisation brought literally every part of the body into moving contact with another's moving body. Bodies passed back and forth across breasts, genitals, and buttocks, and because of the improvisational nature of the practice, it was not at all uncommon for two dancers to

come to rest with one's head in the other's crotch. Yet the explicit sexual connotations of this pose were either denied or treated as an irrelevant detail. All parts of the body mattered most as momentum-creating surfaces. Dancers or audience members might chuckle at the physical pairing that fulcrum physics, not desire, had momentarily produced, but dancers' focus and next physical initiatives soon re-stabilized attention on the ongoing exploration of the kinetic and tactile, but not sexual, potential of the body.

Nowhere was the arresting allure of this polymorphous body more clearly developed than in performances by Mangrove, an all male, all white company formed in San Francisco that organized concerts and workshops from 1975-1980. Mangrove spanned a critical period in the development of contact improvisation, as it consolidated vocabulary and technical skills and generated more proficient and professionally oriented dancers who began to form companies devoted to the presentation of the form or to its use as a primary source for choreographic invention. Founded by four men with considerable prior training and experience in professional theatre and dance, Mangrove quickly garnered visibility and professional success, presenting, in their 250 performances throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe, a new vision of masculine identity, far more open, sensitive, and process-oriented than other staged version of typical male behavior.

Mangrove's male bodies collided delicately, careened gracefully, stopped to sense the moment, and then responded whole-heartedly to another's initiatives. Rather than butt into or out-maneuver one another, these bodies mutually constructed an ongoing flow of dance. The dancers did not shape themselves; no pointed feet, extended legs, or curved arms appeared on the dance floor. Such cultivation of the body would have looked artificial and pretentious next to these sweating, deft athletes. Representative of the general male participation in contact improvisation, Mangrove combined astonishing physical daring with a sensuous vulnerability.

Aware of the social and even political ramifications of this vision of manhood, Charles Campbell of Mangrove declared:

"It's clear to me that we are exploring new personal/political/artistic ground for ourselves, as men gently (and aggressively) supporting each other in a non-hierarchical collective improvisational process, and sharing that process in performance, from a position of

vulnerability and humor and fear, too... it's all about us as people and as men finding the 'people things' which happen in our process of coming into contact."

Not only was the performance a collective display of decision-making in process, it also expanded the ways that men could be seen to interact, to make contact with one another. Instead of competing, they exuberantly pursued collective goals. Instead of a controlled, willful use of the body, they displayed the loss of control, and its attendant embarrassments, tediums, and unanticipated triumphs. Instead of bodily insularity and stilted protocols of touch, they showed men in contact with one another's full physicality, treating other bodies playfully, respectfully, and empathically.

Yet nothing in this repertoire of initiatives and responses constructed or alluded to homoerotic desire. Mangrove's mission, like that of contact improvisation generally, focused on establishing realms of physical intimacy other than sexual. At the same time, Mangrove relied on the tacit privileging of certain masculine attributes that occurred in contact improvisation generally: women were most successful when they showed unusual physical strength, but men were not praised for their softness but for their combinations of strength and daring with grace. Even the pedestrian aesthetic of the practice, while seeming to invite a full range of participants, quietly asserted a masculine ethos, contrary to the feminine decorousness and pretentiousness of other dance forms. Contact's pedestrian sensibility thus helped Mangrove's dancers to secure their masculinity, guarding them against still prevalent allegations of effeminacy while seeming to represent all men.

Similarly, contact improvisation claimed a universal and natural physicality, even though with very few exceptions, its practitioners were white and middle-class. Participants did not contemplate any connections to the Afro-American forms of improvisation in music, poetry, or dance that were developing contemporaneously. Black male breakdancers, for example, improvised a social critique on pedestrian street corners, collectively presenting individual solutions to crises of gravity, momentum, and anatomical structure and using citation to satirize and triumph over oppressive social figures and forces. Rather than probe the similarities and differences between these distinctive approaches to improvisation, contact improvisers aligned themselves with the white post-Cunningham and Judson avant garde and rationalized their choreographic initiatives as an expansion of that tradition. They thereby sustained the whiteness of modern dance even as they began to infuse it with a masculine aesthetic.

It seems entirely plausible that by the middle of the 21st century, we might look back on contact improvisation as that practice which initiated the fundamental shift in modern dance from the sacred revelation of femininity to the spectacular display of masculinity. Alternatively, we might find in modern dance's future a riotous celebration of racial, sexual, and gendered differences. In the meantime, I have tried to show how an examination of the choreographic treatment of sexuality along with race and gender could give us certain critical distance on the modern dance tradition as it moves out of its first century of existence and into its second. It is my hope that this kind of examination could inspire new choreographic as well as scholarly production.

APPROPRIATION AND APPRECIATION

Sylvia Glasser

INTRODUCTION

In June 1990 I had a request from the local South African organiser of a ballet based examining body with its headquarters in London. She asked me if I could help them with the "Bushman deer dance" as they were thinking of introducing a "primitive" dance section in their children's examinations. This set me thinking about several issues relating to the relationship between the dominant² Western culture and indigenous South African culture. First of all I suggested that the concept of "primitive dance" was problematic, and I have discussed this issue in a separate paper (Glasser 1993).

The second issue, which this incident raised, was the question of cultural appropriation. By appropriation I mean taking something that belongs to someone else and making it your own. This can be done either by valuing, respecting and understanding the "other" culture i.e. appreciation, or by brashly taking without regard, knowledge or sensitivity towards the "other" culture.

I will examine these issues historically in the South African context in relation to:

1. The dominant Western³ or "white" culture.
2. The sub-ordinate indigenous "black" or African⁴ culture.

Particular attention will be focused on the music/dance⁵, of these two cultures.

I apologise for referring to people and their culture in traditional apartheid or racist terminology i.e. black or white. However, the material for this paper is set in a society, where even though the laws have now been changed, and apartheid is officially dead, racism and colour-coding have been to a large extent entrenched. In order to discuss these issues in their context it is sometimes necessary to continue to refer to people or cultures in terms of colour, but these terms are not intended to be derogatory. While the issues are set specifically in a South African context they have a universal relevance in a multi-cultural world.

The Eland Bull Dance

I return now to the incident of the phone call re the "deer dance". On the one hand I believe it was positive that at last a Western dance institution was recognising the value of indigenous Southern African culture as something worthwhile studying. However, there were several disturbing factors that needed to be examined. Firstly there was the question of the naming of the dance. What was referred to as the "deer" dance I presumed was the Eland Bull Dance. It is common practice for people from the Western, or dominant culture, to lump "non-western" cultural forms of expression or dance together in an arbitrary and non-specific way. Kealiinohomoku (1969) discusses this tendency. In Bushman or San⁶ belief systems, the eland, which is a particular species of antelope, has special ritualistic and religious significance. The eland is believed to possess supernatural potency or power, which other antelope do not possess to the same degree.

Secondly there was the problem of the content of the dance. The Eland Bull dance is part of the fertility ritual performed by the women when a young San maiden reaches puberty. The dance is sexually explicit with the women, as in mating, suggestively swaying their bare buttocks out towards an older man who takes on the role of the Eland Bull (Lewis-Williams 1990: 77).

Thirdly there was the question of the meaning of the dance. The Eland Bull dance was a sacred ceremony, which marked the rite of passage of the San girl from childhood to womanhood. It has religious significance. It was not just a recreation dance or a dance performed for entertainment.

Before I examine the issues underlying various problems, we need to have a historical perspective.

WESTERN ATTITUDES TO INDIGENOUS BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN CULTURE

Historically, indigenous South African culture was seen as less civilised, less valuable and on a lower level than Western culture. When the colonial settlers arrived in South Africa in the 17th century they found people who could not read or write and who were not Christians. In the white settlers' terms these attributes were regarded as the marks of civilisation. Furthermore the indigenous people were technologically undeveloped, which again was interpreted as a sign of their inferiority. They were seen as child-like and simple or as savages, but either way they were not respected. Their culture and beliefs were misunderstood or perfunctorily dismissed. There was an evangelical zeal reinforced by the coming of the missionaries in the 18th and 19th centuries to convert and "civilise" the indigenous population according to Western values.

The attitudes of the British imperialists and colonialists in the 19th and 20th centuries were one of absolute belief in the superiority of their system and ideas. Social Darwinism served to reinforce colonial supremacist philosophies. While various forms of racism had been in practice since colonisation, formal apartheid was legalised in the mid 20th century.

APARTHEID AND CULTURAL PURITY

Cultural exclusivity or purity, and cultural preservation are dangerously close. It would be difficult to object on moral grounds to any group that wished to practice and even preserve their cultural traditions such as songs and dances. However, separatist or exclusivist tendencies can easily be distorted to serve racism, as we have seen with nazism and apartheid. Under the policy of apartheid the different cultures or "ethnic groups" or "tribes" of South Africa were to be kept apart and be forced to develop separately. Cultures were seen as discrete or separate homogeneous entities that must be preserved that way. Therefore the Zulus, Xhosas, Basothos, Afrikaners, English were seen as separate groups or nations with their own traditions. Contact should occur only at the workplace, but schools, living areas, places of entertainment etc. were separate. Any form of interaction or cultural fusion was actively discouraged by the architects and enforcers of apartheid. We know that the results of this cultural exclusivity were horrific.

FUSION

Central to the question of cultural appropriation is the concept of cultural fusion. By cultural fusion I mean the synthesis or integration or combination of two or more cultural forms of expression, which have their roots or sources in different traditions or different countries. Communities are becoming less homogeneous with improved communication and media, and cultural fusion has been accelerated in the 20th century. Cultural fusion will happen whatever one's attitudes towards it.

If we examine cultural fusion in South Africa in the 20th century we will see that, in spite of apartheid, fusion has been occurring. However, until recently the flow was from the dominant culture of the West to the subordinate African or indigenous culture. There are several examples of fusion that occurred at a popular level in music/dance. The rural black men who came to the cities with the migrant labour system came into contact with Western culture, which they would absorb and adapt and fuse with their songs and dances. Urbanisation meant many rural black people settled in cities or special segregated "townships" or squatter camps. As there were no structured forms of leisure ie cinemas, libraries etc., people used their own resources to entertain themselves and new forms of dance and music developed. Racial legislation meant that urban black residents were often illegally resident in the cities, and forms of cultural expression such as music or dance were often also a form of political resistance to a hostile system.

Marabi

Marabi music/dance developed in the urban slumyards of Johannesburg in the early 20th century. The shebeens or illicit drinking clubs provided social meeting places where the music and dancing was as important as the liquor. The music of the shebeen musicians assimilated elements, which included traditional African, Afrikaans folk, American ragtime and jazz into a single new urban music style called marabi. The marabi dance also drew on elements of African and Western forms of dance. Marabi music/dance has had a re-birth recently with groups such as the Jazz Pioneers and Mango Grove.

Iscathamiya

Similarly Iscathamiya was an urban black South African form of music/dance which absorbed Western elements into the traditional African forms. The Zulu migrant workers in Natal in the 1930's fused Zulu wedding songs and dances, traditional Ngoma songs and dances, Christian hymnody, and American minstrel and rag-time music/dance. Iscathamiya is very much alive with Ladysmith Black Mambazo developing their own version of this syncretic cultural form.

Pantsula

Pantsula developed in the urban "townships" in the 1970's with elements of break-dancing, Michael Jackson "moonwalking", South African gumboot dancing and the syncopated cross-rhythms of traditional African dancing. Pantsula groups

throughout the country organised festivals and competitions. As with Marabi and Iscathamiya, South African black people who incorporated Western white elements into their music/dance developed Pantsula. The flow was one way.

ACTIVE FUSION IN DANCE

During the past five to ten years the trend has changed. There has been what I refer to as "active" or conscious fusion in dance/music on an increasing scale. The difference now is that the fusion is flowing or happening in both directions and very actively from African or indigenous black culture to Western or white culture. It is happening at the level of theatrical performances in music and dance as well as in informal situations. In the dance it has led to some original, innovative, exciting and thought-provoking work where different groups have produced their own brand of fusion between Western modern dance, jazz or ballet on the one hand and traditional or township South African dance on the other. The Dance Umbrella Festival founded in 1989 as an annual platform for new choreography has been the host to dozens of these fusion dance works. Throughout the year companies and groups ranging from the government sponsored Performing Arts Council dance companies through to struggling independent community based groups perform dances of which a high proportion is fusion work.

The interest in the dances of indigenous black South African people or "African dance" has not been confined to performances. Workshops have been held in which black dancers and musicians teach white teachers or students. Tertiary and secondary dance and drama educational institutions have introduced elements of indigenous black South African culture or African dance in their courses and they are consulting African people in the process.

Fusion and politics

This trend is not unrelated to the changing political climate in South Africa and by the more cynical could be interpreted as political expediency. Previously the incorporation of African elements into Western cultural forms of expression happened mainly at protest theatre/dance level. Since the 1970's some artists/choreographers or non-racial groups had worked consciously, using African dance/music and rituals combined with Western forms, to work against the enforced separation of apartheid. For some of these artists and groups it was often blatant political protest, but for others the conscious act of valuing indigenous black culture and incorporating it into their work, in itself, was an act of defiance for a white choreographer/ director.

In the late 1980's what had been a minority activity in the contemporary dance scene accelerated until in the early 90's it has become what could be termed fashionable. This was not unrelated to Mandela's release and the new political dispensation. It also happened as a natural result of the repealing of certain apartheid laws such as the Separate Amenities Act in 1986, and in general an easing of the laws of segregation. As contact between black and white people became easier, fusion in dance became more common.

Attitudes and Residual Problems

There has been developing an awareness that indigenous black South African culture has something to offer and is of interest. Whatever the motives, the willingness to work together and the end result is generally positive. However, even though the laws have changed, attitudes are deeply entrenched and old perceptions and prejudices have a way of manifesting themselves. There are still moral and ethical problems relating to fusion, some being appropriation without appreciation.

THE ARROGANCE OF THE DOMINANT CULTURE

"Ballet is the Basis"

At both popular and informed level amongst my colleagues in the dance community I still come across the attitude that "African dance" is easier, simpler, less skilled than Western ballet or contemporary dance. Thus a number of prominent professional figures in the dance community have stated in public that classical ballet is the basis of all dance training, because with a classical ballet training you could "do" African dance, but if you had only been trained in African dance you could not "do" ballet.

While the second statement may be true the first part reflects not only their beliefs but a widespread misconception about African dance - that it is easy, it has no technique and that if you are able to do the dominant Western form there is no problem in doing any of the so-called primitive dances. This suggests widespread myths that dance is of an evolutionary nature and that if you can do the "highest" form you can easily do the others. On the question of easiness of learning, I have personally worked with highly skilled ballet or modern dancers who have struggled and taken many years to master the technique, style, and rhythmic complexity of African dance, while some never succeed. In learning any new technique a shift of consciousness is necessary.

Complexity and Diversity

This attitude of arrogance displayed by members of the dominant culture also shows an ignorance of the diversity and complexity of "African dance". In South Africa alone there is a great variety of indigenous black or traditional dancing. Even though there are many underlying similarities there are differences in meaning, style, and dynamics of the dancing between the different language groups or ethnic groups. For example the sharp hip twisting of the Shangaan women with their multi-layered frilly skirts is very different from the hypnotic, sensuous, snake-like movements of the Venda maidens performing the Domba, which marks their rites of passage into womanhood. Similarly the nimble footwork and drunken cavorting of the Venda men improvising in solo in the Malende or Beer dance is very different from a virile, aggressive, regimented male group performing the Zulu Ndlamu stamping dance.

An example of the complexity of certain traditional African dances is the Venda Tshikona dance where each member of a set plays a single note at a prescribed interval on his pipe. This note is one of seven in a "sub-set" of pipes and there are three "sub-sets" at different pitches that make up a set, and there would be several

sets in the entire group. At the same time as playing the pipe, the dancers perform a set of grapevine foot movements that are syncopated in rhythm in relation to the pipe rhythm.

The Tshikona dance illustrates a quality widely found in African dance/music, that the performer is important, not as an individual but in relation to the whole group, and conversely each individual's input is essential to the final rhythmic complexity and unity of the whole.

Many Western educated people or dancers often do not understand that the complexity and subtlety of African-based dance/music usually comes from the complex polyrhythms rather than the "steps" or melodies. Therefore Western people often perceive African dance/music as easy, simple or just plain boring. The above illustrates that appreciation is often a result of not merely interest, but knowledge of the basis of a cultural form of expression or art form. Appreciation comes from the act of decoding, just as understanding a language comes from knowing the meaning of the sounds.

Aesthetic Evaluation

There are other problems relating to aesthetic evaluation that I encounter in relation to fusion that also reflect the arrogance of the dominant culture. I have been to many performances where predominantly black "township" dance groups are criticised in their use of "Western" elements. Many of my colleagues and some dance critics are loudly vocal in pointing out their weaknesses such as "feet that are not nicely pointed, hips out of line in an arabesque or legs not stretched in a jete".

However, the converse deficiencies, when the well-trained ballet/modern dancers are using "African" elements, are either never noticed or not thought to be important by these same people - for example the incorrect stance or use of body-weight, the accentuation of movement upwards instead of down into the ground, the lack of torso articulation and mobility, and the lack of awareness of the intricate polyrhythms in the music.

To illustrate this point, in 1993, the writer choreographed a work called African Spring to Vivaldi's Four Seasons in which there was a strong element of fusion of indigenous South African movements with Western dance forms. The costumes emphasised the "Africaness" of the piece. Many of the audience found this combination shocking. They said the use of Vivaldi with "African" dance disturbed them, but were hardpressed to explain why ballet and modern dance done to African music had not disturbed them. We do not like our sacred symbols "misused" or manipulated, but we often insensitively appropriate the sacred symbols of other cultures.

On the Other Side of the Fence

The opposite attitude that is also found amongst dancing teachers and performers in South Africa is that only black people can and should do African dance, and conversely only white people can and should do ballet. Arthur Mitchell and the Dance Theatre of Harlem disproved the latter myth, while there are a number of dance companies in South Africa that over the past ten years have proved that white dancers

can successfully execute African dance. The condition of making success possible is that the particular form of African dance is studied over a sufficient period of time with the care and knowledge that the mastering of any new dance technique requires.

The Magpie Syndrome

The other trend I have observed is that choreographers magpie-like, appropriate bits and pieces of "African" dance and tack them onto their ballets or modern dance works. They take the glitzy bright pieces or the exciting steps without any idea or thought about their meaning or context, or the appropriateness of using them in their particular dance-work. The "African" bits often remain unintegrated and seem to have no purpose in the total concept.

SOME ASPECTS OF A PERSONAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Background

As a white middle-class South African who grew up and was educated under the apartheid system I have experienced the problems that have been outlined in this paper. I have been faced by these dilemmas many times, and as a result of this have thought about the matter and have developed a philosophy, which may be of value to others. In order to clarify the matter it is necessary to take you through some of my experiences and the issues I have had to confront.

Training

My early training in South Africa was in British-based ballet and American tap dancing. Later, in periods between 1959 and 1984 I spent several years learning European National Dance and American Modern Dance as well as Creative Movement in England and North America. I had been fascinated by or attracted to the usual exotic elements of African dance - the stamping, energy and drum beat. However, apart from observing the dance and music that happened in the streets and back yards of domestic servants, and the occasional visit to a mine, there was nowhere formal to learn African dance in South Africa.

I was brought up in a small town in the Northern Transvaal in a family where apartheid was considered wrong, but we were passive victims rather than active protesters, and there was very little contact on an equal social footing with black people. My father's job took him into the rural areas where he often observed African singing and dancing, and although my parents encouraged my tap and ballet dance training, it was never considered suitable or of value for me to accompany him. However, my father did value African culture and often brought back African beadwork or carvings from the rural areas which was unusual for a white man in those times.

I had been teaching ballet and modern dance for over ten years to white students, when I began to collect a series of records made by Hugh Tracey an ethnomusicologist. The music was recorded in the field throughout Eastern, Central and Southern Africa. I attended some of his lectures and was keen to use some of his

collection for a new dance. However, as a white South African I felt self-conscious and inadequate, and even a sense of guilt at the prospect of doing an "African" work.

First Attempt at Fusion

In 1977 as part of my choreographic component of my MA degree at the University of Houston Clear Lake City, I choreographed my first "fusion" piece. It was called Primal Pulse and performed by enthusiastic Texan modern dancers.

Return to South Africa

When I returned to South Africa in 1978, I formed Moving into Dance, and presented Primal Pulse performed by white female dancers to a small white audience! It was not entirely coincidental that in 1979 I was invited to teach at the Federated Union of Black Artists (FUBA), the only formal training centre for black dancers at that time. Here I found the mainly male, young black students were much more interested in learning ballet, American modern dance, and jazz than exploring traditional African dance. Later that year I did some of my own social engineering (to counteract apartheid engineering) and brought some of the black FUBA students together with the white dancers in my company to work for a performance. This was the beginning of Moving into Dance as a non-racial⁸ company that was to perform work that is a fusion of African dance, music and ritual with Western contemporary dance forms.

I found, with encouragement and prompting, the black dancers remembered dances their grannies or mothers had taught them. They were surprised, but eventually pleased, that I wanted to learn these from them. One needs to remember the negative image "tribal" or "ethnic" culture or dances had been given under the apartheid system. I was never again to have a "white only" dance company, and throughout the years I not only learnt from the black dancers, but also encouraged them to re-discover the value of their culture. For the first few years the dance company was still predominantly white, with perhaps four or five black dancers and eight to ten white dancers. As we worked in the garage of my northern suburbs home it was difficult, and often dangerous for the black dancers from the township to get there. In 1987 we moved to the Braamfontein Recreation Centre, which was more easily accessible to black students and dancers. For the next four years the company was really integrated with an equal number of black and white dancers. In 1991 the numbers of the white dancers began to dwindle. The reasons are too complex to discuss in detail in this paper, but as my work became more 'African' in character, some of the white dancers in the company felt uncomfortable, and eventually left. Also as more black dancers attended classes after 1987, fewer white dancers attended. As company members are usually selected from the students or dancers that are trained at Moving into Dance, with fewer white dancers attending the classes or courses, the company became predominantly black, and by 1994 the company members were all black.

Journey of Exploration

I also went on a journey of my own. Through a colleague, who was a physical educationist and anthropologist, I visited Vendlan and watched rural "traditional"

dancing on several occasions in the 1980's. My colleague, who had lived in Vendlan, spoke the language and had written her doctoral thesis on the dances of the Venda. She helped me analyse and understand the dances in context. She was one of the first white women in South Africa whom I had seen could move with the authentic "African" style and spirit in dancing. I learnt that it was not enough to admire, or value the "other" culture, but I needed to understand the meaning and context of their symbols and beliefs. Over this time I had been choreographing works which were fusion-based. In retrospect some worked better than others. One in particular used the Bushman myth of the rain bull which I read about in a popular mythological book. As I was to discover later, the book, and consequently I, interpreted the metaphor for the real thing.

All this made me feel I needed to study in more depth the background to my work and the people with whom I worked. I enrolled at the University of the Witwatersrand for the three year major in Social Anthropology in 1987. I learnt to analyse and see things not just at the surface level, but to see more clearly my position and role and the accompanying moral and aesthetic problems in my activities. I had been interested, even before I began studying anthropology, in Bushman culture and myths and the dancing of these people. I had been influenced by the popular and romantic works by Laurens van der Post. I had always wanted to do a work on Bushman rock art, but felt inhibited by my lack of knowledge and also confused by some of the popular versions of their myths. At the end of my first year of anthropological studies, I approached Professor David Lewis-Williams the curator of the Rock Art Research Unit at the University of the Witwatersrand. He pointed out that the rock art was part of the San religious belief system and that I should approach the subject, if at all, with sensitivity. He gave me some of his publications on the interpretation and meaning of rock art. After reading these I was convinced that I did not know enough at that point.

Two years after completing my course I re-approached the subject and with much trepidation started researching the background of rock art and its relationship to trance dancing. The symbols and images found in rock art were highly complex and their relationship to San beliefs and trance dancing were like parts of a complicated jigsaw puzzle which Professor Lewis-Williams had finally fitted together. This was certainly not some simple "primitive" belief system. The final outcome of this was a thirty-minute dance called Tranceformations, which I choreographed for my company of twelve dancers. The anthropologist and archaeologist who had helped me in my research felt that I had not trivialised or exploited the San belief system. In 1994 when Tranceformations was performed at the Great Hall of the University of the Witwatersrand as part of the "People, Politics and Power" conference organised by the Rock Art Research Unit, several Bushman people from Schmidtsdrift in the Northern Cape, and from Botswana attended the performance. They were very enthusiastic about the performance and one of their leaders said "it was a real dance".

CONCLUSION

Based on my own experiences I believe it is possible to appropriate with appreciation or integrate with integrity. Having lived under, and experienced the negative effects of the apartheid system, and also because of my own love of the indigenous dances of the black people of South Africa, or African dance, I certainly do not believe in, or

advocate, the puritanism of the apartheid approach. Fusion does and will happen. Cultures will merge, artists will borrow. The fusion can be categorised at different levels. Firstly, there is the almost unconscious popular level. This occurs without premeditation through people living amongst each other. Their environment will always affect people and in our increasingly multi-cultural societies, artists or cultural workers will be influenced, inspired or stimulated by their contact with "other" cultures. I believe that this interaction is positive and one should not try to or want to prescribe at this level.

Then there is the conscious level in which you borrow or appropriate from the other culture to contribute to your work of art. How this is done, and with what attitude and motives and knowledge and understanding, is important. If we are trying to bring to the conscious cultural fusion a sense of responsibility and sensitivity, then I have a suggestion of four questions which artists or choreographers can ask themselves.

The Four Questions

1. Trivialisation

Does the use of the "item" or ritual or belief from the "other" culture in its new setting trivialise, violate or exploit the belief systems, sacred symbols or religious rituals of the original culture? In the case of the Bushman Eland Bull dance, would the use of this ritual as the basis for a children's ballet examination dance have been trivialising the Bushman belief system and religion?

2. Appropriateness

Is it suitable or appropriate to transpose the ritual or cultural "item" into the new context? Do we understand the significance of the original context and accompanying symbols? In the case of the Eland Bull dance would it be appropriate to use a highly explicit fertility ritual for a young children's ballet examination?

3. Integration

How is the borrowed material adapted in the new work of art or form of cultural expression? Is it transformed and integrated so that a dynamic new or syncretic form is created or is it tacked on to the old forms like a badly matched patch-work quilt?

4. Attitudes and Motives

What is the attitude towards the "other" culture? Is it patronising and dismissive or respectful and sensitive? Do the motives arise out of real appreciation and admiration or because it is fashionable or politically and financially expedient?

Towards Understanding

I cannot give a formula or recipe in answer to the problems posed. I would not wish to be a cultural commissar or censor, or prescribe to other artists, or expect everyone to study anthropology. I would also not wish to inhibit the refreshing cultural fusion and exchange which is growing in the dance community in South Africa, or elsewhere. It is awareness and sensitivity that I ask for in the people doing this work. I am asking for

people to examine their own attitudes and motives and to spend some time and effort to have the resources and knowledge to answer the above questions. Perhaps the list of questions I have posed will prove useful in helping people to decide for themselves what is appropriate. Perhaps what we need are trained "anthroterpsicologists" to advise us!

While the context of this discussion has been South African, I believe that the questions I have posed and the ideas underlying these have universal application, especially in a world where rapid communication is bringing people from different cultures together and lowering traditional barriers.

NOTES

1. This paper was originally written and presented at the Joint International Conference of the SDHS (Society of Dance History Scholars) and CORD (Congress for Research on Dance) at the New York Public Library Lincoln Centre June 1993. I was invited to present it again at an International Conference "People, Politics and Power" jointly organised by the Rock Art Research Unit of the University of the Witwatersrand and the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg August 1994. I have made some minor changes, but felt the paper, as it stood was still relevant.
2. As this paper was originally written before the official end of apartheid in 1994, I still refer to the dominant culture as Western, and African culture as sub-ordinate. With a majority African government in power there have obviously been radical shifts in official and popular attitudes to culture, which have affected and influenced the 'dance community'. However I still encounter the attitudes and problems discussed in this paper, and Western art forms, in particular ballet, are still widely perceived as 'high' art as opposed to "traditional" African dance or contemporary forms of fusion, which are perceived as lower in the cultural scale.
3. I use the blanket term Western for the culture, which had its roots in Europe or America, for simplification. This is not meant to ignore the diversity of so-called Western culture or of Western dancing.
4. Similarly the use of the term African culture is

- a convenient umbrella term which is not meant to belie the diversity of cultures on this continent, or even in the country South Africa.
5. In indigenous South African culture music and dance are often synonymous. In fact in the Pedi language the word "mnino" serves for both music and dance.
 6. The whole question of terminology is a sensitive issue. The term 'Bushman' has, unfortunately, for some people acquired derogatory or racist overtones, while the academic term 'San' "also has highly pejorative associations" (Lewis-Williams 1989:9) as it is a term of insult used by the Nama Khoikhoi people. In Botswana the politically correct term used by the government is Remote Area Dwellers. Basarwa is another term used by certain groups of people. I use San or Bushman to describe the original hunter-gatherer people of southern Africa without any derogatory intention.
 7. Even though the dancing found in different parts of Africa, for example North, West or South Africa may differ and the term "African dance" in this sense is a generalisation, I use it as it is not cumbersome, but widely used and understood.
 8. I used the word "non-racial" and not "multi-racial" as non-racial makes it clear that the concept of race should not be a consideration. In South Africa even the word multi-racial became tainted through its use by the apartheid culture to stress the separateness of the different ethnic groups.

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GARY GORDON

LESSONS AND MIRRORS- steps to consider In the education of the dance maker

"Catapulting bone crunches into flesh-covered bone, a contrast with the skeletal fragments laid out ritualistically at the beginning ... the physical cross-hatchings centre on a black coffinesque trough. Lotte Lenya songs and the Kronos Quartet moodily mix with the frenzied action. Finally Cameron is baptised with earth raining from the ceiling as a male nude ... appears from the trough in a surprise resurrection. As milk pours from his eyes and mouth, he is bleeding his whiteness," (Adrienne Sichel, *The Star*, May 6 1997)

This is a description of the physicality and theatricality of Andrew Cameron's *The Brittleness of Bone* - a New Voices presentation of The First Physical Theater Company. It is a work in which provocative content is physicalised, realized and communicated in an expressive and impressive theater language. This work identifies the connection between idea, action, and theatre and illustrates the cornerstone of this paper. Choreography for a contemporary theater becomes the creative confluence between ideas and action. In this context choreography does not rely exclusively on inspiration, intuition, spontaneity, luck, chance and observation of the master. It requires detailed and extensive research that draws on discursive, creative, experiential and informed modes of inquiry.

In this way the theater experience is enriched so that the perceiver encounters an imagined, informed and exhilarated physicality. The theater becomes a magical place where created enactment's have the power to shift, move and transform. George Balanchine, the classical choreographer, maintained that he did not "... create or invent anything, I assemble." (Reynolds, 1977: 21). Balanchine is trying to make a point here about the nature of classicism in dance. We are looking at the confluence between choreography and theater from another viewpoint. Choreography in this instance requires more than effective selection of music, costumes, and properties; it is more than arranging steps to music. This paper affirms the communicational impact of contemporary choreography as an educative, entertaining and meaningful force that can contribute positively to personal, social, artistic and cultural developments.

THE EDUCATION OF THE DANCE MAKER

Choreographers are not born but they can be taught This education of the dance maker is not one in which, as dance educators, we provide an easy A - Z of crafting principles, thematic concerns and theater elements, Let us rather set up a creative laboratory in which the aspiring dance maker is challenged, informed, delighted and inspired in the journey towards evolving a novel, fresh and personal choreographic signature.

It is not the aim of this paper to provide neatly structured methodologies for educating dance makers. I believe rather that we need to set up a creative and critical ethos thereby establishing a questioning environment to provide multiple and intertextual learning experiences.

LESSONS AND MIRRORS

That we, as members of the dance community in South Africa, are all learning is becoming more and more apparent. There has been an enormous shift in the conceptualisation of dance in South Africa over the last few years. The FNB Vita Dance Umbrella in Johannesburg with its satellite festivals - the Dance Shongololo in Kwa-Zulu Natal, the Dance Indaba in the Western Cape, the Dance Umdudo in the Eastern Cape, the Dance Mokeki in the Free State - provide clear illustrations of an inclusive, encompassing and evolving conceptualisation of dance.

A similar cultural diversity and artistic plurality is evident at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. Numerous identities, images and icons are illuminated and shared amongst the dance community. The theater is a meeting place ... a convergence ... a confluence for the dance community. It also acts as a mirror in that it reflects social and political transformations. We should be careful, however, of becoming a bit like Narcissus who when he caught sight of his own reflection in the water, I... conceived so lively a passion for this phantom that nothing could tear him away from it, and he died there of languor'. (New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology: 162 - 163).

We must avoid becoming infatuated with our own Image. I think I am a little wary of embracing 'confluences' too readily. We could be in danger of portraying the confluence of people without acknowledging the struggle, the pain and work it requires. We need a more rigorous viewing than that employed by Narcissus. The advice of Hamlet to the players still holds resonances for us concerning the power of theater:

'... the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.' (Hamlet, III 11 line 21 - 27)

We may not hold to Shakespeare's gender identities but this advice from Hamlet to the players does pose pertinent issues in relation to the nature of the theater encounter. Concerning mirrors in African theater Mineke Schipper assures us:

'The Idea that 'the world is a stage', and the theater a 'mirror of the world' exists in many languages and is probably as old as the theater itself.'
(Schipper 1982.-I)

It is not so much the mirror but the reflection that is Important... and how we respond ... and what we choose to see. The mirror that Shakespeare presents us with does not merely show; It also allows for a good deal of criticism. If the theater provides a mirror of our world it should be more than a picture. It should also provide the opportunity for us to reflect on the reflection.

Leonardo da Vinci epitomised the Renaissance Man: he was poet, singer, mathematician, inventor, musician and of course, consummate artist. He wrote of many things in his notebooks - on mirrors and reflections he had the following to say:

"The mirror bore itself proudly holding the queen mirrored within it, and after she has departed the mirror remains."

I find this note particularly helpful; It has numerous ramifications for us. It is the activity of reflecting after the theater experience that is important it is this reflection that has the power to challenge the viewers, open up possibilities and shift their paradigms. It is in this sense that I believe the metaphor of the mirror can act as a navigator in inspiring the development of the contemporary choreographer.

THE MIRROR AND BEAUTY

I hope a new viewing of the mirror is emerging - and one that challenges and inspires. There are of course the common sense assumptions surrounding mirrors and dance: of necessity there should be a mirror or preferably a full-length mirrored fourth wall in the dance studio, The performer can then observe his or her image and hopefully correct mistakes, eliminate physical tensions, distortions, and untidiness; Improve on line, spacial design and body configurations; ensure appropriate body shape and size; affirm general sensibilities on what constitutes aesthetically pleasing dance positions and possibly even enhance the idea of beauty ! I believe we could find a richer use for this mirror.

We are not the first to question such sensibilities. One of the early revolutions in dance occurred in America during the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's. The traditional way of viewing the dancer, movement, and theatricality was thrown out. Alternative images of women were shown ... of women dancing ... of dance vocabulary ... of the theater elements. All of this was in line with the shifting perceptions and often drastic changes that were taking place in the political, social and economic arena. Many artists were part of these changes and wanted to reflect this changing world.

In the dance environment a stark and primitive minimalism looked out at the modern dance audience; harsh angular movements and a strange dissonance replaced the exoticism of Denishawn, the European ballet and the commercial theater. It comes as no surprise then to learn that Martha Graham, one of the great creative revolutionists of American modern dance, did not have a mirror in her West 10th Street studio - well not until the 1940's (de Mille, 1956:95). Graham was committed to exploring, sensing and realising an interior reality. She wanted to access the source of motion - she looked to the emotions. When confronting such realities as society and the personal interior, a mirror is clearly out of place.

Graham was searching for a way to depict truthfully the ethos of her time. This search towards truth might reveal a new understanding of beauty; it might bring us closer to what W B Yeats in "Easter 1916" described as 'a terrible beauty'.

We do not require a mirror that only shows us what we want to see. When we are young, we hear the story of that beautiful but wicked queen who looked into the glass hoping to find the most beautiful woman in the world ... and without fail she always met the reflection of the beautiful Snow White.

We do not want a looking glass that makes it easy and pleasant and provides affirming images that are all too often pretty and escapist. At the same time we do not want to present sensational, superficial or gimmicky alternatives. As dance makers we have a responsibility to our audiences - this requires that we search and re-search deep within ourselves, our place, our family, our friends, our society, our politics for glimpses of those splintered reflections that demand attention and scrutiny.

RESEARCH. THE DEEP WELL

This requires of course extensive and intensive searching and research. In the I Ching 'The Deep Well' is often taken as "a symbol of basic life energy that is shared by all and without which human beings cannot exist" (225).

This deep well needs care in order to function effectively and efficiently. In a similar way, as choreographers and performers we should also return to the creative source within ourselves and our surroundings. We should return to that deep well in order to nourish, enrich and challenge the creative investigation and the consequent theatrical realisation.

I have found recently one of the most inspired examinations of this notion of source in Milan Kundera's novel "Immortality". In the first chapter we view his source. Kundera is describing a woman of sixty or sixty-five. She is having swimming lessons.

When I was ready to observe her once again, the lesson was over. She walked around the pool towards the exit. She passed the life guard, and after she had gone some three or four steps behind him she turned her head, smiled, and waved to him. At that instant I felt a pang in my heart her arm rose with bewitching ease, it was as if she was playfully tossing a brightly coloured ball to her lover. That smile and that gesture had charm and elegance, while the face and body no longer had any charm. It was the charm of the gesture drowning in the charmlessness of the body. (Kundera, 1991, 3)

This gesture appears in multiple narratives throughout the work. The utilisation of this gesture provides inspired illustrations in relation to developing themes, adding resonance's, embellishing ideas, and creating new meanings. The gesture appears in numerous historical contexts and is shared between factual and fictitious characters. It is never quite the same. I would like to apply the multiple viewings that Kundera gives his source to our notion of the mirror. But before we explore these multiple viewings let us examine the reflection itself.

REFLECTIONS AND REVELATIONS

The Belgian surrealist painter, René Magritte challenged his viewers with unusual, strange and extraordinary realities. He wrote in 1926-

'The finished picture is a surprise, and its creator is the first to be surprised. One always wants to achieve a more astonishing, more unexpected effect ... a painting must be a thunderbolt.' (Meuris, 1994: 103)

Magritte's mirror in 'Reproduction Prohibited' (1937) provides a mysterious revelation. The subject is seen from behind looking into the mirror - the reflection in the mirror however is also a rear view. Magritte might be mocking his subject but what the viewer perceives is the unexpected. The reflection reflects upon itself and what it reflects is an extraordinary view.

Magritte worked in the visual arts but I am convinced that we as dance artists can tread a similar pathway. We also need to access and present unexpected viewings. We need to look afresh and anew at our immediate realities. The process of creating dances is one of constant challenge. The difficulty of course is that in searching for the unknown we will find the hidden, the unwanted, the violent, the cruel and often the unspoken.

It is the revelation of these aspects of our worldview that will begin the journey towards creating fresh, challenging and engaging theater.

MORE THAN ONE

Both Kundera and Magritte provide us with more than one reflection. Perhaps then it is not one looking glass for which we are looking. There are many stories ... many view points ... many tales. Perhaps the problem all along is with the idea of one mirror ... one story. This theme of bringing stories together - of confluent multiple viewings - should also be reflected in the form of our work. It should impact on the way stories are told, shared, fragmented and mutated. A universal with or a single immutable reality is no longer valid. There are always a myriad of possible reflections.

An objective reality does not really exist. The theatre is an Instrument by which dancers, singers, narrators, writers and actors interpret their own idea of reality. (Schipper, 1982, 8)

The theatre as a mirror of the world reflects the artist and itself. A true reflection is almost an impossibility. The telling of tales includes mutations ... embellishments ... exaggerations ... distortions, it is something akin to a visit to a grotesque hall of many mirrors. The preparatory work of the choreographer and the educative work of the teachers of choreographers are responsible ones! It is imperative that the choreographic quest is industrious, inventive and also informed.

NEW LESSONS

I am not suggesting that all the contemporary choreography in this country is without thought and invention. Robin Orlin provides a provocative theatre encounter which combines challenging content with inspired theatricality. Vincent Mantsoe fuses cultural expressions to re-create a vibrant South African voice. Many new choreographers are emerging, determined to awaken us with a daring and exciting theatre experience.

But there are minimal opportunities for aspirant choreographers to research and work in a sympathetic environment. We need to develop further the education of the choreographer. And when we do create and establish centers for choreographic development, structure courses and teach classes, we should look again at Shakespeare's words I... to hold, as "twere, a mirror up to nature ..." and assert in fresh ways the transformative power of the theatre encounter.

The mirror can be utilised as an evocative metaphor for the learning experience. The notion of a mirror provides us with a myriad of possibilities reflecting social, cultural, political, moral, aesthetic and sometimes individual concerns. As dance educators, performers and makers we should not settle for easy options. I suggest that we utilise this mirror and its splintered reflections as a challenging starting point for developing choreography in the theater.

And in the telling of these tales and the teaching of lessons let us not revert to the known and the predictable. I think what we are looking for is a mirror something like the looking glass that Alice found. Alice is constantly surprised, confused, delighted and often infuriated at her multiple encounters. Her fragmented experience provides an extraordinary and divided sense of reality. It is towards this kind of looking glass that I myself aspire - one that reflects, reveals and also discovers.

"... then she began looking about, and noticed that what could be seen from the old room was quite common and uninteresting, but that all the rest was as different as possible."

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**STRATEGIES FOR INCLUDING AFRICAN AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURE IN
AN HISTORICALLY EURO CENTRIC DANCE CURRICULUM**

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University of North Carolina at Charlotte

This article focuses on successful ongoing efforts of two UNC Charlotte faculty, one African-American and one European-American who, over a ten year span, implemented strategies designed to expand curriculum offerings in order to include African and African-American source material. They share the belief of education theorist Carter G. Woodson, that students must see something of themselves in what they study. Their intention is to provide validation for African-American students as well as enrichment for all students enrolled in dance courses. The authors also believe that dance education licensure majors would be better served if their course work at the college level prepared them to meet the challenges of the diverse public school environment. The authors are offering the observations and suggestions herein with the hope that their experiences will provide some insights for other departments wishing to make curriculum revisions that begin to more clearly represent our diverse society.

UNC Charlotte is a liberal arts university. During the past ten years student population has increased from 10,000 to 13,000. Currently African-American student enrollment is nineteen percent. The dance program is housed in the Dance and Theatre Department. Prior to 1996, the program offered a Bachelor of Creative Arts (BCA) degree in dance with fifty-four hours of the degree devoted to the major. The Bachelor of Arts degree replaced the BCA in 1996-97 academic year. The UNC Charlotte dance curriculum includes the following courses: technique, style, dance theory, creative process, and performance practicums. Education methods courses, for student teaching in the public schools, leads to a teaching licensure in dance, available since 1978. Dance classes are open to all students if prerequisites have been met. Major enrollment has fluctuated during the past ten years from twenty to thirty students. Ten years ago there were two African-American dance majors and few African-Americans taking elective dance. Now there are eight African-American dance majors and a noticeable increase in African-Americans taking elective courses in dance.

In 1986, with the arrival of the program's first tenure track African-American faculty member, discussions began regarding: (a) how to expand existing curriculum to include contributions made by African-American artists; (b) how to augment the jazz/vernacular dance knowledge of prospective dance educators in the areas of history, theory, and practice; and (c) how to enrich curriculum offerings with African (especially West-African) dance experiences as a means to gain a better understanding of the African-American dance aesthetic. The philosophical stand taken supported the notion that this

material should be included in the curriculum regardless of whether or not there are African-American participants. The issues were fairness and the need to present a balanced, inclusive perspective--one that makes African-American achievements a part of the body of knowledge for all students.

Because the initiatives are ongoing, the model is a large circle with strategies occupying points on the circumference. The dance curriculum sits at the center point of that circle. Curriculum is defined as all the learning experiences offered students, including course work, productions, teaching field experiences, and enrichment activities. The impact of the strategies discussed below reaches beyond the university curriculum to include community involvement and development of public school course offerings.

Strategy I: Use Department Funds to Bring in Visiting Artists.

University funds are often made available to departments for engaging visiting speakers. The process is usually competitive; nevertheless, it is often possible to access this money to pay for master classes and residencies taught by visiting artists. If a local or state arts organization has earmarked community outreach funds, the amount made available may increase. For example, in the 1980s, the Performing Arts Department (the former name of the Dance and Theatre Department) had access to the College of Arts and Sciences' Special Lecturer Funds. Through shared funding with the American Dance Festival (ADF) Community Outreach Program, the department engaged Clarence Teeters and Walter Nicks. Both men were well-respected African-American artists as well as fine educators. In 1987 Clarence Teeters, who was looking at jazz dance as personal expression, taught a co-sponsored master class at UNC Charlotte. In Spring 1988 ADF co-sponsored a week-long residency at UNC Charlotte with Walter Nicks, a choreographer with an international reputation. During that week Mr. Nicks taught master classes and set a new work, "First Cycle Earth" on UNC Charlotte dance majors. As an added bonus, he shared valuable historical information and insights about the work of Katherine Dunham, in whose company he had performed and whose technique served as the basis for his own work. A professional percussionist living in the community was engaged to create the score while Mr. Nicks was creating the work. The piece was performed on campus in Spring 1988 and again in the Fall 1989. It also represented the department at the 1988 North Carolina Dance Alliance Conference in Wilmington, N.C., and was the only work by an African-American choreographer on the program. It is also important to note that there were no UNC Charlotte African-American dance majors at that time, and there were few African-Americans taking dance in our program.

Subsequently, departmental funds alone paid for two master classes in dance from West Africa Dance (1987, 1989), and special lecturer funds available to the department made it possible to sponsor a presentation on African-American Dance History (1989) by dance archivist Joe Nash. An important aspect of Mr. Nash's visit was campus outreach from the department in the form of a presentation for the African-American and African Studies department.

Strategy II: Tap Money Allocated to Student Committees, Clubs and Organizations.

University program boards should not be neglected as a funding source for visiting artists. However, it may be ill advised to take the direct approach by requesting funds in a very forthright manner. The authors had success with, and suggest a more subtle approach. By accepting invitations to serve on student committees, students and supervisory personnel get to know faculty and become familiar with the program. For example, at UNC Charlotte the University Program Board (UPB) is the umbrella for student committees that plan and coordinate campus events and activities. One of the authors accepted an invitation to serve on the UPB Minority Programming Coordination Committee. She also served on the UPB Intramural committee. Next she accepted an invitation to join the campus Jazzing committee. Jazzing is a yearly student planned UNC Charlotte festival. Well-known artists like Nancy Wilson and Ramsey Lewis have been featured. When the time was right, the suggestion was made to feature a dancer as one of the Jazzing events. Unfortunately, UNC Charlotte has no space for presenting dance in its main auditorium, and the festival schedule conflicts with activity in the department theatre. However, the committee sponsored Michael Chertok, who brought his vintage jazz dance film collection to campus in 1988. The following year, to accommodate various music groups featured as part of the festival, a temporary elevated stage was to be built over what is essentially a speaker's podium in the main auditorium. Again the "suggestion" was made to the committee to bring in a dancer. In response, master tap artist Buster Brown was selected. In addition to giving a mini-performance, Buster Brown taught a master class in tap for the dance area. The same year, the Jazzing committee accepted the "suggestion" to sponsor a master class taught by an African-American woman, Marian Turner, North Carolina's first Choreographer's Fellow at ADF and UNC Chapel Hill faculty member. The artist's name and activity appeared on the campus Jazzing poster. This gave the department increased visibility. In 1990 the student Jazzing committee sponsored a master class taught by an African-American Broadway dancer, Luther Fontaine. In 1991 a different UPB committee brought in modern dance artist Blondell Cummings for one master class.

Something really surprising and wonderful happened in a subsequent year when there was no dance faculty member serving on a UPB committee: Gregory Hines was chosen for the opening of Jazzing. Unfortunately his schedule prohibited a master class, and he did not do much dancing because a temporary elevated stage was not in the budget for that year. His presentation was more of a "let me tell you about my career thing" than it was a performance. Regardless, his appearance at UNC Charlotte was the result of seeds planted in 1989 when no one on the committee had given a thought to the possibility of bringing a dancer in for the campus Jazzing festival.

The activities previously described were funded via University Program Board student activities funds with no monetary expense to the department. Rather, the cost was time

invested by a faculty member who was willing to serve on student directed campus committees. The payoff was the UNC Charlotte dance curriculum was enriched with master classes and related performances. Additional benefits were an increased African-American presence tied to the dance program. This meant a very positive message was being sent to the university at large in terms of how African-American culture was regarded by the Dance area. A subsequent strategy discussed in this article provides tangible evidence of how connections with UPB formed the ground work for expanded dance-related student initiatives.

Strategy III: Identify Grant Opportunities and Generate Innovative Proposals.

One of the challenges faced by all arts faculty is interpreting grant guidelines in a way that qualifies projects for available funds. When the authors' attempts to obtain financial support from the UNC Charlotte Board of Governors Distinguished Visiting Scholar Program and the county Arts and Science Council for a week long residency with an African American artist proved unsuccessful, they generated a proposal that resulted in a model residency for persons developing multicultural explorations in the performing arts. The proposal, titled "Expanding the Multi-cultural Dimension of Dance Area Courses," was intended to broaden the instructional methodology, style, and content of two dance faculty's courses. A unique facet of the proposal was to define a guest artist as a consultant who was contracted to present new course material through teaching classes and choreographing a new work for UNC Charlotte students. This meant master classes and an original work were commissioned with funds intended for faculty instruction. The artist/consultant was also expected to spend time with dance area faculty, answering questions and providing insights into African dance and culture. Faculty would observe and document teaching methodology throughout the resulting project.

The residency took place during six consecutive days (Sunday-Friday) beginning December 2, 1990. On the last day there was a performance of an original work choreographed by Chuck Davis artistic director of African American Dance Ensemble (AADE). Classes and rehearsals were designed around the proposed multigenerational work called "In Celebration." The piece was a West African initiation rite that involved middle school children who were brought to campus for evening rehearsals with UNC Charlotte students.

During the week of the residency, UNC Charlotte dance area students and faculty were taught how to tie dye and construct African styled garments from muslin. By means of daily classes, students were introduced to African dance. They were also taught the history associated with the various dances they learned. Approximately 110 students enrolled in dance area courses benefitted from the classes taught by Mr. Davis.

On Friday morning, December 7, the culminating aspect of the residency took place at Piedmont Middle School with the performance of the dance "In Celebration," described by Mr. Davis as "a very special event that gives insight to the learning

process as practiced in many areas of West and Central Africa." The cast consisted of Elders and Initiates. The Elders were UNC Charlotte students: eight white females, two black females, and one black male recruited from the art department. Initiates were Piedmont Middle school students: three black females (8th graders), six black males, two white males, and one black student Musician (6th graders).

Five hundred fifty five Piedmont Middle Schools students, as well as teachers and parents attended the premier of this dance. Also in attendance were the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) coordinators of Dance and Physical Education and Music and Drama. Local television featured a clip of the performance on the 5:30 p.m. news, the *Charlotte Observer* ran a photo, and *North Carolina Arts Journal* reporter Andrea Cooper attended and wrote a feature article about the residency.

All master classes and the performance were documented on video for future reference. The project not only provided a means to incorporate new material into existing courses, but acknowledged African culture as a viable creative source. Another significant result of the project was the involvement of UNC Charlotte dance students (majors, minors, elective, and teacher education) with local middle school students in a public performance which gave the community the opportunity to see the results of the residency. Later, in February, one of our UNC Charlotte students was invited to perform with Mr. Davis's company when it appeared in Charlotte.

Strategy IV: Expand Knowledge Base By Infusing Information Into Existing Curriculum.

The authors believe a visiting artist "stays" forever, and while activities of selected visiting artists enrich dance courses, efforts must continue to create a lasting impression through the core curriculum in order to create a more durable impression of the significant contributions made by blacks to dance. For example, at UNC Charlotte a new course entitled Jazz Dance Origins was added to the curriculum. This course traces the evolution of jazz dance from African origins through the plantation dances of slaves. Course content explores the African characteristics of traditional jazz dance through historical vernacular. By introducing dance based on a non-western style, movement training is enhanced. Additionally, Jazz Dance Origins reflects the goals of multicultural educators who seek a more balanced representation of the arts to help students make distinctions, as well as connections, between themselves and others.

Jazz Dance Origins introduced information that resulted in a series of lessons that became a permanent part of the materials for dance education methods courses. The lessons were also offered to public school dance educators by means of teaching workshops. Currently the lessons are presented to children by all Charlotte-Mecklenburg public school dance teachers. This year author Pamela Sofras presented selected lessons for a new public school dance program developed by the New Jersey Performing Arts Council.

At UNC Charlotte, elective courses Jazz I and Jazz II were

made more content specific. Jazz I deals with vintage vernacular material similar to that covered in Jazz Dance Origins. However, students are not required to develop lesson plans or to gain the historical depth expected of future teachers enrolled in Jazz Dance Origins. Jazz II now consists of a variety of contemporary styles, some reflecting black culture. This past year Jazz I and Jazz Dance Origins became the first departmental courses listed in the Office of Academic Affairs pamphlet *Diversity Across the Curriculum*, designed to spotlight those courses that specifically address diversity.

Choreography created by faculty for students may provide opportunities to reflect African-American/African culture. For example, "A Matter of Style," choreographed by author Karen Hubbard is an arrangement of traditional jazz vocabulary. This work allows students to experience the dancing close to the way it (was/is) expressed in the culture. "Journey: the Beginning," also by Ms. Hubbard, combines traditional West African dance and song with modern dance set to music by jazz composer Yussef Latef. This piece was created so that students could experience and observe how African motifs can be utilized in a concert work.

Because available textbooks do not present a complete enough picture, it is necessary to find ways to incorporate the work of African-American pioneer and second generation modern dancers into twentieth century dance history. This means that, from an historical and cultural point of view, all the choreographers contributing work defined as modern dance will be discussed together so that the developing art form, with all its influences, may be described completely. To accomplish this it is necessary to supplement traditional course content and develop the course syllabus so that the African-American dance pioneers are introduced simultaneously with European-American choreographers. Books specifically about black dance will provide material about dancers working at the same time and place as the European-American dance artists. During the summer of 1988, ADF launched NEH supported "The Black Tradition in American Modern Dance" project. Two publications of essays were made available in connection with this project: *The Black Tradition in American Modern Dance* and *African-American Genius in Modern Dance*. These are terrific resources made available at nominal cost by ADF. Because in the 1980s selected works of choreographers such as Katherine Dunham, Talley Beatty and Donald MacKayle were being reconstructed on companies such as Philadanco, Alvin Ailey and the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, it is possible to locate video resources to support course lectures.

At UNC Charlotte Dance History courses are taught by highlighting the masterworks that have defined modern dance and the artists who created them as well as their significance in the body of modern dance work. To complement traditional dance history lessons that are part of the public school curriculum, UNC Charlotte dance education students began to develop lesson plans based on the masterworks of African-American choreographers. Pearl Primus's *Funga*, Alvin Ailey's "Take Me to the Water" section from *Revelations* and Donald Mackayle's *Games* are examples of works that became inspiration for the creation of

lessons. As a part of this effort, a unique project complementing a recently taught dance history course came from a proposal initiated in 1994. The goal of this proposal was to reconstruct from Labanotation signature modern dance masterworks within the technical abilities of students for an evening's performance at UNC Charlotte. Ruth St. Denis' *Brahms Waltzes* (1922), Doris Humphrey's *Water Study* (1928), Anna Sokolow's *Scenes from the Music of Charles Ives* (1971), and *Crucifixion* (1931) by Helen Tamiris were selected. *Crucifixion* provided the opportunity to feature an African-American student soloist in a piece whose origins came out of a respect and acknowledgment of African-American culture. A university curriculum and instruction grant paid for the scores and the professional labanotator to reconstruct four modern dance masterworks. Two different African-American dancers and one European-American dancer had the opportunity to perform the Tamiris piece *Crucifixion* during the seven different performances offered on and off campus.

Strategy V: Request Funds Made Available to Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

The authors encourage faculty at predominately white institutions to develop rationales making it possible to tap funds made available to sponsor programs at historically black colleges and universities. An effective rationale should address the need to provide enrichment for all students. It is also suggested that the rationale include a massive community and campus outreach effort--one that will insure participation by African-Americans. When both black and white faculty are involved in planning and implementing the event, a positive message is sent to students black and white.

By developing a rationale based on the points delineated, the authors successfully made the case to bring ADF's "Black Tradition in American Dance" to UNC Charlotte featuring noted black dance archivist/historian Joe Nash. In the proposal, community linkages were made with Johnson C. Smith, a predominately black university, and the Afro-American Culture Center. The UNC Charlotte African-American and African Studies department was also included in outreach efforts. This event sent another very positive message to UNC Charlotte dance students: they had opportunities to observe the authors planning projects with black content. Also dance students gained insights about African-American participation in modern dance that related to the material they were studying in class.

In addition to students in Charlotte from UNC Charlotte, Johnson C. Smith University, Central Piedmont Community College, and Queens College, the audience included dance educators from surrounding colleges and universities who appreciated the unique opportunity to enrich their own teaching materials with the information presented.

Strategy VI: Generate Partnerships With Off-Campus Agencies

A partnership with an off-campus agency may make it possible to develop teacher workshops supported by the state arts council. Such workshops would guide public school teachers as they develop cultural sensitivity and would provide them with strategies for

introducing positive and varied movement experiences to students from diverse racial groups. "African-American Performing Arts for Secondary School Teachers" is an example of a grant partnership relationship between ADF and UNC Charlotte. The objective of the three-day workshop was to put three African-American performing artists together in workshop situations with twenty arts teachers from the North Carolina public schools. The artists shared their creative processes with the teachers and encouraged the teachers to solve creative problems with them. Workshops were conducted by Carman Moore, composer, Gus Solomons Jr., dancer/choreographer, and Linda Norflet, theatre artist. Dr. Percy Murray provided insights into African-American history and English Professor Dr. Jon Young explored the African-American experience through the novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neal Hurston. All of the sessions were videotaped and the workshop has become a model for future endeavors, and hopefully, another grant award.

Strategy VII: Support Student Initiatives

It is important to support student driven initiatives that most likely will result from the strategies outlined above. At UNC Charlotte by 1990-91 the campus student activities organization UPB was ready to bring a dance company to campus. However, since the theatre is a laboratory for dance and theatre majors, logistics made it impossible for the department to present outside performances. Finally, by 1991-92, then-chair Jack Beasley was "persuaded" there were "windows" in the departmental season that could indeed be filled by outside companies. Then, in 1993, UPB sponsored the Chuck Davis African-American Dance Ensemble. A master class was included in the contract. The house was full; the audience went wild. Subsequently a petition to have West-African dance taught on a regular basis was being circulated by a white student, who hand delivered the petition to department chair Sybil Huskey. In addition to the petition, surveys were collected for two semesters from students enrolled in selected studio courses, now predominately African-American. African dance was requested overwhelmingly. The outcome was that, for the first time, in the fall semester 1995, West-African dance was taught as a course for credit.

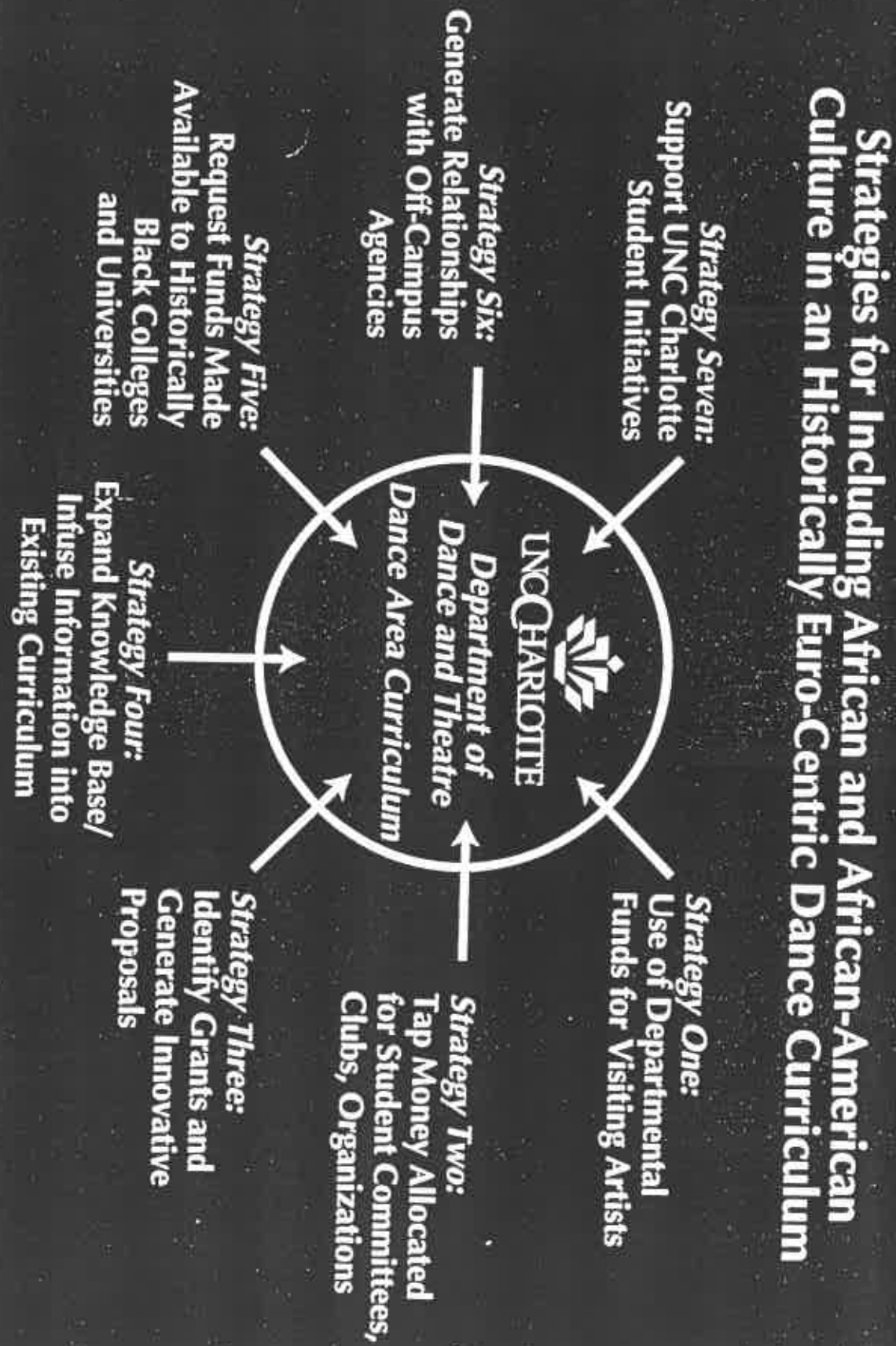
In November 1995 there was another student initiative via UPB to bring professional dance to UNC Charlotte. Unfortunately some errors had been made in identifying and reserving space. An appeal was made to the department chair and technical director to clear a window for the performance. Lula Washington Dance Theatre performed at UNC Charlotte February 28, 1996, in a space that, until 1992-93 was used only for student productions. Again a master class was negotiated in the contract.

The strategies described were implemented by the authors during the past ten years to infuse the dance area curriculum with African and African-American culture. There are more African-American students now enrolled in dance courses. For example, ten years ago there was one African-American dance major and the number of African-American elective students was negligible. From 1988 to 1995 four African-American dance majors

and two African-American dance education licensure students graduated. Recent African-American dance elective enrollment was: Modern I--77%, Introduction to Dance--33%, Jazz I--66%, and American Dance: A Cultural Experience (a new theory course enrolling 53)--50%. African-American presence in dance productions has increased noticeably.

While the authors acknowledge and appreciate the increase in participation by African-American students, they also understand efforts must continue within the department to create a positive welcoming climate. Such a climate will ensure student successes through shared diverse artistic experiences.

In the wake of their own successes, authors Pamela Sofras and Karen Hubbard encourage other dance faculty to find ways, on a continuing basis, to present a more balanced perspective--one that includes African and African-American contributions as part of the body of knowledge for all students.



CRIMES AND MISDEMEANOURS

Aspects of Ballet and Dance
in South Africa

Jonathan Hurwitz

Confluences
UCT
Cape Town
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On Christmas Day in 1925, Anna Pavlova and her company of ballet dancers arrived in Cape Town for a three-month tour of the Union of South Africa. While in Johannesburg, she was taken one Sunday morning to Crown Mines to watch a display of what was called "mine dancing" -- this tradition of taking visiting ballerinas to mine dancing continued for the next half century at least. At the end of this exhibition, the lead dancer, reportedly a tall Zulu man, was presented to Anna Pavlova. This lady, he was told, is the greatest dancer in the world. No, he replied, I am the greatest dancer in the world.

The story was reported in Johannesburg and London newspapers in the colonial tone appropriate to empire, and in a way that told the reader that this was really supposed to be a funny story.

It is possible that this unknown, unnamed Zulu may have been the greatest dancer in the world. But that world acknowledged no place for his dancing, other than as entertainment for visitors, for senior mine officials in summer suits, their wives in hats and gloves, gathered under a canopy to shield them from the sun. Coming from a mining family myself, these images are very real to me.

Did Anna Pavlova witness a crime that Sunday morning in the summer of 1926? Was she, indeed, party to a crime? The Zulu miner was told of Pavlova's greatness in a form of dance unknown to him, yet it was expected that he would accept that claim without question. Was his repudiation of it the first plea for us to acknowledge a uniquely South African dance form? If it was, it was a cry in the wilderness.

Although Pavlova brought to South Africa the first ballet company to tour our country, ballet was not unknown here before she arrived. Its early history, dating back to the 18th century, is the most engaging section of Marina Grut's *History Of Ballet In South Africa*.

But I believe that ballet in South Africa -- and by that I mean its role as popular entertainment, readily and regularly accessible -- began with Pavlova's visit 70 years ago. With her seasons in Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria and Johannesburg, ballet began to be woven into the cultural fabric of South Africa. It found a home here.

The first half of the last 70 years was bracketed by Pavlova's tour in the mid-20s and by the visit of The Royal Ballet in 1960. During the 35 years that began in 1925 -- years during which we were still part of the British empire -- there was growing activity in South African ballet. We welcomed visiting companies -- the Russian Ballet and the Ballet de Monte Carlo in the 1930s, the Royal Danes in the 40s, the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in the 50s -- as well as many celebrated dancers on what were then called "concert tours".

Johannesburg became the first city outside the United Kingdom where the method of the Royal Academy of Dancing was taught. The ballet school at UCT was founded and the company attached to it toured widely. In Johannesburg there was a spate of ambitious but short-lived companies, the most notable of which was the Johannesburg Festival Ballet Society which gave the first performances in this country of *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Giselle*.

We produced ballet dancers but we could not employ them and the 1940s and 50s saw a sustained exodus of South African dancers. Most went to the United Kingdom where our dominion status smoothed their way into English companies. All this changed in the early 60s. The most fundamental way to characterise this change is to say that South African ballet's pioneering days were over. There were good times ahead but for many these were to be the goods of evil, of privilege, of racial exclusion, of cultural supremacy.

In 1961 South Africa became a republic and ended its membership

of the Commonwealth. Eighteen months later the government established four arts councils, one in each province and attached to each was a classical ballet company. Other areas of artistic endeavour to fall under the auspices of the councils were opera, plays in English and Afrikaans, and classical music.

In keeping with the policy of apartheid, the arts councils served white audiences exclusively, a condition entrenched by laws barring blacks from the theatres and concert halls which housed their presentations. When Margot Fonteyn came to Johannesburg in 1971 to dance with Pact Ballet at the Civic Theatre, she also gave one performance in the township of Coronationville for the coloured community. Black, Indian and White audiences were not permitted to see her dance there and there are stories, apocryphal perhaps, of white women darkening their faces with make-up so as to gain access to the Coronationville hall.

In determining in 1962 that ballet, opera, drama and classical music would be the arts councils' areas of activity, the foundations were laid for a situation, indeed a crisis, which has had a devastating effect on theatre dance in South Africa and from which ballet and dance may survive only by the skin of its teeth: provision was made for classical ballet but there were to be no government-funded modern dance companies.

It was perhaps easy if not inevitable in 1962 to disregard the importance and legitimacy of modern dance in the formalised performing arts. The tragedy for South African dance is that no-one in 1962 had the vision or the influence, or both, to successfully champion the cause of modern dance and to ensure that along with ballet, opera and other art forms which were later to acquire the label "eurocentric", a place was created for modern dance in the privileged world of subsidised arts.

When, finally, in 1988, PACT established the Pact Dance Company, much damage had already been done. Classical ballet had flourished in Cape Town, Pretoria and Johannesburg. Productions

were lavish, companies large. Through the privilege of subsidy, audiences in Pretoria were able to see ballets by luminaries like Balanchine, Ashton, MacMillan, Cranko, Bintley and others. These audiences were substantial and despite attrition by financial, political and social factors, and by emigration, they have remained so.

In the rising temperature of socio-political change, triggered in 1976 and vigorously renewed in 1985, the government-subsidised arts councils found themselves energetically targeted as apartheid structures. As the arts were drawn into the political arena, dance came to characterise and to personify the rift between privilege and denial, and ballet the dance form that stood for everything that was despicable about the system.

The result was the rapid evolution of a polarity between ballet and other forms of theatre dance in South Africa. Over the last ten years, ballet, with its hierarchical structure, the minutiae and exactitude of its technique, its accessibility to the white suburban child, has had to combat ideological opposition. As that battle begins to wane it is being replaced by the fight to survive as government subsidies come to an end.

In pondering this state of affairs, one may consider how it is that the New Arts Philharmonic Orchestra can become part of the centrally-funded core infrastructure of the State Theatre -- granted with mutterings from musicians' unions about the number of South Africans versus the number of foreigners in its ranks but with little outcry over the fact that there is only one black musician in the orchestra -- while Pact Ballet, which is being set adrift from central funding, is referred to, and by extension, stigmatised in a Johannesburg newspaper as a "white" ballet company. In the reader's mind this juxtaposes two concepts -- white and ballet -- that individually are not undesirable but when read together are conflated into a single undesirable element.

I have said before, and sometimes in the face of strong opposition, that modern dance was the worst victim of South Africa's cultural isolation and isolationism. The international trends in modern dance passed us by. While in the 60s, distinctions between ballet and dance were blurring, while in the 70s and 80s new wave, post-modernism and de-constructionism characterised modern dance, and ballet companies internationally were increasingly becoming repositories for the work of modern dance choreographers, ballet and dance in South Africa were squaring up for confrontation.

Modern dance emerged as the antithesis of classical ballet, as a place of refuge for dancers and choreographers not inclined towards ballet. Its stamping ground became an annual forum called the Dance Umbrella, a festival-like setting where audiences have tended to be other dancers, where some exhilarating work along as well as some poor work has emerged and about which disproportionate volumes have been written on the arts pages of newspapers.

From the politically correct safety of this community, forays are conducted which attempt to cast both valid and unwarranted aspersions on classical ballet. Dance is championed as the form accessible to the community at large, both as practitioners and observers, while ballet is branded elitist and exclusive; this antagonism has found its way into teaching institutions in Johannesburg where modern dance works choreographed on students ridicule balletic conventions.

In a spiralling freefall, individuals, groupings and companies repay real and imagined crimes and misdemeanours with acts of punishment and retribution. The elements of South African theatre dance -- dancers, directors, choreographers, administrators -- eye one another across a divide, threatened and threatening.

This, we could say, is the fallout of the failure to which I

referred earlier -- the exclusion of contemporary dance by the architects of South Africa's arts councils in the early 1960s. One must accept, of course, that even if a place had been found for subsidised contemporary dance in South Africa thirty years ago, there still would have been no artistic home for black dancers in any modern dance company funded by an apartheid government.

Not only were fundamental impediments in place to make it impossible for black and white dancers to train and perform together on an ongoing basis of normality, but by its very nature, the system denied township children access to the dance education that was within the reach of their suburban counterparts. So when training did come to black dancers in the 70s and 80s through the endeavours and energies of pioneering teachers, it acquired a patina of political activism.

By 1990, when South Africa set out on the road to democracy, the white children who had had access to training from an early age, were now the dancers and indeed the acclaimed ballerinas of our ballet companies. Most of their black contemporaries, however, were just embarking on training programmes and for many of them it was too late. Some became beneficiaries of neo-colonial munificence. Just as Oxford and Cambridge welcomed a quota of students from the colonies in the 20s and 30s -- among them men destined to shape post-war South Africa -- so an institution like the Rambert School brings to London South African dancers disadvantaged by our malignant past. But for these dancers -- not all, but too many -- this well-meaning misdemeanour comes too late.

Finding themselves on their return alienated from South Africa's classically-based companies by technical inadequacies, some of these dancers come back either to wander in the wilderness or to find an artistic home in groups and with choreographers who cater to the level of their technical abilities.

And what of the audiences? The silent, sometimes polite, sometimes enthusiastic majority that votes with rands and cents at the Computicket terminal -- where are they? Those who are not in Sydney, Toronto and Houston, those who are not venturing from behind six-foot suburban walls only to give obligatory standing ovations to visiting companies, great, good and bad -- where are they? Well, most of them are at the ballet.

Two marketing surveys at the State Theatre -- one in 1992 and one in 1995 -- produced similar results: of the ballet-going audience between 3% and 4% indicated that they attend modern dance performances often and between 6% and 7% that they attend modern dance performances occasionally. The remaining 90% claim never to attend modern dance performances.

This is not unique to South Africa but what gives it a uniquely South African tone is the politicised antagonism between ballet and dance: ballet is not merely conformist and evolutionary; it is a white elitist art form, stultified and retrogressive, inaccessible to the community at large. Dance is not merely non-conformist and revolutionary; it is ugly and pretentious, with a parlous standard of choreography, performed for the most part by poorly trained dancers.

Aggravating these perceptions are additional factors, the saddest of which is perhaps an element of distrust. The ballet community believes itself threatened, not only by declining subsidies, but by lobbies that seem to them to be operating in a way detrimental to their general well-being by interfering in their ability to present the paying public with value for money.

In an effort to mitigate their tarnished past, our ballet companies began about seven or eight years ago to put into place programmes which would bring ballet into the lives of township children. But such was the weight of the baggage they carried with them -- and anyone working in the former arts councils will be acutely aware of that phrase -- that the crimes of the past

were replaced by a new set of misdemeanours: I recall that we at the State Theatre went through a range of programmes determined initially by the Directorate and subsequently by indicators from the new Board and the Department of Arts and Culture.

These were called "outreach" programmes until we were told that "outreach" was a paternalistic concept; it was replaced by "community programmes" until, in short order, that too was declared unsuitable; it involved going to townships with elaborate portable stages until that was abandoned in favour of bringing children into the theatre where they could experience ballet in its proper environment.

I cannot speak for the Cape Town City Ballet but these measures at Pact Ballet always had one thing in common: whatever scramblings were afoot to make them politically correct, they were aimed at children which, in itself, was an aspect criticised as opportunism. Pact Ballet was rebuked for not following the example of the Dance Theatre of Harlem's entertaining outreach programme in 1992. The difference, of course, was not that Pact Ballet might not have been able to match the Harlem company in the ebullience of its outreach programme but that the Dance Theatre of Harlem came to Johannesburg in a blaze of glory: a proudly all-Black American dance company celebrating South Africa's new democracy and the opening of the rebuilt Johannesburg Civic Theatre. The Dance Theatre of Harlem brought no baggage with it.

Having worked in the South African ballet and dance industry for 20 years, I am used to hearing one particular rallying cry: the call to make ballet accessible to a black audience, although advice on how this should be done is sparse. It is a cry usually accompanied by the admonition that "if you people don't do something to bring Black audiences to the ballet, you can kiss your ballet companies goodbye." The logic of that sentiment is simultaneously clear and muddled and a discussion of its merits does not have a place in this paper.

But it does have a tenuous link to an observation made recently in Pretoria that a performance of *La Bayadère*, although full, was full of grey-haired, middle-aged, white women. The implication in this -- what shall we call it? -- ageist, sexist, racist? -- sentiment strikes me as a reaction to the fact that outside of the Grahamstown Festival and, to a lesser extent, the Dance Umbrella, South African modern dance companies attract almost no audiences at all -- and by audiences I mean that pro-active body of people who are independently attracted to a performance and are able and willing to pay for their tickets.

Years of subsidised ballet, presented by politically tainted institutions, have bred what is perceived to be a middle-aged, white female audience. Years of struggle against an alienating system and financial deprivation have bred a modern dance industry that has yet to generate sustaining audiences for a South African product.

As we move forward, in time if not in re-conciliation, changes in South Africa's socio-political condition bring to bear a changing set of factors on the politics of South African dance. Projects that may not have been started in a spirit of altruism by the arts councils are steadily becoming distanced from the labels and scepticism that afflicted them in their early years and their genuine benefits are coming to the fore.

As the umbilical cord of state finance is cut and our ballet companies are set to float or sink on their own abilities to attract income and financing, so, I believe, the complexion of our audiences will become less important, and the anxiety with which company marketing staff scan audiences at the Nico or the State in search of heads that are not female, white and middle-aged, will abate.

In the end, though, when the ideological furore has subsided, when the state subsidies that have kept ballet afloat in South Africa for 35 years are reduced to non-sustaining trickles of

project funding, what will survive?

When the crimes of the distant past and the misdemeanours of the tumultuous late years have died away, and the punishments and rebukes that they have bred have died away too, can what we have survive, and what we hope to have, take root and flourish?

"The emotion," wrote Edwin Denby, "is that of scale. Against an enormous background one sees detached for an instant, the hidden grace of the dancer's individual move, a chance event that passes with a small smile and a musical sound forever into nowhere."

THE CHOREOGRAPHIC NOTEBOOK AN INTERIM REPORT

E. Jean Johnson Jones

African Peoples' Dance¹ in Britain

Historically, the practitioner of African Peoples' Dance and their British audiences have not understood one another. A chasm of cultural difference has prevented the development of a common language through which the performer could communicate the character and intention of his/her work to the observer.

During the past two years Kokuma Dance Theatre, one of Britain's major Afro-Caribbean dance companies², has been working with the Choreographic Notebook process. This represents the first time that the work of a British company specialising in dances of African and/or Caribbean origin has been preserved in Labanotation; a system of movement analysis and documentation most commonly associated with western dance forms.

The project began with the premise that it is the responsibility of the artist to make his/her art accessible to its audience. Practitioners of African Peoples' Dance in Britain must have a clear idea, in western terms, of what their method and intention are; they must be able to communicate their art to audiences who see the world from entirely different perspectives than their own.

The Choreographic Notebook

The title *Choreographic Notebook* is used to identify three related ideas:

1) the research project that first investigated the idea of a Labanotation score based on the choreographic process; 2) the methodology that developed from the project; and 3) the final product itself.

Fundamentally, the *Choreographic Notebook* is an approach that explores the application of Laban Movement Analysis and Labanotation to the choreographic process. It is a dynamic, inclusive, process-oriented procedure in which the final product reflects the combined effort of all members of a dance company. This includes: the artistic director, choreographer, dancers, musicians, public relations and managerial staff who relate directly with the Laban Movement Analyst.

The aim of the *Choreographic Notebook* approach is to develop a methodology for the documentation of dance that is dynamic and interactive. Its objectives are: to enable company members to benefit from an understanding of Labananalysis, to provide participants with an additional means of understanding, articulating and communicating their work and to bridge the distance between movement analyst and artistic personnel.

Employing the essential intent of the *Choreographic Notebook* each participant company will develop its own set of objectives which will result in a final product which is unique. The name, *Choreographic Notebook*, is derived from the methods by which a notebook is completed.

The Choreographic Notebook of Kokuma Dance Theatre

In 1995 the Labanotation Institute (Guildford) and Kokuma Dance Theatre (Birmingham) formed an alliance in order to produce a Choreographic Notebook. The design of the Notebook considered the interests of both partners.

These were:

1. to investigate the appropriateness of Labananalysis as a tool for the documentation of African Peoples' Dance
2. to analyse and preserve the artistic product of Kokuma Dance Theatre

Labananalysis as a tool for the Documentation of African Peoples' Dance

While the usefulness of Labanotation for the documentation of western theatre dance has been acknowledged its application to the documentation of African and Caribbean derived dance forms is questionable.³

The dance heritage transcribed in the Laban system of movement analysis and notation has been inventoried in Laban Notation Scores: An International Bibliography compiled by Mary Jane and Frederick Warner. The Bibliography, along with its Addendum, consists of more than 4000 entries of these only fifteen entries make reference to African Peoples' Dance.

The absence of a documented dance chronology which reflects the experience of African Peoples' Dance as practised in the west becomes critical if one considers dancing behaviour.

Humans move and belong to movement communities just as they speak and belong to speech communities....there are kinesic (body motion) 'languages' and 'dialects' which are learned by culture members just as speech is learned, and which are a matching distribution with speech, languages, and dialects.

Alan Lomax, cited in Hanna, 1987, p 4.

Dr. Adrienne Kaeppler characterises 'movement communities' as 'structured movement systems.' Movement systems, according to Kaeppler, 'are systems of knowledge which are socially constructed. . .they are created by, known, and agreed upon by a group of people and primarily preserved in memory.' (1992, p 151)

Dancing is a structured movement system. (Kaeppler, 1992) It is part of a system of non-verbal communication that echoes the social, political and economic norms of a society. (Hanna, 1987) The absence of a documented dance history which reflects the 'movement systems' of a society renders its dancing inaccessible to close investigation and appreciation.

Except for the University of Ghana no other institution in Africa has considered any form of western movement notation as appropriate for the systematic analysis and documentation of African Peoples' Dance.⁴

Anthropologist Paul Bohannan would seem to support this perspective,

One of the major flaws in social science occurs when a scientist allows a culture-bound story--or, more often, a theory developed in his own society or his own discipline--to become the basis for comparison.

Bohannan, 1995, p 78.

Western music notation is used as a tool of communication, analysis and documentation among musician's world wide. Is it possible for Labananalysis to fulfil a similar function in respect of African Peoples' Dance as practised in the west?

What is Labananalysis?⁵

Introduced by Rudolf Laban in the 1920's, Labanotation is a symbol system which records the dynamics of the human body. Used by a trained movement analyst, Labanotation has the capability of precisely depicting the direction, duration and intensity of human motion through three dimensions of space. While the system can be applied to sport, physical therapy or any other areas of life where there is a need precisely to record and analyse human movement, it is most commonly used in the world of dance. This method of recording has decided advantages over the notoriously unreliable human memory, the cumbersome and subjective written word and even (though the two are often used together) the video tape which is two dimensional and often misleading.

In Laban's system on notation, certain symbols are standardised to represent parts of the body and the motions that they are capable of making. By combining symbols representing arms, legs, head, hands and feet with those representing bending, stepping, folding, jumping or twisting, the Labanotator is able to record all of the movements that a dancer's body executes during the performance of a dance.

While Labanotators are interested in the mechanics of movement---what part of the body moves through space--Laban Movement Analysts concern themselves with how the body moves through space.

The Laban Movement Analyst (LMA) breaks movement down into the elements of which it is composed: Body, Effort, Shape and Space. S/he examines the manner in which the body changes in response to internal and external stimulation, the energy flow which is caused by the movement and the qualitative dimensions of time, space and weight. Thus, the Laban system records what moves as well as how changes are made.

The term Labananalysis is used in the context of this discussion to include both Labanotation and Laban Movement Analysis

To Analyse & Preserve the Artistic Product of Kokuma Dance Theatre

Kokuma Dance Theatre

Founded in 1978 Kokuma Dance Theatre is one of the oldest African Peoples' Dance companies in Britain. Its vision,

to enhance enjoyment, appreciation and understanding of African and Caribbean culture and history through dance and music, [is the foundation upon which it has developed its distinctive style; a style in which] African, Caribbean and Black British dance and experience are fused into a unique dance vocabulary. The name 'Kokuma' comes from a word in Yoruba, a Nigerian language, which means 'this one will never die.

Kokuma, Touring Season Programme, 1995.

Jackie Guy was born and educated in Jamaica. He was a member of the National Dance Theatre of Jamaica where he gained the understanding of African and Caribbean dance forms that now characterise his work. In 1988 he was appointed Artistic Director of Kokuma Dance Theatre; a position he held until 1995. It was during the period of his appointment as Artistic Director of Kokuma that the Company developed the unique dance vocabulary for which it is now known.

The Choreographic Notebook of Kokuma Dance Theatre is a recognition of the contribution of Jackie Guy to the artistic development of Kokuma Dance Theatre.

The Kokuma Project

Kokuma Dance Theatre and the Labanotation Institute undertook the documentation the following:

1. Kokuma's company technique class
2. one dance from the company's repertoire of set pieces
3. one work in progress.

The purpose of the undertaking was six fold:

1. to analyse and preserve intact the artistic product and singular technique which have brought Kokuma to the forefront of African/Caribbean dance
2. to facilitate the teaching and learning of the Kokuma approach to African/Caribbean dance
3. to add to the inventory of promotional material the company has available for export
4. to protect the company's exclusivity through the production of copyrighted material
5. to take what is hoped will be the first steps in the routine documentation of the company's exclusivity through the production of copyrighted material
6. to expand the use and capability of the system of Labanotation.

Collecting the Data

Over a period of six months a system for the collection of data (recording movement) emerged which was to have a major influence on the analysis and final documentation of the dancing.

These were:

1. the procedures for gathering of data
2. the role of the Artistic Director in the documentation process.

Both represent a departure from the standard approach to the documentation of dancing through Labananalysis.

1. Method of Work: procedures for gathering data.

It is not uncommon for a movement analysts to engage in distance and participatory observation when recording movement. It is also considered good practice for video recordings to be made of the choreographic process; both of these standard procedures were part of the documentation process. The Kokuma project extended these routines, however, as its methods allowed for the direct interaction of notator with choreographer, dancers and musicians. This took the form of physical engagement in movement sessions as well as interaction and collaboration with artistic personnel. The notator became a part of the choreographic process.

Through the activity of physical engagement in the movement not only was a knowledge of the nature of the dance behaviour acquired, but this method lay the foundation for kinaesthetic empathy. The value of this 'physical experience' became apparent when a distance observation approach was taken.

Information gained from the 'doing' of the movement provided the movement analyst with an initial means of communicating with artistic personnel; to pose questions and to make comments about the dancing in 'their' (choreographer, dancers') terms. Additionally, an understanding of the movement in 'physical' terms lay a substructure on which to transmit to artistic personnel a knowledge of Labananalysis.

Significantly, this procedure established a professional bond between movement analyst and artistic personnel. The building of such a relationship provided the adhesive that would stabilise the final documentation of the movement.

2. Role of the Artistic Director in the Documentation of the Dancing

Collaborative analysis:

There exists a level of communication between choreographer and notator which allows a dance to be recorded to the satisfaction of its creator. Rarely, however, does the author of a dance composition possess the knowledge of movement analysis that would enable him/her to document his/her choreography in Labananalysis; the designer of a dance relies upon a movement analyst to document his/her work.

During the course of this project, it became necessary for Jackie Guy to grasp the fundamentals of Labananalysis--Motif Writing, Labanotation and Effort/Shape. Thus, his role was extended to include that of Movement Analysts.

An objective approach⁶ to the analysis of movement was one of the . With the agreement of Jackie Guy, questions were posed and clarification sought during the course of rehearsal; this process was then elaborated upon at regularly scheduled 'analysis' sessions.

The interaction which occurred within the rehearsal period proved invaluable. These sessions (which included both participatory and distance observation) enabled me to understand how Jackie conceived of, analysed and transmitted his work; it gave me an insight into his personal system of examination. This information was later used as a substructure on which to build a knowledge and appreciation of Laban Movement Analysis and Labanotation. An understanding of this system of analysis empowered Jackie with the ability to make decisions on how his work was to be encoded.

Summary

This report has introduced the concept of the *Choreographic Notebook*, an approach that explores the application of Laban Movement Analysis and Labanotation (Labananalysis) to the choreographic process.

The tool of Labananalysis have been applied, more frequently, to the analysis and documentation of western theatre dance. As a result there exists an extensive body of data through which western movement systems may be studied and enjoyed. Though part of a western movement system, no such archive exists that catalogues African Peoples' Dance as practised in Britain.

Making use of the repertoire of Kokuma Dance Theatre, the Kokuma Project was designed not only to analyse and preserve the artistic product of Kokuma Dance Theatre, but to investigate the suitability of Labananalysis as a tool for the documentation of African Peoples' Dance; a question posed by practitioners of this form in Britain. Two issues arising from these investigations have been introduced in this report: the method of collecting data and the role of the Artistic Director in the recording process.

The Choreographic Notebook of Kokuma Dance Theatre is to be produced as a three part collection. Part one, *The Dance Technique*, is to be submitted for publication in January, 1998. Additionally, a preview of this material will be presented in the forthcoming Macmillan House publication: *Dance in the Field: Theory, Methods and Issues in Dance Ethnography*, Theresa Buckland, editor.

Notes

1. The term 'African Peoples' Dance' was introduced by Peter Badejo in 1993 as an 'umbrella' term to identify 'African dance and its derivatives'. See Badejo (1993: 11).
2. The identifier 'Afro-Caribbean dance company' appears in the Kokuma 1990-91 Season programme.
3. This question was raised by Peter Badejo during a public seminar titled *Back to the Future*. See Semple (1994).
4. See Hanna (1987:4).
5. See Kaeppler (1992:151).
6. See Bohannon (1995:78).
7. This material has been used with permission of the Labanotation Institute.
8. See Kokuma Dance Theatre 1994-1995 touring programme.

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**'PALIMPSEST' AS CREATIVE PRACTICE AND ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUE:
SECRET COMPLEXITIES IN THE WORK OF SHOBANA JEYASINGH**

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One of the most esteemed, yet controversial choreographers to have emerged from the South Asian dance tradition in Britain, Shobana Jeyasingh, recently described her heritage as 'a mix of David Bowie, Purcell, Shelley, and Anna Pavlova, and it has been mixed as subtly as a samosa has mixed itself into the English cuisine in the last 10 years or so: impossible to separate. But it is surprising how to many people my heritage could only be things Indian.¹¹ By the same token, in a recent lecture, she quoted from Salman Rushdie's essay 'Commonwealth Literature Does Not Exist': 'If history creates complexities, let us not try to simplify them.'¹²

I want to begin my paper with a summary of the cultural issues that pertain to Jeyasingh's work, particularly that of the binary divisions that we so often favour, in the terminology of East-West collaborations and cross-cultural fusions, terms that can be seen as convenient and comforting to European culture. In Jeyasingh's case, this is how her work has often been received, since she established her dance company in 1988. Hers is work that has used a number of classical forms, especially Bharatha Natyam, often set alongside music from Western musical tradition, for instance, by the British composers Michael Nyman, Glyn Perrin and Alistair MacDonald. Jeyasingh is acutely aware that these are terms that betray power imbalance. Homi Bhabha explains:

...although there is always an entertainment and encouragement of cultural diversity, there is always also a corresponding containment of it. A transparent norm is constituted, a norm which says that 'these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid.'¹³

But neither is the two-dimensional conceptualisation a reality for an increasing number of thinkers during the 90s. A cultural position is many things. Paul Gilroy in *The Black Atlantic* contrasts an open view of ethnicity as 'an infinite process of identity construction',¹⁴ always changing, always re-negotiating itself. Jeyasingh's own views have been stimulated by such writers as these: Bhabha, Rushdie and Gilroy.

Such views naturally colour the artist's approach to tradition, and distance her from the essentialist's ideal of an authentic tradition, drawn from times prior to the influence of alien, colonialist, cultural values. This untainted tradition is seen as important to reinforcing kinship and identity across a community in exile (and originally seen as a radical political step, to reclaim an identity independent from British values). Rushdie could only admit that his view of his homeland was imaginary, broken, fragmentary, and of necessity 'incorrect'.¹⁵ Jeyasingh likewise not only views the 'authentic tradition' as an impossibility, but considers that the striving for it is not a way forward; it is a retrogressive opposition to the project of modernity:

Traditional arts need not be locked into the past. They can be transformed by the artist into traditions in use.¹⁶

The drive to get hold of and keep 'the real thing' only supports western binary oppositions, and too the patronising fascination with the Other.

The term hybridity is still useful (and indeed, led by Bhabha, became the buzz term at the 1997 London conference *Re-inventing Britain*) providing that we allow it a radical complexity of meaning: no sharp border-lines or boundaries -- these no longer make sense as concepts. This is another way of seeing reality. The concept of hybridity envelops all of us too, as we all occupy multiple positions within culture. However, the migrant condition, to which the term 'double consciousness' has been applied, with its concomitant notions of loss of homeland, its uprootings and disjunctures, now has the virtue of offering an especially useful metaphor for all of us. As Rushdie says, it celebrates 'impurity...mongrelisation'.¹⁸

Such views as these, incidentally, have given Jeyasingh trouble with some of the South Asian community in Britain, dancers and audiences of more essentialist leanings. (As background to this, we have had in Britain, from the 1970s onwards, an increasing number of classical dancers resident and engaging with their tradition. More recently, we have seen work that draws from both South Asian and western forms, as well as straight traditional classical performances.) At the same time, in Jeyasingh's work, which addresses a broad audience, and not the South Asian community in particular, she has developed from classical tradition, has opened up the vocabulary, developing the movement in space, group work, contact between dancers, concentrating largely on 'nritta' -- pure dance aspects.

This brings me to introduce another completely different kind of commentary about Jeyasingh's work. I leave it to the choreographer to speak first. In her 1995 company document, she claims that she has

challenged perceptions of Indian dance and jettisoned it from its imposed ethnic ghetto, with its prescribed framework and concern with the reaffirmation of cultural heritage, and encouraged it to be seen as a classical form, culturally as 'baggage free' as the choreographer who utilises that classical technique chooses.⁹

Culturally baggage-free? What have we here? The potential for dance to be devoid of cultural connotations, simply self-referential, totally abstract, pure, not the slippery focus of a multiplicity of texts, not the cultural mongrel?

Jeyasingh sometimes chooses to emphasise universals, the similar values and readings between cultures, the common understanding of geometrical configurations used in western and eastern traditions, the link between the straight back and open symmetry of Bharatha Natyam and classical ballet, both forms seen as 'objective' languages. At this level, as a maker of dances, Jeyasingh remains a proponent of dance for the sake of dance, and she demands dance literacy, seeing dance first and foremost for its non-representational values (and deriving meaning from that viewpoint first).

I have given this background because it operates in interesting tension with the dance works themselves. It also affects our 'seeing' of the works. Powerful words open doors and Jeyasingh, an exceptionally articulate artist, offers powerful words. She has excited powerful words from a number of writers too. However, I am interested here in the fact that the contextual themes of migrancy and of relation to tradition have become the focus of so many of these words, and much less the dance work itself and its emergent meanings. Tradition and cultural reference are not nearly so central in writing about new ballets. An interesting example is the recently produced monograph and video on *Romance...with Footnotes* (1993).¹⁰ The video of the dance is intercut with interview material (Jeyasingh with Sarah Rubidge) on the subject of cultural identity. This can but colour the way in which we interpret the dance.

Jeyasingh made the point herself in 1990, in the old terms, as preface to a discussion of Bharatha Natyam:

Bharatha Natyam came to be valued chiefly as an example of its culture and religion and Bharatha Natyam dancers came to be valued as race relation officers, cultural ambassadors, experts in multiculturalism, anthropological exhibits -- everything save as dance technicians.¹¹

The new terms that I have described, stemming from 'hybridity' theory, are different; they appeal to another kind of intellectual community. However, the point is much the same -- everything save the dance work, the dance text. Another irony is that if you chose to categorise Jeyasingh as aligned to the ballet or Merce Cunningham aesthetics, and were of narrow disposition, you might see her as traditionalist and old-hat. But, bearing the 'multi-cultural' banner, you see her as new and young!

Jeyasingh herself has spoken according to these culturalist terms, increasingly so in recent years: for instance, at the 1997 *Re-inventing Britain* conference. This is what is wanted of her most of all, it seems, and perhaps it is what she has grown to articulate best. So Jeyasingh can be seen as shifting ground, negotiating a relationship with her theorists, critics, audiences, although she sometimes lets the aesthetic element slip out. Perhaps she is telling us too about the complexity and ambiguity within her work.

I will now look at *Palimpsest* (1996), concentrating on the work, some of the relationships within the work, and some of the emergent meanings from the work, as I read them. The music is a commissioned score by Graham Fitkin, the designs by Keith Khan. The title refers to a manuscript that has been erased and written over, leaving glimpses of the old text beneath. It reflects the multi-layered approach in this work, both in the dance and the music, which are mixtures of ingredients that come to the fore, get lost, re-appear.

Overall, you might see that the dancers become more informal during the progress of the work, as people rather than dance technicians, and earlier rules for stage behaviour and dance action are broken. The dancers form unstylized conversational clusters (although we do not hear what they say). At the end, three of them seated in a cluster turn to look at us, a strange gaze, full of their power, lightly threatening to us on the receiving end. Yet, there is no straightforward through-line in the piece, and Fitkin has said that he scrapped his original linear structure to achieve one more aleatoric, more wayward: ambiguity and question marks never leave *Palimpsest*.

I am now going to examine a couple of moments in the piece. First, there is the feature of the piece that I call 'adjustments to seeing', our seeing. In an early passage, one person's clarity in rhythm and body design is made bolder, more public and more formal by duplication over one or more other dancers (in unison); a ragged dancing group is seen as a distribution in space or as particles clustering and recluster, forming new combinations. Individuals are lost. Occasionally one is found. The timing and spacing of these shifts between ways of 'seeing' create their own ebb and flow of energy, producing a sense of shock, or minor surprise, or gradual evolution.

Increasingly as *Palimpsest* progresses, Jeyasingh embarks on a major enquiry into the nature and ambiguity of movement. Again we readjust to shifting circumstances. We see the same movement in a new context: sometimes like a message gesture (indeed, there is actual

'abhinaya' incorporated in the piece), sometimes more about body design and what that means (formalised, for instance, when set across more than one dancer), and sometimes it accrues drama from being set against a neighbouring performer's different shape making.

The music often delineates the structure of the choreography, but sometimes interrupts its texture, the timing of musical layers breaking in unexpectedly. The music also carries overtones of meaning from film scores, evoking intense heat, gaiety, shrieks, mystery. Structurally, in another sense, there are moments of integration of music and dance, a solo instrument speaking the dancer and vice versa. There are also moments of stark separation, autonomous bodies sensing their own power, stamping out their rhythms totally without musical support, or the music is like an oppressive outside force. At the end of the work, we see/hear a number of these features in rapid succession. Jeyasingh asks us what are we seeing, what are we hearing, and for a while, the clarinet identifies with the personal, highlights the individual presence on stage.

Of course, all these aspects of the dance speak, contain metaphors, just as I cannot help but suggest in my descriptions, although I have a strong suspicion that my reading of any one of the moments in this piece has been acutely affected by their relationship to each other, the way in which they have been set up within the context of *Palimpsest*. This is so, quite apart from any external context, although we must recognise that the outside always affects, to some degree, the way we look in.

Furthermore, I do not believe that Jeyasingh's work is ever culturally baggage-free. There are innumerable cultural resonances, signals of a heritage, and a classical dance heritage, and the web of meanings that stem from that, sometimes actual dance symbols. We may be more or less attuned to that heritage. But my main point here is that it, too, with all the subversions of itself, creates its own graph of energy ebb and flow, its own moments and interrelationships of moments across the piece. There are still strange anxieties from women dancing out their references to Indian classical sources as a group, sometimes pointing up individual values in polyphonic textures, sometimes adding pressure through multiple gender presence and machine motion. And remember that final gaze, which so overtly challenges, opposes all our preconceptions about how Indian dancers draw in and cajole their audiences. It is a moment of disruption, without transition preparing us for it, a brutal 'moment'.

How enriching it is to chart all this information, the emergent meanings from the dance itself, and its music, some of it springing from issues of space and time, and some contextual understanding that reveals the cultural resonances and dislocations within the work. I have chosen to emphasise the non-representational and formal and the entity of the dance text in my examples because I believe that it is in this area that there should be more discussion now. But what we really need is to juxtapose multiple approaches, to see how different systems might contact each other momentarily, foregrounding the profound ambiguity and complexity of that moment of contact.

It is my contention that if we go to the dance text more boldly, and interrogate it more deeply, we might find that its own cultural metaphors are far more forward-looking and imaginative that we can know through constantly locating the work within presently understood cultural frameworks. Thus, the deliberation with the dance text folds back on to cultural considerations in enriching ways. As Raymond Williams writes, by creating new configurations, art pushes at the 'edge of semantic availability', enabling new meanings to be

imagined and hence new possibilities for us to find identity.¹²

There is an irony here. Is Jeyasingh trapped by us into talking and being talked about in the ways that make most people comfortable, and still not addressing the complexities of the dance text that she believes in? There is a strong case for using our eyes and ears rather more now and deliberating more directly with the artform itself. If we do not do this, I believe, we end up with immature discussion and the continued marginalisation of some of the most exciting work that is part of our culture today.

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This paper is a development from the presentation 'Networking Dances: Home and Away in the Choreography of Shobana Jeyasingh', given at the World Dance '96 Green Mill Conference in Melbourne, Australia.

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**Three Indigenous Peoples of the United States of America and Mexico:
Contrasting Strategies to Sustain Their Dance and Music**
Joann W. Kealiinohomoku, July 14, 1997, Cape Town, SA

Introduction

A cultural confluence is a merging, a flowing together of cultures that produces a new configuration. I will examine the confluence of music and dance and world views of three Native American groups with colonial influences. One rejects confluence; two use it to their advantage.

This is a tale of three indigenous cultures in the Americas, and the strategies they use to keep their dance and music cultures alive and vital. They succeed despite nearly overwhelming odds when they became small streams in the rushing river of vast outside forces. The three are the Hopi Indians of northern Arizona in the southwestern part of the United States, the Hawaiian natives on the world's most isolated archipelago in the Pacific ocean, and the Yaqui Indians in northern Mexico and southern Arizona.

I am able to tell this tale to you because I have spent decades becoming immersed in the Hopi, Hawaiian and Yaqui cultures, especially their dance events.

None of the three engaged in battle with the United States of America. The Hopi lands were ceded to the United States in a treaty between the United States and Mexico. The Hawaiians were betrayed when a group of expatriate Americans imprisoned the Hawaiian queen, turned the monarchy into a democracy, and then allowed the United States to annex the Islands. The Yaqui fiercely and successfully defended their land against the Spanish, and later fought with the newly formed Mexican government to help it gain its independence, only to have the Mexican government turn against them with terrible consequences when the Yaqui refused to be absorbed as Roman Catholic Mexicans. Beginning in 1890 many Yaqui people sought political asylum in the United States where they now have four autonomous villages.

All three, the Hopi, Hawaiian, and Yaqui peoples, are determined to maintain their values and identities and they have used unique strategies to do so. The strategies are restrictiveness by Hopi Indians; revivalism by the Hawaiians, and syncretism by the Yaqui Indians.

Historical Background

In 1680 the Hopi Indians joined forces with other Indian tribes in the American southwest to overthrow the Spanish who were in their midst. All except the Hopi were reconquered by the Spanish 12 years later. To this day, the Hopi have no traces of Spanish culture and the tribe forbids the Catholic Church on their reservation. The Hopi were blissfully ignored by the outside world for nearly two hundred years, but, by the end of the nineteenth century they attracted much, mostly unwelcome, attention. Now, one hundred years later, the Hopi have firmly closed off their villages in their determination to maintain their sovereignty.

The Hawaiian nation was annexed by the United States in 1898. The Hawaiian culture was almost lost because the Hawaiians were a minority in their own land and they had much pressure to embrace

western ideals. Their culture was commodified and turned into a tourist attraction, and grist for the romantic mills of the motion pictures. But in the 1960s there was a powerful move to regain what was nearly lost. The Hawaiian Renaissance, as it is called, focusses primarily on Hawaiian music and dance. The strategy is to include everyone who is interested in Hawaiian culture, whether or not they have Hawaiian ancestry, on the principle that there is strength in numbers. They maintain energy in the movement with major competitions, at least one every month throughout the seven inhabited islands, that engage thousands of people in chanting, and dancing.

After the Yaqui defeated the Spanish conquerors the Yaqui themselves petitioned the Spanish to send Catholic priests to them but without soldiers. The Spanish at first refused, but after years of negotiating, in 1617 two Jesuit priests came alone to Yaqui country and within five years had baptized nearly the entire population of 30,000 Yaquis. For a hundred years the priests and the Yaqui collaborated in creative cultural revisioning, and then the Yaqui asked the priests to leave. They had learned what they wanted to know and would go on by themselves.

The Traditional Cultures

In the time before the arrival of Europeans the economy of all three cultures depended upon farming and the natural resources where they lived. Today their economies are greatly modified by a money and credit economy, jobs outside of their traditional homesites, and new technologies. All three have been influenced by Christianity in one way or another, but all hold tightly to their ancestral legacies.

Hopi

Hopi farmers live on table top mountain plateaus in the high deserts at six to seven thousand feet in altitude. Sixty miles south of their thirteen villages, and always in sight, is the great mountain range that rises to 14,000 feet, and is identified on maps as the San Francisco Peaks.

Their villages include apartments built of rock that surround a plaza that serves as the dancing ground for outdoor ceremonials. Their fields are outside of the tightly knit villages, sometimes many miles away. Famous for their running abilities, at least in the past, Hopi farmers sometimes ran even fifty miles to their fields. Today they often drive their cars to their fields.

The Hopi technique of dry farming has sustained them for thousands of years. Their major crops are corn (or maize), beans, squash, and formerly, cotton, and tobacco. The cotton was used to weave their cloth. The tobacco was used for ceremonial smoking that wafted prayers to the cloud messengers who delivered them to the deities. The food crops nurtured them.

To farm without irrigation in the desert it is necessary to avoid erosion from blowing sand and summer flooding storms, and to plant the seeds deeply enough that they can thrive from moisture below the surface of the ground. Seeds are planted in staggered rows. With a digging stick a Hopi farmer makes holes in the sand that penetrate 15 to 20 inches deep into which they deposit handfuls of 8 to 10 seeds. Rain is brought by sung and danced prayers.

In the Hopi cosmology all human beings live in this, the fourth world. The first three worlds were

under ground from which people were expelled after they became immoral and tainted by witchcraft. After each expulsion people ascended to a world above.

When the Hopi people reached this, the fourth world, the only creature here was Maasau, the lord of life and death. He told them that people would have to accept a specific responsibility in order to have tenure on earth. The Hopi were assigned to be stewards for providing moisture for the world. The Hopi, as the rain makers, were to forever dwell in the center of the world, so they could always be in contact with the deities that live in the San Francisco Peaks. This solemn covenant allowed them to stay in this world and has dominated their thoughts ever since.

The social organization of the Hopi is built around matrilineal clans that were determined when the people emerged from the earth. Each clan "owns" and is responsible for yearly ceremonial activities that are strictly scheduled according to astronomical signs. Each clan has a secret, esoteric society and an associated priesthood. Participants in a society must be initiated before they become members. The Hopi are ruled by a council of priests that represent the clans and their secret societies. Economically the Hopi are egalitarian, but the rule of the council of priests is final and unquestioned.

All Hopi ceremonial music and dancing concern moisture. Even after death initiated Hopis become cloud people who float over the Hopi villages to hear and see the performed prayers and then relay them to the deities who live in the San Francisco Peaks.

The first principle of Hopi sung and danced prayers is that everyone must have good hearts and think beautiful thoughts. When the singing and dancing are wonderful even non-performing participants think happy thoughts. They are not the audience. The true audience is the group of spiritual messengers. The words of the songs paint pictures of the ideal world - lush fields of corn, butterflies that come with moisture, youths and maidens who are comely and fecund. The songs, aspirated by moist breath, float up to the clouds. The dancers gently stamp their feet to wake up mother earth, make gestures that reinforce the words of the songs that can also be seen by the cruising clouds. Dancers' regalia include items that have sympathetic magic for moisture, such as cotton fringes and flowing hair, both of which are visual images that evoke thoughts of rain.

Ceremonies are organized to take several days, four, eight, even sixteen. During the first several days ceremonies are conducted secretly in semi-subterranean buildings carved from living rock. The concluding ceremonies are performed in public so the good thoughts are multiplied. Even non-Hopi people were invited to come to the public portions of the ceremonies, so long as they were respectful, had good hearts and happy thoughts.

By the end of the last century, outsiders had become enamored with the Hopi. Tourists took the train to Winslow, Arizona, and engaged horses and buggies for the 60 mile trek to the mesas. Many brought cameras. During the ceremonial dances they would jostle into good positions to take pictures, even in front of their Hopi hosts. They would tell the dancers to hold still or repeat an action, and generally be intrusive. In 1912 the Hopi decreed that photography would not be allowed at ceremonies; that any camera would be taken away and destroyed.

Throughout the twentieth century the relationship of the Hopi people with outsiders fluctuated between congeniality to distrust. As more and more people crowded into the plazas to see the

ceremonies, the more difficult it was to maintain control. In 1992, after serious infractions against Hopi ceremonial activities, one by one the villages closed to the outside world.

In everyday life Hopi individuals are very much part of the outside world where they have jobs and pursue advanced education. But back at home, the 10,000 Hopi people cherish their traditional life style and uphold their covenant with Maasau. They strictly regulate who and when outsiders may come into their villages.

In the meantime, many artists, both graphic and performance, have been inspired by the Hopi culture. Businesses have used Hopi motifs for commercial purposes without permission from the Hopi. For example, one bank used images of Hopi spiritual beings as their trademark. Some modern dancers used Hopi themes in their choreographic works. This borrowing, purloining, as it were, is no longer Politically Correct. The Hopi Tribal Council established a Culture Preservation Office, and the stern, unyielding director of that office is the gate keeper for all that may in any way affect the Hopi culture.

At least for now, as far as the traditional Hopi are concerned, the Hopi reject the concept of confluence as it applies to them.

Hawaiian

The Hawaiian people established their kingdoms on volcanic islands that have a range of resources from the forests in the high mountains to the beaches that lead to the wealth of the oceans. This diversity lead to labor specializations - wood cutters in the mountains, farmers in the midlands who grow tropical foods such as taro and bananas, and fisherman on the beaches. Specialization extended to all endeavors such as crafts, and the performing arts. People did not live in villages. Rather, homes were scattered throughout regions that extended from the mountain to the ocean. Hereditary chiefs for each region distributed the results of labor and vocations. The Chiefs were accorded special luxuries such as courts of retainers and performers. Those luxuries were justified because the chiefs were revered and the highest chiefs were considered to be living gods with power (*mana*), which, like electricity, was both useful and dangerous. The traditional rationale for Hawaiian dance and music was to activate the magic power of words, especially as they affected their aristocracy.

The chiefs had to be protected so that their metaphysical powers would not be dissipated; the common people had to be protected so that the metaphysical powers of the chiefs would not overwhelm them. The managers of these powers were the hereditary teachers and priests. They were particularly careful of the magic power of words that were instrumental in remembering genealogies, mythologies, historical events, and for guaranteeing the fertility of the chiefs, and more. Acting on behalf of the chiefs, the priests controlled the lives of the Hawaiian people. The word "tabu," so well known throughout the English-speaking world, is borrowed from Polynesian languages that include the Hawaiian language.

In the Hawaiian cosmology the islands were fished from the sea by a powerful demigod. The pantheon of deities comprised several categories of supernatural beings. They included four high gods, vocational gods, family guardians, demigods and trickster gods. All the deities were derived

from nature. The goddess of the volcano was, and is, associated with the dance. Her ongoing battle with the demigod of the sea, who is imaged as a supernatural rooting pig, is celebrated in song and dance as a battle between creation and destruction.

Clearly the very stratified Hawaiian class society, based on metaphysical powers and nature gods, was bound to clash with the Christian ethos. In 1820 the first missionaries arrived from the United States. They arrived at a propitious time, shortly after the Hawaiian people themselves had overthrown the hold of the Hawaiian priesthood. The reigning queen of all the islands quickly allied herself with the missionaries in order to regain her power as the supreme ruler. One of her first edicts was to banish the hula, the ancient Hawaiian chanting and dancing, that seemed to the missionaries to be vulgar, immoral, and at odds with the one God they brought to the Hawaiian people.

For the next century the hula teetered from going underground to regaining prestige, to going underground again, to becoming commodified for tourist consumption. By the end of the 1920s the Hawaiian people were romanticized as carefree children who wiggled their hips in simple dances that had no substance other than pure entertainment. Nearly every small town dancing school in the United States had classes in the hula taught by a teacher who had taken a few lessons on a tourist ship or in a hotel.

All that changed when the Hawaiian Renaissance began. Today hundreds, even thousands, of people seriously study the hula in both the Hawaiian Islands and even on the Mainland of the United States. The crowning achievement is to participate in and win an award at the Merrie Monarch Festival held each spring. This festival commemorates the last king of the islands who brought the hula out of hiding on the occasion of his coronation in 1883. And even though the hula was to undergo many subsequent obstacles, the king's acknowledgment of the cultural significance of the hula gave authority to the new era of serious hula. Today teaching and performing trivialized hulahula, as it was called, is no longer Politically Correct. Hula troupes have been invited to perform in prestigious venues such as the Kennedy Theatre in Washington, D.C., and two hula masters (Nalani Kanaka'ole and Pualani Kanaka 'ole) were named National Heritage Fellows in 1993.

In the Hawaiian Renaissance hula participants come from all walks of life and from all ancestries. They conduct their lives as ordinary Americans in every way other than their devotion to hula. In fact, then, the resurrected hula is completely decontextualized from its former traditions. It is important now in that it proclaims that Hawaiian culture still has power and that it is a power to be reckoned with. Indeed no politician in the Hawaiian Islands would dare to underestimate the Hawaiian presence. There is even a movement in the Hawaiian Islands for restoration of the monarchy and independence from the United States of America.

The revitalized hula is a model of confluence that is embraced by most Hawaiians and many non-Hawaiians as well.

Yaqui

When the Yaqui invited the Jesuits to come to their villages in 1617 they lived in scattered settlements along the bottomlands near the mouth of the Rio Yaqui at the Sea of Cortes in what is now

Mexico. Silt lands from the annual flooding of the river permitted two harvests a year of corn, beans, and squash, but over half of the diet was provided by hunting and fishing, and gathering of comestibles such as cactus fruit. If the occasion demanded it, talented leaders arose to become war chiefs. The Yaqui were known to be fierce defending warriors although they never went to battle for aggressive purposes. They were never defeated by the Spanish and therefore there were no Spanish activities among them in the 1600s. However, the Yaqui were very interested in the activities and teachings of the Jesuit priests who were working among neighboring tribes that had been defeated by the Spanish. To the Yaqui the Christian God seemed to resonate with their idea of their sun god (Our Father Who Art in Heaven), and Jesus seemed to be a powerful medicine man. They wanted a Roman Catholic priest to come to them to explain Christian mysteries so they could compare them with their own mysteries. Two Jesuits were finally given permission to come to the Yaqui in 1617 and the ensuing interaction of Roman Catholic and Yaqui religious beliefs was profound. As the Yaqui understood it, Jesus was a divine who had actually traveled and worked among the Yaqui people. They believed that Bethlehem is in Yaqui territory and not in some far away land. For the Yaqui, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the female counterpart of divinity. The result was Yaqui Catholicism. This was a whole new religion, not just a juxtaposition of two religions (Spicer).

Soon after the Jesuits arrived the Yaqui created eight permanent villages that each centered around an open air church and large plaza where ceremonies could be performed. They developed a ritual drama, or Passion Play, that incorporated their old ceremonies with the 40 day passion, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus. This is the oldest documented uninterrupted passion play in the world, even older than that of Oberammergau in Bavaria that dates from 1634.

Unlike western theatrical traditions that use real people to portray the *dramatis personae* but manipulate the depiction of time, the Yaqui version is just the opposite. It does not use people to impersonate the critical *personae* of the Passion but it does incorporate real time. The Oberammergau Passion Play is presented once every ten years and is over in a day. The Yaqui Passion Play reoccurs every year and takes the entire 40 days of Lent plus three. The persons of Jesus and Mary are represented by icons. The Yaqui people take vows to become members of sodalities that play the roles of either negative or positive forces, because this is miracle play that pits evil against good.

The negative forces include sodalities that represent the Roman army who hunt down and crucify Jesus. The officers of the Roman army comprise a sinister group. Another group is that of the common Roman soldiers and they are played as doltish clowns who are probably a reinterpretation of masked dancers from a pre-Christian era.

The women's sodalities are forces of good. One group is responsible for dressing the altar and icons; a group of *cantoras* sing sacred Latin and Yaqui texts; and societies for young women wave flags in the sign of the cross and carry the icons through the stations of the cross that surround each public plaza. A male sodality provides lay priests, and song leaders. Another male sodality is dedicated to the Virgin Mary. They entertain her with European style country dances, performed by males only. Then there are groups of children of both sexes who are little angels at the climaxing battle of the forces of evil with the forces of good. This enactment held on Holy Saturday, dramatizes

the charge of the Roman soldiers against the church. The forces of good defend the church and defeat the Roman army with a bombardment of blessings of flowers, song and dances.

In the defending army are the mythical Yaqui deer dancer and the sacred clowns/hosts-of-the-fiesta. They are not members of sodalities; rather they assume their roles because of a calling revealed in dreams, followed by an apprenticeship that prepares the deer dancer or clown/host-of-the-fiesta for a life-long transformation. Long ago the deer dancer and sacred clowns/hosts-of-the-fiesta participated in ancient Yaqui hunting rituals. They are still thought to live in the magical flower world of the Yaqui cosmos, who return at appropriate times to aid the Christians.

Ironically the magical deer has become a popular symbol for all of northern Mexico, even though the Mexican government committed terrible crimes against the Yaquis for wanting to maintain their own religion. The deer dance has been incorporated into Ballet Folklorico dance companies throughout Mexico that perform the dance as a romantic tragedy of man against nature, totally misunderstanding the real deer dance of the Yaqui.

In the United States, many have seen performances of folklorico dance companies, but few have seen the real Yaqui deer dance. Although the theatrical adaptation is exciting it bears little resemblance to the ancient Yaqui deer dance. Because of a new found apprehension against borrowing dances from the Other, modern dancers in the United States hesitate to incorporate alien forms in their choreographies and so the adapted deer dance is known, but not performed by non-Mexican groups. Little do they realize that what they think is the Mexican deer dance is really a misappropriation of the Yaqui deer dance. The Yaqui, for their part, ignore the misrepresentation of their deer dance. They are too busy with their ceremonies that they feel bring blessings to the world.

With the Yaqui there is a successful merging of two belief systems that give the Yaqui people their reason for existence and the will to persevere despite all obstacles.

Conclusions

A cultural confluence is a merging, a flowing together of cultures that produces a new configuration. I have examined the confluence of dance and music of three Native American groups with colonial influences. One avoids confluence; two embrace confluence. All three vivify their cultures through the effective uses of music and dance that are congruent with their distinctive world views and historical anomalies.

The strategies for coping with the outside world are: closure and restrictiveness by the Hopi Indians, a defense they never had to use before colonial powers threatened their ceremonial life; revivalism by the Hawaiian people, who survive culturally in their music and dance, for which they encourage the cooperation of non-Hawaiians and incorporate western models for special events; and syncretism by Yaqui Indians who reinterpreted their ancestral legacy and created a new religion by conflating two texts into one. (Hopi - reclusive; Hawaiian-inclusive; Yaqui - exclusive)

LYNN MAREE

DANCE AND POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

(When is a dee cee pee cee?)

but the work of man is only just beginning
and it remains to man to conquer all
the violence entrenched in the recesses of his passion.

And no race possesses the monopoly of beauty,
of intelligence, of force, and there
is a place for all at the rendezvous
of victory

Aime Césaire *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* translated by C.L.R. James in *The Black Jacobins*

This paper draws on most of my life's experience, rather than on extensive reading of academic texts. It is for South Africa, and for 1997, and will be both journalistic and polemical in style. I propose to look at the origins of political correctness, as espoused originally by the American "left"; to deal with what I see as the reasons for some of its concepts being used in South Africa now, first as the residue of positions espoused by the cultural desk during its opposition to apartheid and in the run-up to the elections in 1994, and now as part of affirmative action and calls for Africanisation.

I will only move on to dance in the latter part of the paper. So much is still to change in South Africa--so much of that change is still only hinted at. We need to see what impact the funding policies of the National Arts Council will have; we need to see whether cultural commissars will emerge. Our democracy is so young and the struggles for power in the arts still so open. It behoves us to decide what a society committed to ubuntu and a common humanity must do to put right the injustices of the past without instituting new straitjackets for artists and the arts.

Everyone attending this conference is committed to dance in society: some to particular kinds of dance, some to particular blendings. Everyone wants to see it thrive in the world for a whole range of reasons. Most of us believe that the arts have a contribution to make to a civilised society--be that by entertaining, by uplifting, by allowing its citizens to follow their bents and be artists, by subverting, helping us to laugh at ourselves, offering us beauty, non-utilitarian pursuits, becoming truly human and connected to each other through respect and fellow-feeling.

Notwithstanding the justice of the above accusations, there is a need to critique the proposed solutions in the name of logic, of truth, and of the future. The lie about white achievement was not that it left black achievement out, but that it brought colour or nationality or group identity in: the achievement was individual, or it was human. When Josiah Thugwane, a black South African, wins the marathon at the Olympics, he wins—he does not make every other black South African a fabulous long distance runner.

The claim that past suffering gives one a right to future comfort is far trickier: natural justice suggests it should be so, but not even lining all whites up against a wall and shooting them would produce that comfort—the Russian peasantry did not get rich when Stalin obliterated the kulaks: all societies have recognised that in reality only a few benefit from revolutionary change: the society needs to work to eliminate the causes of that suffering and inequality.

But the need to understand the impulse which produces these arguments, and the reasons for their credibility, is urgent. The animosities and disdain for real history in favour of essentialisations produced by imperialism, set perfect precedents for their replacement by equally untrue and dangerous belief systems. “The absolute evil of the native, replied to by the absolute evil of the settler” (Fanon) If the perks which were unfairly distributed then continue to exist now, then people will use every justification as to why it should now be their turn to have them. And it must be clear to us all what the dangers of essentialising blackness, or ethnicising politics, are.

THE CLAIMS OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

I want to propose that too close a concentration on political correctness will have a detrimental effect of every one of our ambitions for a new non-coercive culture. The sensible efforts in America to criticise the canon of The Great Tradition, has sometimes led to the proposition that all discrimination and commitment to quality and standards is elitist, racist, and anti-women. The possibility exists that this will amount to new anti-intellectual tyrannies which need the same sort of rigour in opposing them as the smug doctrines of white and male superiority they are set up to topple.

New hegemonies take the place of old; complaint and subjectivity have primacy in political, artistic, and academic circles. If, for instance, we accept that you have to be Zulu to dance Zulu dance properly, or to write about the experience of being Zulu, or to understand the culture properly, if we disallow the possibility of empathy, of the potential achievements of training, and cross-cultural understanding, then we are on the pathway to an utterly fragmented society: even a monocultural society will cease to be a society. “You can’t understand me, I can’t understand you, and you must allow the value of my experience, my knowledge, my artistic creations, my temper tantrums, my destructive impulses—to be paramount and unquestioned.”

We become shut up in privatised boxes, and we deny what to me is undeniable—the ability to judge and to appreciate worth and value in anything “other”. We know now that criteria for judging worth and quality vary, but we know that both can still be recognised, that there are shared yardsticks, that it is not all a question of like and dislike.

“Self-esteem comes from doing things well, and from discovering how to tell a truth from a lie, and from finding out what unites us as well as what separates us” (Hughes, pg 128)

A study of history teaches us that there is much to learn from African societies, and much to be ashamed of and disgusted by in western consumerist, militarist, capitalist societies. But even with ubuntu, even in a society where the stranger was welcomed and fed, and people felt connected to and dependant on one another, there was murder, there were dissidents, there were outcasts. All societies can learn from each other, all societies are in constant flux, all societies

IMPERIALISM AND APARTHEID

Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* provides a fully reasoned and amplified account of the effects of imperialism (and by extension, apartheid) on culture, both European and everything that culture touched with its empires. Imperialism produced a system of domination, though we must not forget that coloniser and colonised co-existed and battled with each other—the domination was never either straightforward or complete. European literature, music, drama—all are permeated with notions of ‘them’ and ‘us’, of a world beyond those European boundaries where the white man can go to have adventures, or to simply make money with virtually no effort or attention: wherever he goes he is in control, the “natives” are the other, and they at the very least cope less well. What whites were able to internalise from this was that they “had the power to give or withhold attention”: in the relationship of historical dependence and subordination, all the giving went one way. All history was the history of Europe. ‘Civilisation’ was European. Westerners/white South Africans still never doubt the universality of their culture: they do not understand that ballet too is a form of ethnic dance.

An example—when I was eighteen, I left Johannesburg to spend a year in Minnesota on an American Field Service scholarship. Asked as a foreigner to do a national dance, I put on my kilt and did a Highland Fling, explaining all the while that the Scots in South Africa had preserved their dances. My white New Zealand fellow-AFSer who was much wiser, or more deracinated, donned a Maori skirt and did a Maori folk-dance. It was a very long time ago, but it points up the Europeanised consciousness I had then, and my ignorance.

These effects were felt not only by the white man and woman, but also by those who were experiencing imperialism from the other side. In some cases, people were alienated from their traditional ways of life, and felt the need to model their behaviour, their dress, their value system, on that of the white man/woman. There is an convincing body of research in Britain which shows black children wanting white dolls, and straight blonde hair. What we are experiencing now on the part of Africanists, what Steve Biko tried to achieve with Black Consciousness, is an attempt to reclaim not only a way of life and its associated values, but also to redefine its status as a way of life to be proud of. And the bases and strength of these claims vary. Not all Africanists follow the same line of argument. I describe a few of these arguments below.

Whites lied when they ascribed all invention, all progress, to themselves: Blacks too made a contribution to civilisation. (True) There are many examples (Beethoven in classical music, in computer science, in architecture, in jazz). A new pantheon of heroes is uncovered and identified with on the basis of skin colour—an identarian consciousness continues;

it was the Africans who suffered most under apartheid, so now they deserve the perks—the jobs, the money, what decent jobs there are in the arts. V.S. Naipaul it was who coined the phrase “The Mimic Men”;

black Africans make up the majority of the population of South Africa: in a democracy the majority rules: the rainbow is ephemeral and the blue African sky goes on shining behind it—and that goes for the arts too;

South Africans live in an Americanised, alienated, violent society: we need to return to the values which we were tricked away from, to a golden age of ubuntu. (Would that was more than myth, would that it were possible).

“Those people compelled by the system to play subordinate or imprisoning roles within it emerge as conscious antagonists, disrupting it, proposing claims, advancing arguments that dispute the totalitarian compulsions of the world market” (Said, pg 406)

are flawed: the perfect one is still to be worked for, not found in the past. And there is no going back: the hybridising intrusions of human history are inescapable.

Many Black South Africans are completely at home in the English language and use western conventions in the arts and politics and economics, Indian authors have enriched both the excitement of the English language and the canon of the English novel, there are stunning Japanese ballet-dancers and Indian cellists--people everywhere already have access to more than one culture. Counter-arguments which claim that empathy is impossible lead to ethnic cleansing, they are anti-human, they deny our common history, our common bonds: they straitjacket and imprison us. There never was one Europe: there never was one Africa.

"No-one today is purely one thing. Labels are no more than starting points....imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. But its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, or black, or Western, or Oriental. Yet just as human beings make their own history, they also make their cultures and ethnic identities. No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages, and cultural geographies, but there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life was about. Survival in fact is about the connections between things....it is more rewarding--and more difficult--to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about us. But this also means trying not to rule others, not trying to classify them or put them in hierarchies".

Said, pg.407-8

Freed from the shackles of exclusion, disability and awe, we can do what Chakrabarty calls "provincialise Europe" and own, interact with, choose from their arts and artefacts from a position of confident equality.

DANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA NOW

Dance in South Africa is doing that borrowing, sometimes awkwardly, sometimes unconsciously, but voluntarily and easily. Take gum-boot dancing for example. Whites in South Africa, and abroad, see it as uniquely African--but its existence and its development depended on the gum-boot, the mines, the dance competitions. It then spread beyond the compounds, beyond the townships and the cities, beyond the adult male. And now it is becoming theatricalised, it is sometimes a tool of expression inside a dance piece. In May I saw a gum-boot dance done by the mainly white young boys in the Durban Boys Choir, so even the musicians have 'borrowed' it!

The dance on which this paper focuses is that over which there may be arguments of political correctness: that is, dance which aspires to be 'art', which wishes to be funded as art, and dance as it should be taught in a national curriculum. It is not concerned with the dance aspects of 'way of life' culture. With culture one does not need to debate political correctness--no-one is looking to stop Scottish country dance classes, or Greek get-togethers, or the celebration by the Taiwanese community of the Lion dance, or the Indian community encouraging young girls to study bharata natyam, or the coloured community encouraging their young girls to study ballet privately, or everyone from enjoying ballroom dancing. Nor do we need to worry about raves, clubs and videos.

Given that focus, here follows a very brief (because dealt with elsewhere at this conference) snap-shot of what is happening in South African theatre dance. Here I want to pay tribute to the conceivers, the funders, and to Phillip Stein and the staff of FNB Vita, for the contribution made by Dance Umbrella over the years of its existence in South Africa. Much of the shared recognition of the breadth of the dance as art experience is owed to the open platform which it has offered steadily over the last nine years.

Two of South African dance's currently most favoured sons are Boyzie Cekwana and Vincent Mantsoe. They are both black, both use their own histories, which include all they have learnt in the wider world about dance and ritual, about life and their place in the world. They feel free to use different cultural vocabularies. Their artistic vision is their own. Mbongeni Ngema with his popular successes and massive emulation, has just collaborated with the dancer/choreographer Simpiwe Magazi on the choreography for his latest musical "Maria, Maria", mixing traditional Zulu dance with American conventions, with gospel movement patterns, with contemporary motifs, with township beat. In his inimitable way he is offering training, jobs, and a philosophy to his artists, and a slice of South African life, writ large, to both South African and international audiences. Robyn Orlin offers performance art with a more challenging, more personal viewpoint. Jay Pather, Artistic Director of Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre, is telling our stories, building a new eclectic South African dance language. Gary Gordon, Alfred Hinkel work here, responding in personal and political and movement terms to this moment. Jeyesperi Moopen works with her classical Indian dance base, her awareness and experience of African and contemporary movement, uses her dancers and Moving Into Dance dancers, and builds a work we all recognise as having something to say to us all, to resonate for all of us. All the time an Africanising is going on, even among those most rooted elsewhere like the two large ballet companies; Africanising in the sense of finding what is ours, of distancing ourselves from Europe--almost like that cultural flowering which began in Australia in the sixties as a conscious shaking off of a borrowed identity.

A dance curriculum has been designed for South African schools. It is an enlightened creative and inclusive curriculum. It aims to empower people through dance, and with trained teachers, and sufficient resources, it could be instrumental in building a common culture, offering an introduction to dance as a non-verbal form of communication, improving cognitive development, and forging bonds in the Blacking sense as people dance a feeling of connectedness, of community among cultures, into existence.

Participative projects which bring young people together, like The Playhouse Company's Reachout, show in their popularity year after year that young people recognise the quality of the experience and want to repeat it, believing along with the organisers that anyone can dance. In these projects personal identity and ability rather than cultural identity or ability need emphasis. You do the movement this or that way because of its internal needs, the movement is drawn from our hybrid background, and all dynamics, musics, body parts, isolations, are available to us all. Our prisons and our hospitals, if offered this work, would see its value.

What is happening is all of it good, and none of it enough. It needs protecting and expanding.

THE FUTURE

Within the arts, and for our purposes, within dance, we need to undo everyone's twisted ways of seeing: we need to re-invent ourselves, away from the imitative and impositional worship of things European and American, without switching then to worship of a stereotyped, idealised 'Africa'. We need to stand tall, and from that position of strength and confidence borrow, steal, discard. Neither the cultural strut nor the cultural cringe. Germaine Acogny said some years ago: "the Europeans pinched our dance traditions; if we see useful concepts in theirs--we'll 'discover' them"!

We need clarity, confidence, honesty and rigour, we need to nurture talent--in all aspects of dance--and to increase the opportunities for professional careers in them. This involves the provision of access, resources, training, and infrastructure. Safe opportunities for experiment must be found--in the re-invention of ourselves there will be many artistic failures. Cross-fertilisation is the key, not forced or self-conscious fusion, nor pastiche. Informed borrowing, by

all from all. We need to find what John Berger calls "another way of telling".

We need to insist on the possibility of distinguishing the good from the mediocre--relativising is not enough: we share a history: when we criticise we are criticising from within. And we need to have yardsticks which are not found only in the market-place. Richard Long, an African-American dance academic said in a lecture at The Playhouse in May: "You can't argue with success", but the fight against imperialism and apartheid could have been seen to be doomed, apartheid seemed impregnable once, art-forms change because artists see new ways of doing things, and have new things to say, and material success does not always last. Our role-models need to be more than celebrities: they must be worthy of admiration.

We need to carry our mission far beyond the professional and stage dance world: a dancing South African will learn his school-lessons better, be in touch with his feelings and those of others, and have a sense of what it is to be a South African and a fully-functioning human being. This means work in teacher-training colleges, with street-kids, in prisons, in hospitals. Big ambitions, but brighter, lighter, new worlds to aim for.

We are reaching for an integrated culture which embraces the counterpoint, acknowledges the entwining, avoids the bland, and gives us a catholicity of vision which Raymond Williams espoused as follows

"There are ideas, and ways of thinking, with the seeds of life in them, and there are others, perhaps deep in our minds, with the seeds of a general death. Our measure of success in recognising these kinds, and in naming them making possible their common recognition, may be literally the measure of our future"

Eagleton, 1989

Writing in 1940, of a visit she made to Yugoslavia in the late Thirties, Rebecca West said:

"A proud people acquire a habit of resistance to foreign oppression, and by the time they have driven out their oppressors they have forgotten that agreement is a pleasure and that a society which has attained tranquillity will be able to pursue many delightful ends. There they continue to wrangle, finding abundant material in the odds and ends of injustices that are left over from the period of tyranny and need to be tidied up in one way or another. Such politics are a leak in the community. Generous passion, pure art, abstract thought, run through it and are lost. There remain only the obstinate solids which cannot be dissolved by argument or love, the rubble of hate and prejudice and malice, which are of no price. The process is never absolute, since in all lands some people are born with the inherent sweetness which closes that leak, but it can exist to a degree that alarms by the threat of privation affecting all the most essential goods of life; and in Croatia I had from time to time felt very poor.

Question: when is a dee cee pee cee?

Answer: when it is both personal and collective.

Lynn Maree
June 1997

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DESTINATION: RHYTHM NATION - A SOUTH AFRICAN DANCE WRITER'S PERSPECTIVE

BY ADRIENNE SICHEL

The title "Destination: Rhythm Nation" is a variation on the by now clichéd reference to South Africa as the Rainbow Nation. This was bestowed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu when this country miraculously gained its democracy on April 27 1994, officially ending over four devastating decades of Apartheid rule.

There's a lot of pride attached to this symbolic coming together of races and cultures. There's also a lot of cynicism. One view is that the most important colour - black - is missing from the rainbow. Look even closer at this patriotic symbol and it is pockmarked with dissension and pockets of social and political resistance. Certain groups feel threatened in terms of their language and culture. Despite resistance, and even obstruction, a new culture is evolving. Yet nowhere is the confluence of cultures and histories more evident than in South African theatre dance and increasingly in dance training.

My perspective of South African dance, which is inclusive of all traditional, urban and theatre forms, is as a theatre journalist and dance writer who observes, reports on and records processes and developments, primarily for a daily newspaper in Africa. This may not be criticism, or research, in the formal academic sense, but along the way journalists in South Africa, elsewhere in Africa, in Asia, and other continents where contemporary dance is a relatively new occurrence, have a contribution to make towards opening debate and identifying criteria for the 21st Century.

When we speak of criticism it is usually in a Western sense. In Africa, and in certain other societies, it is not polite to criticise others, even if they're artists. How then is evaluation conveyed, either verbally or in print? This is only one provocative question that daily faces anyone writing about the arts and culture in South Africa. Education is certainly one of the long term answers, but woven into that system of criteria will be certain elements perhaps not included in the Western approach.

South Africa has 11 official languages, which is nothing compared to many other African countries. It also has rhythms which belong to specific indigenous cultural groups. So it's essential to be able to distinguish between West African rhythms and Southern African ones. The challenge is also to be able to identify, for example Zulu, Pedi and Shangaan rhythms. The same applies to steps. A Zulu indlamu stamp differs from that of a Xhosa, Swazi or Sotho stamp.

It is essential that reviewers and interviewers versed in classical ballet technique and Western modern dance history have to be aware of, and knowledgeable, about these cultural forms which are synonymous with customs, languages and musical traditions. This approach is becoming obligatory precisely because in South Africa, and countries like Poland, Russia and Korea, dancers and choreographers, increasingly trained in Western techniques, are fusing this knowledge with their cultural heritage and expression.

In South Africa there is also a broader social context. The President, Nelson Mandela, danced at his inauguration, and at many a state or public occasion, either on a sports field, or in Parliament with other heads of African states. This is also a country of war dances related to peoples' culture. The most recent is the toyi-toyi, which was used extensively during the political struggle. After Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990, it started becoming a dance of celebration.

Nowadays, while it remains a dance of social protest for activists and trade unionists, the toyi-toyi is also used by educationists and artists waging war on AIDS, child abuse and rape and by champions of women's and animal rights.

Informing this social background is the fact that for the majority of South Africans, dance is something you do at weddings, funerals, celebrations, circumcision or traditional healing rituals. Even in the workplace, or simply spontaneously. It is not necessarily something you purchase a ticket for to see in a theatre.

At the other end of the scale this is also a country with an established theatre dance tradition. It is also a country in which the culturally diverse dance community, united under the Dance Alliance banner, lobbied at the highest level to bring about reform in the funding system and the establishment of a National Arts Council.

South African dance history is badly fragmented. Aching gaps exist in terms of development and historical documentation, some of which is distorted. There is one binding ingredient emerging- its rhythm heavily rooted in the African tradition of call and response. Not only African rhythm is involved. Kwa-Zulu Natal has the largest Indian population outside India. This community has its origins in indentured labourers brought to the British colony of Natal last century. During Apartheid the Indian dance community was culturally isolated and self-sufficient but in the late 80s the barriers began dropping especially at Dance Umbrella in Johannesburg.

Bharata Natyam and later Kathak emerged in fusions in companies like Jazzart Dance Theatre, in Cape Town, whose collaborative process included many dance forms. This was reflected in their signature dance work "Bolero" (1989; an updated version is being performed during this conference) which fused elements of Indian classical dance and ritual with South African gumboot dancing and a modern dance technique using weight.

Another important influence is Jayespri Moopen, now based in Benoni in Gauteng, who has spent years experimenting cross-culturally with African and Indian dance culminating in "Talas in Conversation" (1996), also to be performed at this conference. Three young African men, trainees at Moving into Dance, and Moopen's Tribanghi Dance Theatre, respond in movement to mainly West African and Indian percussive rhythms.

Fusion, which should be much discussed at this conference, makes its own critical demands. Top of the list is a knowledge of the original form, the source. For the past five years certain South African choreographers have been making headway after years of experimenting and avoiding the pitfalls of artificial appropriation and superficial application.

What credentials must a reviewer have? As much background and practical experience as possible in addition to an inquiring open mind when it comes to recognising evolving aesthetics. In South Africa it has become obligatory for anyone assessing performance to have a working knowledge, for example, of the Martha Graham technique, the Cecchetti and and Royal Academy of Dancing Vaganova methods as well as gumboot dancing. Gumboots is a workers' dance which has crossed over into theatre. It has its own highly complex rhythms anchored in weight and physical and vocal call and response. In this whirlpool of colliding forms the onus is often on the writer to find words in analysing an emergent vocabulary.

Another dangerous area is ritual. Certain pertinent questions have to be asked and answered by the reviewer. Foremost of which is: "Is it possible to theatricalise, or to fuse traditional dance with other traditional forms or other techniques without homogenising or vandalising the essence of the form?" Naturally the dangers of dealing with a diverse dance culture and rituals are writ large. This presents the writer and reviewer with equally perilous challenges be it in South Africa or elsewhere. There's also always the risk of being branded a racist.

Three quotations which I encountered have provided me with a valuable springboard. The first, which has become a working mantra, was by Katherine Dunham, during an interview on her technique and work process in a film then housed in the Kennedy Centre Performing Arts Library, in Washington DC "Dancing is a way of knowing - an affirmation of culture," Katherine Dunham said.

The second was the question "Does dance automatically lose its social place the minute it goes on the stage?" posed by Village Voice dance editor Elizabeth Zimmer at the 1993 Dance Critics Association Conference in New York City.

And finally, "Once it (African dance) leaves the soil it is no longer ethnic, it is theatre". This observation was made at a performance by Chuck Davis, director of the African American Dance Ensemble at the 1993 American Dance Festival, Durham, North Carolina.

Based on experience and observation in South Africa, Africa and elsewhere, my answer to Elizabeth Zimmer's question is a confident "no it doesn't have to". Chuck Davis's statement gets a loudly emphatic "no". As has been proved by certain South African choreographers on the local, and now the international dance stage, there is a way of respectfully creating theatre with original ritualistic and traditional material. Naturally there are always inherent dangers in taking this license. Obviously something always gets lost, the context and performance space is different to start with. The test is how much of the spirit, the essence, of the original is preserved in its transition from the communal, or sacred space, to the stage and to what extent does it transform, or enhance, a fresh form of expression.

As African dancers and choreographers start communicating with each other on homeground (as opposed to meeting only at foreign festivals and conferences), and sharing ideas, certain interesting concepts and approaches surface. For instance at the Premier Concours Choreographique International Inter Africain held in a war-ravaged Luanda, Angola, in December 1995, the voting procedure for the jury was an eye-opener. The jury, on which I served, included critics from Paris, leading French choreographer Mathilde Monnier (director of the National choreography institute in Montpellier), Paris-based Burkina Faso choreographer Irene Tassembedo plus journalists from Ivory Coast and Angola.

The scoring - as motivated by the event's co-ordinator Alphonse Tierou, a Paris-based choreographer and researcher from Ivory Coast - favoured choreography; imagination; music; costumes, make-up and hair over technique, which was listed last. Technique earned three points compared to the five awarded to choreography and imagination and four for music. The countries represented at the competition were Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Madagascar (special prize), South Africa (took first place) and Zimbabwe (second place). Ironically the companies with the strongest Western and/or contemporary African dance technique won anyway.

This event also highlighted the fact once again that in Africa culture is very political. The two contemporary dance companies from Ivory Coast couldn't compete. Instead, a traditional company was sent. The contemporary companies weren't considered "African" enough by the government officials.

Similarly Tumbuka dance company (founded by Neville Campbell, former artistic director of Britain's Phoenix Dance Company), which has been well received in South Africa and in Europe, is largely ignored by official Zimbabwean circles especially in terms of funding. Tumbuka is also regarded by the traditionalists as not being "African" enough. This company was not invited to participate in Britain's Africa '95 Festival's Pan-Essent-Move Workshop on Pan-African dance at the Victoria Falls.

On the African continent the role and function of the contemporary African dancer/choreographer/musician creating for the stage is also a multi-faceted one. It carries with it elements of the shaman, storyteller, poet, healer, educator, facilitator and entertainer.

The Southern African repertory has certain major works that include many of these criteria. Sylvia Glasser's "Tranceformations" (1990), a dance theatre work dealing with the decimation of the San (Bushman) and their culture. A commissioned electronic score by Sean Naidoo used original music. On a smaller scale, but just as powerful, was "Solo for a Street Child" (1993), created by British choreographer Neville Campbell for Alois Mangwenya, danced to mbira music, composed, and played on stage, by dancer/musician Donald Kudumba. This solo integrated traditional Shona rhythm movement and modern vocabulary in an urban context, as rain poured from the ceiling.

Christopher Kindo, whose personal and artistic history is the embodiment of the Apartheid embattled artist, set a major fusion ball rolling in his 1990 solo "Me", his farewell to the Pact Dance Company. Kindo, clad only in a long split saffron loin cloth explored his ancestral African slave, Indian and Malay history in tandem with his experience as a ballet-trained dancer.

On graduation from UCT Ballet School in the late '70s Kindo was initially forbidden by Apartheid law to dance on the racially segregated South African stage. In "Me" many elements seamlessly fused - West African and Bharata Natyam arm movements and positions, entrechats, grand jete. The choreography was infused with constantly shifting rhythmic dynamics, weight and speed.

The sequel "Me and You", for Johannesburg's Free Flight Dance Company, like "Me" also set to Zakir Hussein's world music, extends this cross-cultural choreographic signature. It has become a major South African repertory work.

Last year saw the consolidation of "Ahimsa-Ubuntu", an equally significant work, which traces the history of South Africa's disenfranchised peoples. This production was conceptualised and scripted by sociologist, writer and political activist Fatima Meer, who is the director of the University of Natal's Institute for Black Research. Directed and choreographed by Jay Pather, Ahimsa (Hindi for non-violence) Ubuntu (an Nguni word loosely translated as humanity) was originally commissioned and performed on television in 1995 to launch Meer's book "The South African Gandhi 1893-1914". So taken was visiting guest Sonia Gandhi, widow of assassinated Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, that her interest resulted in a tour of four Indian cities in November 1996. Farewell performances were given to schools and invited audiences in Durban's opera house.

"Ahimsa-Ubuntu" highlights the fact that South African dance increasingly plays an educational role. From 1998 every child in South Africa from grade 1 to grade seven will have arts and culture (including creative movement) as one of the learning areas.

The history syllabus is still a shambles. Several community theatre and dance companies have responded to remedy this. "Ahimsa-Ubuntu" was brought to life by Jay Pather and the newly formed Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre (Zulu for "crossing over to a new place altogether") in collaboration with Durban's Playhouse Dance Company and Pravika Nandikishore's Kathak Kendra.

The stage reverberated with call and response stamping as chapters of South African political history were depicted through rhythmic and spoken dialogue against a background of archival and news footage. A grand jete announced colonial occupation; pirouettes replaced gunshots, tap dance and gumboot routines depicted the rise of racism and the 1952 defiance campaign. Indian dance interacting with the aggressive toyi-toyi depicted the Soweto riots on June 16 1976.

The growth of political resistance, across racial and cultural divides, was effectively communicated to a synthesised score built out of variations and fragments on melodies from the hymn Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrika (South Africa's national anthem), Rossini's "Thieving Magpie" and Raghupathi Raghav Raja Ram.

Durban-born Pather has doggedly pioneered his vision of democratic dance. He studied English and African literature at the University of Durban Westville and is a Fulbright scholar and New York University masters graduate in theatre and dance.

While working with Cape Town's Jazzart Dance theatre he went to Angola to direct the exiled Amandla Awethu, the African National Congress's cultural group in exile. This background has enabled and empowered Pather to take historical material and events and refine them in dance through a choreographic charter.

In an interview Pather articulated his concerns. "The confluence of classical Indian dance and traditional African dance, the rhythmic quality of both forms is very complex. The semiotics are so rich in all the traditional performance from indlamu (traditional dance) to isicathimiya (an urban choral form). The problem with the abhinaya (quality of expression) is that in a big venue these subtleties get lost. My concern is that the dance is not just foot stomping. I was anxious to keep the forms with their centres. The African dancers worked hard at finding the original steps. The same with the classical Indian dancers. The deeper you drill, you deepen those natural forms and things start happening at an intrinsic level."

As works like "Tranceformations" and "Ahimsa-Ubuntu" prove, the new breed of South African storyteller/history teacher takes dance class and connects with the past and the present through a rainbow of rhythms. They also present the South African choreographer as an anthropologically sensitive prospector and gem cutter. As for the role of the South African dance writer time, history and heated debate, will decide.

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A DELICATE BALANCE

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This paper considers some important issues involved in the establishment and consolidation of a dance culture in an educational setting from an Australian point of view. The various educational institutions in Australia have faced enormous problems with dance education as they have sought to reconcile the demands of an Anglo-American derived educational philosophy with the need for recognition of an immensely rich range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies and the awareness of the value of many recent immigrant cultures.

In my home state, New South Wales, the last 20 years have been exciting as a whole culture of dance in education - from infants to tertiary - has been initiated, nurtured and recognised. This paper is partly a report on what has been happening in N.S.W. in particular, and Australia in general and partly a philosophical consideration of what would seem to be some critical issues for dance educators. These thoughts and suggestions are offered to South African dance educators in a spirit of collegiality - not as a prescription, but as a motivation for discourse and decision which hopefully will assist with the growth and development of another country's dance in education practices.

AUSDANCE

The existence of a powerful professional organisation and national advocacy body has assisted dance, and dance in education in Australia immensely.

In 1977 a group of dance enthusiasts gathered in Melbourne and voted into existence what is now known as 'The Australian Dance Council' or 'Ausdance'. This organisation is essentially a service and advocacy body which presents a united voice for dance. Its mission statement is "to facilitate, educate and inspire the dance community to

reach its potential as a dynamic force within local, national and international arenas..." (Ausdance, 1997a). As an example of its influence and effectiveness in promoting dance it is seen as fulfilling a range of functions. It has lobbied successfully with the Federal Government to have dance included as an art form in its own right in the National Arts Statement. Each state branch publishes a Dance Directory which is a network of local dance studios, teachers, choreographers, companies and other dance personnel. It organises and coordinates dance workshops for teachers, dancers and the general public. Most state offices are resource centres for print and audio-visual dance material. It is also a publisher of dance works. It has played varying roles in commissioning and publishing conference papers and reports on Australian Dance Companies, Safe Dance, Dancers' Transitions into other careers and Dance Teaching Guidelines (See Bibliography). Its current priorities are assisting professional dancers, encouraging culture specific dance, promoting audience development and increasing the range and availability of technology for dance.

Of course, all the above could not have been realised without 8 years of voluntary work followed by Federal and State funding that pays for full time, hard-working administrative and organisational staff. It should be noted that all Ausdance's achievements are even more extraordinary in the context of 'the tyranny of distance' (Perth to Sydney is 4 hours by air) and a national population of only 17 million.

A major significance of Ausdance in the context of this paper is that it is an inclusive organisation which represents all dance personnel on both a state and national level. Internally, this inclusiveness gives its members a unique insight into the practices and beliefs of colleagues in other areas of dance. Publicly, it gives the organisation the political clout of speaking with one voice on behalf of many. Speaking as a dance educator, my Ausdance membership provides me with a monthly journal of dance news, events, concerts and resources. Ausdance lobbied the state government last year when my campus was under the threat of closure. It provided a masterclass in January with the visiting Brazilian dance from Bahia, it is organising a big national annual dance conference, it assists me to locate part time staff and it enabled my students to receive maximum publicity for a recent 'Streets of Dance' program in

Sydney. It is a remarkable organisation and I commend it to you.

TECHNIQUE AND STYLES

A problem that has occupied Australian dance educators has been the quest for a system or systems of movement education that would physically educate students to their maximum advantage. There has been a large amount of research in the last 20 years into the efficiency, range and potential of the human body. Initially, much of this research came from physical education (e.g. JOPERD May-June 1987, Nov-Dec 1990). However, an increasing number of dance researchers are providing information on how the human body can best be trained. Martha Myers (1983) stimulated a rewarding debate in her seminal collation of articles on the Body Therapies. In 1994 the 6th Triennial Dance and the Child Conference in Sydney (Schiller and Spurgeon, 1994) contained several important papers on Somatic Movement Education. In 1995 Salt Lake City hosted the 3rd Symposium on the Science and Somatics of Dance (Soloman and Soloman, 1995). We dance educators are now in a much better position from which to make an informed choice of technique and styles "given the bewildering variety of forms in existence" (Adshead, 1981:29).

At my University and in the NSW Department of Education's schools we have based our dance curricula upon a modern dance technique. This phrase 'modern dance technique' for us refers to a way of using the body that is anatomically sound; that allows maximum facility of use and that is as free as possible from externally imposed stylistic influences. It assumes intelligently acquired physical skills and appropriate knowledge which lead to a heightened anatomical capability. It has as its aim the complete mastery of the body as an instrument of expression and communication. In the four year dance double degree course that I coordinate, classes in this technique are accompanied by enough anatomy, physiology and kinesiology to provide students with a clear understanding of their bodies and of safe dance practices. Upon this movement education base we then extend the students' abilities with Open Classical Ballet classes, a variety of Jazz styles and a somatic education program (usually Yoga and Pilates with an introduction to Alexander and Feldenkrais work).

Spread across the four years of full time study the above model is bearing fruit. I do not have research findings to substantiate this claim: I can only assert that the beneficial results of this pattern of movement education have been evident in my students' dance ability and knowledge. The important point in including this information is not that others should adopt the above program on the basis of an unsubstantiated claim but that intending dance educators should investigate and construct their own dance technique education *based on the available research findings on how best the human body may learn to dance*. There are several issues that are germane to this investigation.

Firstly, I feel that it is vital to treat with circumspection the claims made on behalf of certain styles of dancing that theirs is the only true, real way to achieve a proper dance education. Unfortunately, understandable political and economic circumstances frequently lead some dance teachers to have a complete vested interest in the style that they teach. Similarly, it behoves those of use who write curricula and syllabi to make sure that the styles of dance made available for students to study reflect known scientific and somatic principles not our own personal likes and dislikes.

Secondly, whatever style of dance, or pattern of movement education that is taught needs to be taught carefully, intelligently and sympathetically. Recent Australian research has cast doubt on the pedagogical skills of some dance teaching (Innes, 1988: Beall, 1989, Stock, 1993) whilst the study of how dance is taught is receiving deserved attention (Skrinar and Moses, 1988: Schlaich and DuPont, 1993: Gough, 1993). Ausdance has just issued "Australian Guidelines for Dance Teachers" which is a booklet designed to specify and promote best practice (1997b).

Thirdly, the issue of the time per week that needs to be spent on acquiring and mastering a dance technique is still, it seems a contentious one. In 1989 the visiting American Dance anthropologist Drid Williams wrote in a controversial memo to Ausdance about Australia's then B.A. Dance courses that "students will be so overloaded with physical work/activities that they will have no time for study" (1989a:2). This opinion went counter to the prevailing orthodoxy that demanded as

many hours per day as possible be spent on dance technique. In 1989 Martha Myers expounded on her 'twice from half' theory when she explained that an anatomically aware and intelligent student could get twice the benefit from half as many well taught technique classes (1989).

In my dance degree course students receive one 90 minutes dance technique class per day. Some would argue that this is not enough but I can only respond 'enough for what?' It is probably not enough if a student wants to join the Australian Ballet or Sydney Dance Company but I would maintain that it is enough time to acquire a good, solid technique and an articulate, choreographable body and it leaves enough time for a student to read, write, improvise and choreograph and to lead a full and enriching student life.

CONCEPTUALISING DANCE IN THE CURRICULUM

The problem of exactly how to conceptualise dance in an educational institution is one that has occupied many dance educationalists recently. Dance fulfils so many roles and functions in various human societies that those of us who advocate dance being taught in schools, colleges and universities have to begin by asking ourselves 'dance as WHAT?'. Kraus et al (1991) devote several chapters to the history and philosophy of dance in education. It would seem that over the last 200 years at least in both the U.S.A. and the U.K., dance as taught in an educational institution has been taught mainly as either fitness, or as a beneficial creative educational outlet or as performance training. In my English primary school, dance was firmly allied to music and I was taught regional folk dances and encouraged to just 'dance to music' because it was seen to be assisting my creativity. At my teacher training college dance was taught by an ex-pupil of Rudolf Laban so it was what the English called Modern Educational Dance but it was firmly part of the Physical Education syllabus and only taught to female students. The men played sports. For many years and in many institutions dance has been seen as part of physical education. Indeed, the recent English National Curriculum placed dance under the aegis of P.E. as one of six areas of study (D.E.S. 1991). Jacqueline Smith-Autard has written a book on the

theoretical basis of dance in Education (1994). She considers the merits of the educational (creative-subjective) model and the professional (objective, skill-based) model of dance and she recommends what she names the 'midway model' i.e. a way of theorising dance that combines the best of both educational and professional models (Smith-Autard, 1994: 26ff).

In N.S.W. we have adopted our version of this midway model. Dance is conceptualised as an art form, to be performed, created and appreciated. It is theorised as a close relative of music and drama and its proper companions are deemed to be the arts in general. In N.S.W. secondary schools dance is increasingly being placed in performing arts departments. Brinson (1991) makes a plea for this position in Chapter Three of his book 'Dance As Education' For myself and my colleagues in schools and universities in N.S.W. there are the following tangible benefits to be gained from conceptualising and teaching dance as an art form in its own right.

Firstly it places it in a coherent common framework in relation to the other arts. Music and drama, are performed, created and appreciated. Features of dance such as style, form, motif and abstraction, for example, are common to the arts. For the spectator, both dance and the arts of image production and object construction are visual experiences. For the performer, dance and drama are kinaesthetic experiences. The list is fruitful and, I suspect, endless. Such commonalities and collaborations can only benefit dance students. It is interesting to note that a recent television documentary on Dance in the 20th Century (1992) featured a half hour segment on the explosion of choreographic invention that occurred in France in the 1980's after the newly elected Mitterand government increased arts funding. One choreographer after another spoke of an initial education in photography, painting, sculpture, literature... etc: not dance.

Secondly, it gives dance an objectivity which can then be assessed and evaluated - essential features if we are going to claim a solid educational benefit for our discipline. The British philosopher David Best has written extensively on the importance and viability of objectivity in the arts in general and dance in particular. "The arts can be

as fully educational, because they as fully involve rationality and understanding, as any other area of the curriculum". (Best, 1992:2).

Thirdly, to regard dance as an art form in no way negates its previously perceived educational advantages. A dance curriculum centred on performance, creation and appreciation can be one of the best ways of promoting fitness. (Leonard, 1975:6). Dance making involves the student choreographer in a considerable creative endeavour. Performing and producing dance events can assist with professional development and socialisation skills. Appreciating dance involves being able to read dance, write dance and speak dance. The midway model of Smith-Autard can fulfil many educational objectives.

Lastly, this way of conceiving of dance allows for a wide range of student interests and intention. We need to bear in mind that our groups of students will include some who wish to be dance professionals, some who are mildly curious and many who are interested in learning about dance for its own sake rather than for performance.

There is, however, a possible drawback to the 'dance as art' model. As Keali'inohomoko (1980:41) has pointed out "anthropologists study dance as 'non-art' because the discipline of anthropology is committed to the principle of cultural relativity". We need to recognise that to study dance as art is a western ethnocentric viewpoint which may place it at odds with the approximately 75% of incidences of dancing that are not art. (Williams 1989b). As an example of this cultural clash, I would like to cite a problem facing dance educators in São Paulo, Brazil. Lilian Vilela, a prominent Brazilian dance educationalist, pointed out recently that 'what to teach' in dance in their schools was problematic. On the one hand if you teach samba, frevo, forro, maracatu or any other of the students' indigenous styles there is really no point because the students can do it much better than you. On the other hand if you teach the 'perform, create, appreciate' model it is an alien culture for the students. Their attitude is 'if we can't do this on the streets at night, what's the point of learning it?' (Vilela, 1996). For many Brazilians, dance is something that everybody does, not something that you learn in schools.

A similar problem exists in parts of Australia. For many Australian Aboriginal cultures, it may not be permitted to dance some dances without permission or to teach the dances without consent of the elders. The idea of discussing, analysing and interpreting a dance is a culture specific phenomenon and we need to be aware of and sensitive to different attitudes towards dance and dancing. Do we need to look for and create a link between Western performance dance, staged and subsidised, the street dance and nightclub dance of our students and the 'dance as art' occurring in schools? Or should they be discrete events? Certainly, when conceptualising dance in the curriculum, educationalists need to pay attention to the dance of indigenous cultures and other non-western ethnic groups.

INDIGENOUS DANCE AND WESTERN DANCE

An involvement in dance in education requires, in my opinion, working out a mutually beneficial and respectful relationship between indigenous dance cultures and superimposed Western dance practices. I cannot improve on the recommendation of one of South Africa's leading educationalists Sylvia Glasser who said "I believe that it is possible to appropriate with appreciation or integrate with integrity". (Glasser, 1993:9). As Glasser rightly asserts, fusion will happen anyway on many levels. We need to ensure that such fusion is respectful and non-exploitative. I wish to focus, in this section of the paper, on the many benefits to be gained by western dance educators from learning about indigenous dance cultures. One of the problems for those of us brought up in a western, white culture is our overwhelming tendency to believe in our cultural supremacy. Prominent dance anthropologists such as Keali'inohomoku and Williams have done much recently to alert western dance educationalists to culturally inappropriate ways of conceptualising and classifying dance and dance history. As an Aboriginal dancer recently said, white Australians tend to project images of indigenous dance as part of a romantic image of themselves and their past. (Blanco, 1997). This image is at stark variance to the reality of how many white Australians actually treat many Aboriginal people. We need to respect our indigenous cultures and to realise that western dance practices have much to learn from them.

Firstly, here in South Africa you have access to some wonderful indigenous dance styles that are very beneficial to dance in education. On a recent study tour to my original country, England, I was left in no doubt as to the vitality and importance of Afro-Caribbean derived dance styles in schools. There are many talented black English dance teachers educating and enthusing their students via 'Afro' classes. I was told by several English dance educators that this was the style that appealed in general, to all: black, white, male, female, older, younger. I must confess to a personal bias here. Afro-Caribbean derived dance styles were one of my first introductions to dance twenty eight years ago. I was fascinated by the energy and skill of this style of moving and it remains my favourite style. In 1995 Vincent Mantsoe from Sylvia Glasser's 'Moving Into Dance' visited Sydney and taught a series of classes to my university students. The dexterity and skill of his classes was evident. Inexperienced and experienced students alike could participate with equal enjoyment. As an educationalist I find this style of dancing the most useful: it is accessible to novices yet can be challenging to the experienced. It does much to generate interest in dance in schools and I believe that its full educational value has yet to be realised. We are fortunate that so many African/Caribbean/Latin American dancers are willing to share their styles with us.

Secondly, it would seem that western dancers can benefit kinesthetically from indigenous dance styles. The choreographer Jiri Kylian visited several Australian Aboriginal cultures in the early 1980s and his piece 'The Stamping Ground' was one of the results. Watching this fascinating dance I was struck by the new vocabulary of shapes and movements that the dancers had acquired. I was no less impressed by Kylian's company when it visited Australia last year. It seems certain that there are whole new ways of moving that are waiting to be experienced by western dancers.

Just as Kylian's dancers appear to have benefited from exposure to a new vocabulary, so it seems that many indigenous dance companies are following Alvin Ailey's lead: namely giving non-white dancers a comprehensive movement training that includes modern and ballet.

In Australia this practice is leading to an interesting development. Bangarra Dance Theatre based in Sydney takes its movement training from the Yirrkala in North Western Arnhem land, the Torres Strait Islands and western contemporary dance. I believe that with their recent dance 'Ochres' we are seeing the emergence of a truly Australian dance style: a way of moving unique to this country. Perhaps dance needs the equivalent of theatre's Peter Brook whose Paris based International Theatre Centre has researched and investigated so many different styles and whose company from around the world has presented so many new and exciting theatre pieces. The time is ripe in Australia at least - for a multi-racial dance company that broadens and deepens dance fusion so that different cultures can share with sensitivity each others' styles and practices.

WHO SHOULD TEACH DANCE IN SCHOOLS?

I wish to conclude this paper with a brief consideration of the above issue. In my view the answer is plain: specifically educated teacher-dancers are best placed to offer school students a safe, comprehensive dance education. The program that I coordinate at the University of New South Wales is aimed at providing school students with specifically trained and educated dancer-teachers. Programs to provide dance education specialists are gradually appearing in other Australian states. In framing and implementing dance as a subject in schools my colleagues and myself have had to consider several important issues to do with teaching personnel.

Firstly, in the absence of specially educated teacher-dancers (e.g. while one is waiting for programs to be implemented) there are two compromise positions which can work well. Taking existing good teachers and giving them as much dance and dance education as is deemed necessary to enable them to properly enthuse and instruct students and using the skills of ex-professional dancers who happen to possess pedagogic talents and who are willing to learn more. Sometimes the skills of both groups of people can be pooled when a partnership scheme is implemented: dance professionals working along side teaching professionals in a team teaching situation (e.g. Cole, 1994:55). The fundamental issue with these compromise positions is to

recognise the discrete talents and abilities involved in both teaching and dancing. In other words just because you can dance does not mean that you can teach dancing. For too long and in too many institutions we have staffed dance departments on the basis of this fallacious assumption. I have as much respect for the profession of teaching as I have for the profession of dancing. Of course, you can have both but possession of the one does not automatically confer skill in the other.

Linked to this point is a second issue. As I discussed in a previous section of this paper, we are learning much about safe dance practices and efficient kinesiological principles. This knowledge will benefit dance professionals but it is essential for dance teachers. Such scientific knowledge needs to be acquired via coherent courses of study specifically designed for their students. We cannot continue to assume that somehow teachers will instinctively teach dance in a safe and efficient manner.

Thirdly there is the aforementioned growth in knowledge about how dance is taught - dance pedagogy. In my university course we devote two subjects to the teaching learning process as it applies to dance. (This is in addition to the range of education subjects and to the incorporation of desirable teaching practices into all subjects). We have much to learn about dance pedagogy and, again, we cannot assume that teachers will instinctively implement best practice.

Lastly, we have only to look at our colleagues in art and music. It has long been recognised in Australia that to teach these two subjects requires particular and specific training. Drama and dance have followed suit with their own specific education requirements. It is time that we made sure that tertiary institutions provide programs whereby students may become skilled pedagogues and talented dancers able to excite school students to do dancing, to make dances and to appreciate the rich cultural diversity of our dance heritage.

I hope that the above discussion of five issues that are important ones for Australian dance educators will serve to further the cause of South Africa's dance in education.

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DANCE CULTURE, EDUCATION AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

by Jill Waterman and Jennifer van Papendorp

July, 1997

Introduction

South Africa is going through a historic ground breaking transformation that has been long awaited and fought for. As two dance educators who are deeply involved in the policy making issues on the ground, we felt that it was essential that we document what we were experiencing and that we attempt to share our impressions with the participants of this, South Africa's first international conference on Music and Dance.

In this paper, we are going to be looking at two contrasting view points of dance education within the formal South African education system. One view point will look at the past and the other at the present. In the conclusion we will try and bring these two dance education contexts together and suggest possible ways into the future.

The paper will only discuss dance in the government sponsored schooling systems. The role of the non-governmental organisations (NGO's) will not be investigated. In a short sentence one has to positively acknowledge the NGO's vital role in dance and cultural redress in our country and also their ability to make dance accessible. This is a topic for another full paper!

Background and the Past

All government education grows out of policy and the political context of the country. If the government is paying for education it is going to want a system that will build future supporters/voters.

Dance education in South African schools has been governed for the past 30 years by the politics of the ruling apartheid government. The schools were divided by race. The access to funding for dance education was also separated out according to race, with a few schools in the House of Assembly (White), the House of Representatives (Coloured) and the House of Delegates (Indian) departments being the favoured minorities.

The Nationalist government was driven by the patriarchal process of Christian National Education. Certain churches' beliefs and the physicality of dance have never been easy partners making dance education a very low priority in the formal education arena.

Classical ballet as a safe "high art" form was therefore encouraged in a small way and became the dominant dance form taught in a limited number of schools. Few Classical Ballet choreographers or teachers were going to challenge the censorship board and Christian principles with risky sexual content or present issues that might question political matters. South African Classical Ballet companies for the most produced work which did not question the status quo - after all the Performing Arts Councils, where several ballet companies were housed, received most of their funding from the

government, so it was best not to upset them. Choreographers like Cranko, who made works that reflected on issues of the day, sadly made most of their contribution to 20th Century classical dance outside of South Africa.

In South Africa, Classical Ballet supported a Western aesthetic thereby reinforcing the rule of the White minority power. Ballet has for years been the entertainment of the social elite. For example in Russia where the Tzar was financially supporting the ballet companies, the dancing context was often concerned with kings, queens, princesses and princes. Swan Lake and Sleeping Beauty are prime examples of the ballets mirroring life of the royalty and elite. The idea of dance supporting the cultural values of the elite, serving primarily 'White' middle class South Africans, was an easily transferable concept for the apartheid government.

"High art" and anything classical that fitted well into this mould was regarded as relevant culture and supported by the government and many businesses. This implied that all of the indigenous arts forms of South Africa were therefore lesser in value. The vertical hierarchy of cultural values followed into the school system.

The Cleansing

In 1994, the transformation in education began with the National Education and Training Forum (NETF) process where all existing dance curricula were brought together and viewed for their learning levels and to 'cleanse' them of cultural bias, sexism and racism.

It was soon very clear to the NETF dance sub-committee that the present syllabi prescribed to the cultural superiority of things classical and placed these at the top of the dance education hierarchy. More classical ballet was being taught in schools than any other dance form.

Addressing Bias

Indian dance, both North and South, Spanish and National dances from countries in Europe were also being taught, but in very few schools. All these dance forms were being taught only to children of the same race e.g. Indian dance was taught to Indian children. African dance forms were being given little place or value. This racist bias led to the decision to formalise and register an African Dance core curriculum and to make the dance curricula accessible to all races.

Status of Dance

Dance as vocational training was only offered as a Standard Grade subject, unlike Music, Drama and Visual Arts which were all offered as Higher Grade subjects. The dance education was severely undermined by this attitude and the NETF and dance educators managed to introduce dance as a Higher Grade option. We were aware that the levels would eventually fall away but to visibly lift the profile of dance as an equal art form to Music, Drama and the Visual Arts was very important to the dance community. The vocational dance training offered for the Senior Certificate differed greatly between educational departments, producing vastly different levels of competence. All students now do the same Senior Certificate examination.

Access to Dance in the General Education

Another concern of the NETF was that all learners in their general education should have the opportunity to experience dance. Creative movement was being taught in some limited fashion by the physical education departments and in some cases successfully but what concerned the dance educators was that the girls were doing dance and the boys were sent off to do "other" things. What was this telling our boys about dance and what was it telling the society about gender and dance?

Children in the ex-House of Representatives schools could and still do take ballet during school hours but in the primary school they have to pay extra for these classes, thereby *excluding* many of our potential learners. The "Dance:Creative Movement" core syllabus was devised to bring dance education into the general education system. This is a learning programme which opens dance education to all abilities and all races and genders. So far, however, due to lack of funds to hire teachers, few schools have implemented this option.

Many of the NETF changes in dance education have been informed by the national education policy of redress, access, equity and quality. Also the right of all South African to value and experience their own cultural heritage and share that of others. These policies are ushering in a shift in cultural dominance and are strongly influencing the design of a new inclusive transformative curriculum.

Shifting Cultural Dominance

Following the radical change of government in 1994, a gradual change in cultural dominance is taking place. Within arts education, this is evident in the move from a Western discipline-specific approach to a more inclusive, African, integrated-arts approach. While Western arts tend to fragment artistic expression into separate specialist disciplines e.g. music, dance, drama, etc., African Arts tend to be more integrated combining praise poetry, story-telling, music, song, dance, decorative costumes and artefacts

In the past, cultural dominance was relatively invisible and gradual, with global culture permeating our consciousness and colonising local culture, for example through television, advertising, Classical Ballet, American Modern Dance and so forth. In the new South African dispensation local and national culture is acknowledged as being a major issue for redress especially within the newly emerging education curriculum. Given this emphasis on culture, and considering that education is concerned with cultural transmission (Bernstein,1975:85), there is a pressing need to understand the concept of culture and how it affects the way people think, act and give meaning to their lives.

What is culture?

Culture has at times been narrowly interpreted, causing people to be seen in stereotypical moulds - We would call this the 'saris, samoosas and spears' interpretation of culture, which sees culture as a given, static and inflexible. A broader conception views culture as socially constructed, as ways of doing,

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thinking and valuing, often used as a weapon of control and for reproducing ideological interests - whoever is in control.

It was this type of cultural imperialism which has brought about the "high art - low art" debate mentioned earlier. Cultural practices have by their dominance both constructed and blocked human agency. "This is the way we do it in my culture" is a familiar refrain when someone wants their own way or thinks their way is superior!

The art forms valued as "high art", informed by Western ways of thinking, tastes, and styles led to focused, discipline-specific specialised training in a single art form, geared towards producing artists of excellence. The conception of dance has been narrow - seeing dance as elitist and prestigious, exclusionary, not for the ordinary human in the street - but for the special, gifted, talented individuals who give the world something to dream about, something to aspire to. The elitism and inaccessibility adds to the magic. This has been the goal of classical ballet training - excellence, magic, aspiring to "high art" status. Training is vocational with 'standards' guarded by gatekeeping Ballet Associations and professional companies. The aim is to prepare pupils for global economic possibilities by ensuring an international 'standard'.

Unfortunately, this elitism denies opportunities to the majority of people, limiting the arts mainly to those who can afford it. For instance, Classical

Ballet is being taught at approximately 60 schools in certain communities (out of 27,000 schools in the country) serving mainly female learners.

The Western classical cultural dominance has been maintained through certain myths and taken-for-granted assumptions and agendas. It is only when being faced with a different culture and art forms that these become noticeable. These myths and assumptions serve to confuse the issues and need to be demystified. For example:

- you must have a classical training to become a dancer - this limits opportunities for other dance forms to be given status;
- you need a certain kind of body to be a dancer - this body type serves a particular aesthetic and is prejudiced towards certain racial stereotypes

These myths limit the natural cultural interaction and interchange that takes place in a polycultural society. They prevent people from developing an awareness of other ways of doing things, of venturing out of their comfort zones and of being able to enrich themselves. Experiencing new cultures could open fields of possibilities and potentials. This is one of the beliefs that underpins the new curriculum

The Present - Education Reformation

Educational restructuring was one of the ANC election promises, as a means of achieving social justice, of uplifting the economy and increasing marketable skills. Initiated by an interministerial group of labour and education ministers who came together to discuss what the country needed, it

was decided, after much research and in consultation with representatives from labour, business, the NGO sector, teacher unions, civil society and the bureaucracy, to adopt a Transformative Outcome-Based education system for the whole country. Outcome-based education systems have been implemented in many of the G7 countries for human resource development - to increase worker productivity.

Outcome-based Education

Outcome-based education focuses on the results of learning - what the learner knows, understands, can do, and values. It aims to create equality of opportunity, to empower learners to take responsibility for their lives. It is learner-centred rather than teacher-centred, allowing for learners to be active rather than passive (Curriculum 2005 Lifelong learning for the 21st century, 1997:6,7).

It is difficult at first to understand how Outcomes are different to Objectives. The teacher having an educational objective does not guarantee learning; teachers and learners must now ensure that learning takes place - that there is a demonstrable outcome. Giving learners an education or teaching them a syllabus is not enough. They must be able to apply what they have learnt in their life roles.

This new curriculum seeks to prepare learners for a different way of life in the 21st Century. Education in the industrial age prepared learners to conform to instructions, to do as they were told, press a button in a factory, Jetè on

command. But the world has changed. Information technology has changed the nature of the working world. Machines take over the jobs of people, mass media produces packaged art right in your living room and Sleeping Beauty no longer reflects the worlds we are living in. Salaried jobs in all professions, but especially in dance, are few and far between. To remain relevant an education in Dance must now prepare dancers who are resourceful and innovative, who can create, administer, fund-raise, manage, negotiate and adapt. Dancers of the future will have to generate their own opportunities and as educators we need to prepare them for this task.

Many different consultative groups have met to discuss and identify what the critical educational needs are that every learner needs to master. From these forums, cross curricula *critical outcomes* were identified such as;

Learners will:

1. Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking
 2. Work effectively with others as a member of a team
 3. Organise and manage one self and one's activities responsibly and effectively
 4. Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information
 5. Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic, and/or language skills in various modes
 6. Use Science and Technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others
 7. Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation
- In order to contribute to the full personal development of each learner, and the social and economic development at large, it must be the intention underlying any Programme of learning to make an individual aware of the importance of:***
8. Reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively
 9. Participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities
 10. Being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts
 11. Exploring education and career opportunities, and
 12. Developing entrepreneurial opportunities
- (Department of Education Discussion Document, 1997:10)

Where in some countries a Traditional OBE has been implemented (where subjects have changed from being objective-based to becoming outcome based), in South Africa it was decided that we would adopt a *Transformative*

OBE (Curriculum 2005 Life long learning for the 21st Century A User's guide, 1997:5). In this system education and training are integrated, bringing together the head and the hand, the mental and the manual, the academic and the vocational (Department of Education: Outcome based education in South Africa, 1996:11). Subjects are grouped together into learning areas and learning areas are also clustered together to produce transdisciplinary integrated learning programmes. The emphasis has shifted radically from culturally exclusive arts forms to a culturally inclusive arts education. In dance terms this calls for the development of culturally flexible, 'thinking dancers', moving away from the low status, limiting stigma attached to dance as merely a 'physical' activity.

Impact on dance education in the formal education sector

Dance will be brought together with Drama, Music, Visual Arts, Media Studies and Arts Technologies under the umbrella of an "Arts and Culture" Learning Area. Arts and Culture **Specific Outcomes** informed by the Critical Outcomes will determine what learners must learn. These outcomes are broad, emphasising skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that the learner will need in future life roles. The Specific Outcomes go way beyond the skills and techniques of current dance training. By integrating education and training, they herald in the move away from "high art" and towards a broad understanding of the arts, developing creativity, a means of expression and communication - art as part of everyday life. The emphasis is on exposing **all learners** to arts and culture, on the importance of the process as well as the product and on recognising and developing the marginalised cultural forms.

Although many countries are embarking on some form of Outcomes-based education, each country has had to recontextualise the meaning of OBE according to their needs. South Africa's Specific Outcomes are quite different from other countries. They are as follows:

Arts And Culture Specific Outcomes

Learners will be able to:

1. Apply knowledge, techniques and skills to create and be critically involved in arts and culture processes and products
2. Use the creative processes of arts and culture to develop and apply social and interactive skills
3. Reflect on and engage critically with arts experience and work
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the origins, functions and dynamic nature of culture
5. Experience and analyse the role of the mass media in popular culture and its impact on multiple forms of communication and expression in the arts
6. Use art skills and cultural expressions to make an economic contribution to self and society
7. Demonstrate an ability to access creative arts and cultural processes to develop self esteem and promote healing
8. Acknowledge, understand and promote historically marginalised arts and cultural forms and practice

(DoE Curriculum 2005, 1997:171)

Teaching methods shift from the patriarchal, authoritarian teacher-driven discipline-specific methodologies to participatory, democratic, integrated learner-centred methodologies. The assumption is that every learner can learn given sufficient time, varied methods and a supportive environment. The emphasis is on empowering the learner, or translated into dance, the dancer, the creator - to produce, rather than on training dancers to memorise, copy, conform, and reproduce others' art. Teaching strategies are based on the understanding that learning takes place best when learners participate, have fun, communicate, are unafraid and feel good about themselves.

Assessment strategies are also quite different moving away from judgmental examinations that function as selection mechanisms. Instead assessment is on-going, part of learning, informing the learner and teacher of where remediation is needed - informing future practice. Assessment focuses on what learners *can do* rather than on what they *can't do*, is about success, not about failure.

Implementation

In the South African OBE, the curriculum will be delivered in eight learning areas:

LEARNING AREAS
Language, Literacy and Communication
Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences
Natural Sciences
Arts and Culture
Technology
Human and Social Sciences
Life Orientation
Economic and Management Sciences

Learning is divided into three phases:

- Teaching in the **Foundation Phase** (Grade 1 - 3), will be done by generalist teachers. All the arts will be *integrated* and used as a vehicle for learning concepts experientially across the curriculum
- In the **Intermediate Phase**, Grade 4 - 6, Arts and Culture is integrated with Life Orientation and teaching may be done *collaboratively* by specialists where available.
- As the learners reach the **Senior Phase**, Grade 7 - 9, the arts, while still integrated, become *increasingly specialised* to prepare learners for the
- **Further Education Phase** - Grade 10 - 12, at which point arts education will become *discipline specific*.

(Curriculum 2005 Discussion Document, 1997:3-5)

The shifting dominance from an exclusive, discipline specific arts education to an inclusive, integrated arts education with no one dance style being dominant highlights many challenges and difficult issues:

1. Hybridisation

One issue concerns the hybridisation of art forms where activities become so integrated that arts disciplines lose their uniqueness. There is the question of skill development, of continuity and of who can teach integrated arts. The last

thing anyone wants is to deskill the population. Are there teachers who can teach integrated arts?. Can generalist teachers incorporate arts and culture into their teaching? Do they know enough? Will they want to? Can the Arts be taught effectively by a non-specialist? Will we generate a society of mediocrity?

2. Financial Restraints

Every learner must achieve all 66 outcomes from the eight Learning Areas so therefore every learner must be exposed to dance. However, it remains to be seen whether this ideal can be implemented given the financial constraints of dwindling budgets and teacher rationalisation.

3. Skills Development

Creative Dance is an art form that excludes no-one. Based on principles of dance rather than a style, it incorporates and integrates easily with all other art forms. But Creative Dance is often misunderstood, perceived as insufficient for building technical skills and therefore limited. This is of course a misperception. If Creative Dance is to be the main umbrella dance form in the General Education Phase, the teaching of creative dance would need to develop beyond a grocery list of experiences and horizontal learning. Its success would depend on a) including the development of generic technical proficiency and b) becoming aware that experience is both mental and physical as long as awareness, discussion and synthesis take place.

Marginalisation in time allocation

Despite the fact that Arts and Culture are now part of mainstream education, the notional time allocated to this learning area is still less than to learning areas such as Mathematics, Science and Technology. The commitment towards providing Arts and Culture education, towards all Learning Areas being equivalent and towards social reconstruction is in conflict with the left-brained emphasis on the rational/logical "economics" subjects. This will no doubt have an impact on which teachers are hired.

A contested terrain

There can be no doubt that this changing cultural and educational environment is a contested terrain. The interpersonal and interminably on-going power struggle of who is representative (in terms of colour, race, gender, status, background, connections, position or in need of position) to write this curriculum, is only the beginning. In the olden days battles were fought physically and the fittest survived. Democracy has moved the battle to a battle of minds and power struggles. Weapons become the ability to function in a committee, to be computer literate, to be committed to a process, to be determined and to be available

There is the stand off between NFC's (need for change) and the RTC's (resistance to change). The NFC's believe that there is a need for a more relevant curriculum, to prepare the youth for the 21st century, a drastic change to the culture of teaching and learning, and a massive need for professional teacher development and the up-grading of skills. The RTC's are

anxious at the risk of doing something new and unproven. They want to maintain the status quo and to remain in their comfort zones. They are prepared to make a few surface concessions and self-consciously attempt a fusion of arts and cultural forms.

These two oppositional attitudes are summarised below as they apply to dance:

RTC - Traditional Attitudes	NFC - Emerging Attitudes
Teacher attitude - gate-keepers, protecting the status quo	Teacher attitude - innovators, pushing back the boundaries
Strive for excellence of the talented and fortunate few	Make arts accessible to many
Training to reproduce art forms	Education to produce art forms
Must begin young	Can begin at any age
A classical base is essential	Not all dance forms require a classical base
Competitive	Co-operative
The right body	Any body
Standards must be maintained	Standards are culturally constructed
Emphasis on practical aspects	Theory and practise are both emphasised

The traditional and emergent attitudes highlight certain contradictions in dance practitioner values, practices and beliefs. We have identified two viewpoints that may be stereotypical but are probably fairly representative:

Paradoxes In Dance Education

Attitudes of achievement and devotion	Prejudice and entrenched attitudes
Need for access	Need for quality
Hybridised dance forms	Pure dance forms
Horizontal learning	Vertical learning
Desire for Universality	Celebration of Difference
High art	Popular art
Broad education	Specialised education
Low status practical subject	High status academic subject
Process-oriented	Product-oriented

Questions that Arise

These paradoxes give rise to some sticky questions that need urgent attention:

- Can a balance be found between these paradoxes?
- What kind of Arts Education should we be providing for our youth in the formal education system? (This question will come into the debate that follows later this afternoon.)
- What does the country need?
- What do the people need?
- Must we choose between training for excellence or a broad understanding of the arts?
- Can we combine them?
- The policies are based on moral values which support OBE - but do we have the resources and ability to implement?
- Given the financial constraints, can we afford dance teachers in at least some of the schools? If so, which ones should be afforded opportunities? Who had opportunities in the past? Who should decide? Is equity possible?
- Can creative dance produce excellence? Or will it lead to a society of mediocrity?
- Can learners achieve excellence in Dance within the education system given the multitude of constraints e.g. insufficient time allocated, short

periods, interrupted school days, inconsistent attendance, lack of incentives for teachers and for learners

- Is this the most important goal of teaching dance? Have the goal posts moved?

Looking to the future

Finding a balance and solutions to these questions will be a great challenge. In the future we may begin to see culture as dynamic, as a changing environment - constantly being created and influenced. Perhaps it is time to relax with the concept of culture, to accept that there are many ways of being, knowing, acting, and valuing. We need to make art that truly reflects our own experiences and encourage others to do the same. This will reflect a gradually changing culture. It points to the need for an inclusive, culturally flexible model for art education

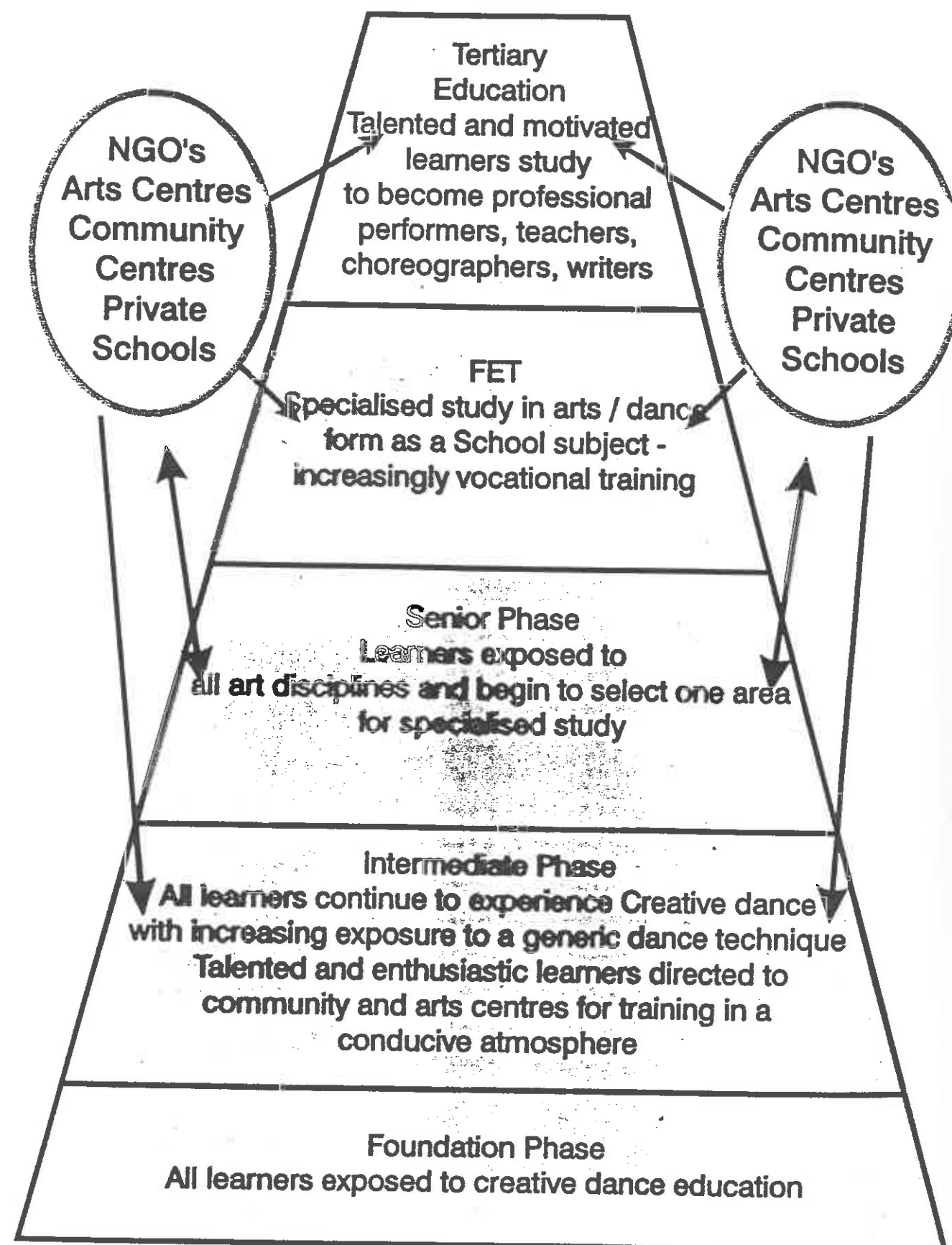
Given the financial constraints, access could be increased at the lower levels to a generic, culturally flexible dance education and training, one which not only integrates education and training, but also integrates arts with other areas of learning. Morning dance teachers in schools would teach creative dance including a generic dance technique to all learners (including boys). Talented and enthusiastic learners would be identified and guided towards after school classes at the arts centres for vocational training under more conducive circumstances

After the initial stages, dancers would be identified who could be directed towards intense training in a focus area in high school. Learners who want to study dance as a high school subject would be directed towards the satellite high schools or Arts/community centres in each region that can offer intensive arts training in the afternoons, serving a number of schools simultaneously.

Conclusion

The challenges are great in moving from one view point to a new and very different ideology. Burtenwood has said that "Cultures are always changing and always resisting change" (1996:232) and Popper suggested, as an appropriate model for education in a multicultural society, "an open society where the clash of cultures contributes to the growth of knowledge (in Burtenwood, 1996:232)

While it is to be expected that the various dance communities will continue to struggle to promote and preserve their preferred dance values and beliefs, the playing fields will not be level. They were not level in the past when Western dance forms were dominant and they will not be level now. The balance of power will always be shifting as new and emergent cultures gain status.



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The eminent musicologist, David Rycroft, states the problem as follows ("Stylistic evidence in Nguni song", in Essays on Music and History in Africa, ed. K.P. Wachsmann, pub. Northwestern U.P., Evanston, 1971):

"Among Nguni peoples it is the Xhosa who seem to achieve the greatest subtleties of offbeat and 'near miss' word phrasing The Xhosa seem to render words more correctly (than the Zulu), but this is done at the expense of regular time-values in the melodic line, and the phrasing bears an exceedingly loose relationship to the body meter. Hand-clapping commonly provides a metrical foundation in Nguni light dance-songs, but the general mood of Xhosa songs is one of lively neatness and precision A significant feature of all the Nguni dance-songs I have so far studied is the even-spaced regularity of hand-clapping

"Among the Nguni it seems to be a particularly Xhosa refinement for the words of dance-songs to pursue a largely independent phrasing of their own. On first hearing, it is easy to attend fully either to the words or to the claps, but it is difficult to grasp a connection between the two. One's first impression is that the stressed syllables are placed on off-beats, between the hand-claps, and unstressed syllables on the beat. But it soon becomes apparent that word syllables seldom coincide exactly with any clap, or with any convenient subdivisions of the hand-clap meter - that is, if, as a Westerner, one expects the onset of the vowel to be the coincident feature. This seemingly 'near miss' placement is not haphazard, however, but is likely to be repeated with exactitude by the singer with each repetition."

Rycroft goes on to suggest a correlation between the hand-claps and the consonantal articulation.

For an outsider, the first experience of Xhosa rhythm may well cause the same puzzlement expressed by Rycroft. I encountered the problem in 1979, when we brought in a group of singers from the nearby village of Sikhwankqeni, to a church music workshop being held at old Lumko mission, some twelve kilometres south of Lady Frere, deep in Thembu Xhosa territory. As I approached the group, who were out of sight around the corner, it seemed to me that the rhythm of the song (being performed without clapping) was quite clear. Then I rounded the corner, and to my consternation, the performers were dancing another rhythm entirely, apparently not related to the rhythm of the sung words. The situation can be illustrated by examples taken from the women's umngqungqo dance song, Latshon' ilanga, performed extensively in the area.

In the umngqungqo dances, performed at girls' initiation, the women move in a circle, holding sticks in their hands - and therefore not clapping: which makes it easier for outsiders to concentrate on the voice rhythm. The voices clearly move in a triplet rhythm, as shown in the following line from the song:



If one is now able to concentrate solely on the body movement of the dancers, however, they are seen to be moving in a clear two-beat pattern. (This can be demonstrated excellently by use of video recordings. First, listen to the voices without watching the screen, and then watch the screen with the sound off.) Watching the body movement without hearing the voices, one finds it very difficult to correlate the two rhythms. One feels it must be the dance of another song. But then look and listen at the same time, and one can clearly observe that it is one and the same song. What makes it even more confusing, as Rycroft notes, is that the body movements do not coincide with the voice beats, at least not in any obvious way.

The dance: body (hip) movement:



In addition, in many songs, including other lines of Latshon' ilanga, at times two or four syllables are spread evenly over the space of the triple beat: two or four in the space of three, and so on.

In my early efforts to try to analyse the rhythm of Xhosa songs, I tried playing back recordings at half speed and quarter speed. No matter how I tried, I still could not make voice beats and claps coincide in any way that seemed to make sense. Slowed-down play-back may work for transcribing music composed of percussive or other instrumental performance, but it doesn't work with Thembu dance songs.

Andrew Tracey gave me the first valuable tip: look for cross-rhythms based on three-against-two patterns. Such a pattern

is clearly the rhythmic basis of Latshon' ilanga, but in other Thembu songs all kinds of apparently crazy patterns occur: 10-vs-8, 13-vs-12, 5-vs-4. It was obvious that before I could begin to understand how such patterns could be made to work, I had to get some insight into the link between voice rhythm and body rhythm. I tried to observe performers as closely as possible, trying to learn to feel in myself what they were feeling when they performed. As I listened to songs, I tried to move with the singers, and at last I began to notice something.

These Thembu dance songs are cyclic. A very few (of what I identify as very old) songs do have a slightly variable cycle length, when the song leader may at times sing a longer text before signalling the overlapping chorus response. But all the songs which have 10-vs-8 and similar patterns, in fact have two simultaneous beat cycles. The voice rhythm will have a set number of beats (10, 13, 5 or whatever), and the clapping will have its fixed number of beats per cycle (occurring in the same time as the voice rhythm cycle) - 8, 12, 4 beats and so on. But it was also clear that the two cycles did not necessarily begin at the same time. I began to notice that some particular beat in the vocal cycle appeared to trigger the start of the clap cycle. The first beat of the clap cycle did not fall on this vocal beat, but was triggered by it in this way: it seemed to me, that the movement of the hands was begun on the triggering voice beat, so that the sound of the clap itself fell after the voice beat. The link was the body movement which spaced or delayed the clap, so that it fell after the voice beat. I realised that this spacing was not haphazard, but the delay was a rapid pulse - in an underlying pulse system common to both voice and body rhythm. I called the triggering vocal beats 'springing points', and then at last found that I was able to analyse and transcribe the songs in a way that appeared to make rhythmic sense.

For transcribing a song, therefore, I had to identify the vocal rhythm cycle, and the body rhythm cycle, and also try to identify the starting points of these cycles. Of course, in many songs the voice cycle could begin at different points, because different vocal lines could be used to lead the song. Nevertheless no matter at which point in the voice-beat cycle people began singing, it was always the same voice beat which acted as the springing point for the body rhythm cycle. So: identify the vocal beat

cycle, identify the body rhythm cycle, identify the springing point, and then identify the pulse which underlay the clap/dance delay, and transcription could be undertaken.

In many songs, however, there was still the necessity of sorting out the voice rhythm. Ten, or thirteen, or five beats don't seem to make sense. Fortunately, I found that certain of these songs using apparently crazy rhythm were performed in different ways. What appeared to be ten equal beats was based on an original twelve-beat pattern, 13 beats was also derived from 12, and a five-beat pattern was a disguised eight beats. Just how these patterns are derived is shown below.

(Detailed transcriptions of the songs discussed in this paper, using rhythm lines instead of more conventional notation, may be found in my book *Xhosa Music*: D. Philip, Cape Town, 1988.)

In the song *Umzi kaMzwandile*, the original melody (as still found at times in Sikhwankqeni in 1979) occupied twelve beats; the text lines each had (mostly) ten syllables, so two syllables each occupied two beats: line A. below. This easily turns into the ten-beat pattern shown in line B. To take the further step of equalising the beats, so that the pattern appears to be ten exactly equal beats, is literally child's play in Sikhwankqeni.

A. E- be- lel' e- nge- kho kwa- phe- zo lo. E- be- ...

B. E- be- lel' e- nge- kho kwa- phe- zo- lo. E- be- lel' ...

Similarly, in the song *Indenzen' inkwenkwendala*, 13 syllables have to be fitted into 12 beats. The last 9 syllables are fitted into the space of 8 beats. These 9 melody beats may appear to be phrased as shown by the dotted tails.

In the Glen Grey district, which includes Sikhwankqeni, I recorded two versions of Ntsikana's Song performed with *uhadi* bow accompaniment. In the version at Mackay's Nek, the bow played a clear 8 beat (3+3+2) pattern. In Ngqoko, the bow appeared to play a five-beat pattern. A very slight, occasional lengthening of the last bow beat gave the clue that this was also an 8-beat pattern, equalised into $1\frac{1}{2}+1\frac{1}{2}+1\frac{1}{2}+1\frac{1}{2}+2$. Body movement in fours ($2+2+2+2=8$ beats) is therefore quite logical:

Ntsikana's song - Mackay's Nek.

A- ho- mna, ho- mna, hom, ho- mna, hom!

uhadi

bow

rhythm

Ntsikana's song - Ngqoko village.

Ma- ho- mna, ho- mna, li- kha- kha le-nya-ni-so.

uhadi

bow

rhythm:

body

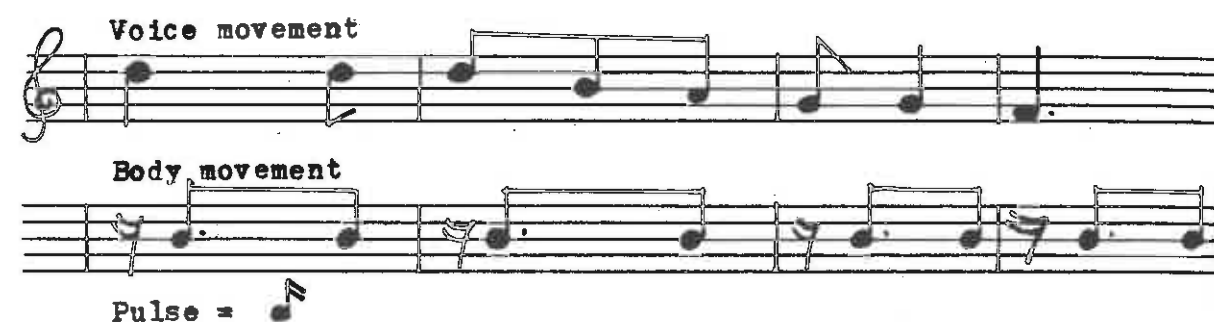
movement:

In the first two songs shown, *Umzi kaMzwandile* and *Indenzen' inkwenkwendala*, the voice movement is not based on 10 or 13 beats, but 12. In *Umzi kaMzwandile* the body movement is a cycle of 8 beats, and 8 against 12 makes clear sense: the typical 3-vs-2 cross-rhythm. In *Indenzen'*, the clap is a 12-beat cycle, the same as the basic voice cycle, but spice is added by the extra syllable. These songs will be referred to again, but now the link between 3-beat and 2-beat patterns must be shown.

When 2 beats (body movement) occur in the same time as 3 beats (voice movement), the underlying basis is in fact a pattern of 6 rapid pulses:

2 beats (2 x 3) = 3 beats (3 x 2) = 6 pulses.

When the clap is delayed by one pulse, so that the clap main beat falls one pulse behind the voice main beat, the resultant is shown below - a realisation of the song Latshon' ilanga, discussed earlier. It will be seen that (when the voice beats are regular) the second body beat falls on the third voice beat. This of course is often disguised by irregular spacing of syllables.



One effect of delaying the body movement is to "swing" the rhythm. One has to move with the song - and conversely, if one does not move with the song, one cannot feel (and therefore cannot understand) what is going on with the rhythm.

Another effect is that the song now has two main beats. In songs where different singers begin at different points in the cycle, each participant may well have different perceptions of what are the main beats of the song.

This is the basis of a rich, sophisticated system of rhythm. In the district around Ngqoko and Sikhwankqeni, this richness is so great that, among the hundreds of songs in the area, very few share exactly the same rhythm systems. Conversely, many songs can be recognised at once by local people, simply by their rhythm patterns. These latter include Umzi kaMzwandile and Indenzen' inkwenkwendala. In both these songs, the body rhythm cycle is triggered by a less important beat in the voice cycle. This less important beat is then the first beat in the 3-beat pattern moving against the 2-beat clap pattern: which means that what appears to be the main voice beat (the first voice beat of the line sung by the song leader) is relegated to the status of an upbeat. The equalisation process which then fits 10 or 13 beats into the space of 12, then means that no coincidences of voice and clap beats can be spotted by the outsider. This is compounded by the clap delay, which also disguises the springing-point (i.e., the triggering beat). The results are both delightful and confusing.

These examples show voice/body rhythm relationships in Umzi kaMzwandile and Indenzen' inkwenkwendala. When the songs are performed it is not possible to spot coincidences of voice and clap beats: with Umzi kaMzwandile, even those beats which appear to coincide are disguised by equalisation of the voice beats. (SP = Springing Point.)



Many songs in the Ngqoko/Sikhwankqeni area use a rhythm system of 3 voice beats ($3 \times 2 = 6$ pulses) against 2 body rhythm beats ($2 \times 3 = 6$ pulses). These include songs like Latshon' ilanga and other umngqungqo dance songs, and many others which I believe to have more ancient origins than songs like Umzi kaMzwandile (a thesis discussed at length in Xhosa Music). These (arguably) older songs use other realisations of the pulse offset technique. A strong voice beat may be treated as a (clap/dance) up-beat. The clap will fall a pulse behind the voice beat, and a foot stamp may coincide with the voice beat. When, some time in the 19th century, the Xhosas began making drums, this rhythm was then used in playing the drum. This rhythm is also beautifully applied to diviners' dances, one dancer stamping on the up-beat of the drum, and the other on the down-beat: which means that for the first dancer, the "up-beat" becomes the down-beat.

The illustration shows the application of "offset" rhythm techniques used in many songs in the Ngqoko/Sikhwankqeni area. Of course, this does not mean that the techniques are always used as shown, even within the same song. These are some ways in which the rhythms may be applied.

Voice (rhythm basis: each line down represents one pulse)

Clap (2 against 3 cross-rhythm, with pulse delay)

Stamping added as up-beat

Foot

Clap

Typical drumming in Ngqoko/Sikhwankqeni district

Diviners' divided dance

Dancer 1

Left Right Left Right Left

Dancer 2

Left Right Left Right Left

That concludes this brief description of an attempt to solve the enigmas of Xhosa rhythm. In addition to the references mentioned in the text, readers might like to compare Gerhard Kubik: "Transcription of African Music from Silent Film: Theory and Methods", in African Music (ILAM), vol. 5, no. 2, 1972, for Kubik's idea of rhythmic "corner points" - something undoubtedly similar to the idea of "springing-points" expressed above.

(A video, "Xhosa Music introduced by Dave Dargie", is a first attempt by this writer at making video material available for students interested in Thembu Xhosa music.)

SAMĀ : ITS NATURE, PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD,

WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE

TO SOUTH AFRICAN ISLAMIC MUSIC

PAPER PRESENTED BY DESMOND DESAI

AT

"CONFLUENCES", AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ON DANCE AND ETHNOMUSICOLOGY WHICH INCORPORATES

THE 15TH ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

CAPE TOWN, 17 JULY 1997

ABSTRACT

Samā' is generally associated with the religious practices of the socalled "Whirling Dervishes". This paper attempts to clarify the meaning, purpose and function of samā' as "religious concert" or "mystical dance" in their various forms as performed by certain Sufi brotherhoods.

In particular, South African samā' such as the ratiep art form, will be discussed in relation to its fundamentals of dhikr, movement and self-mutilating acts. Cultural specific and comparative systems, as well as universal features will be used as bases for analyses and discussions.

KHALIFA

I.D.Du Plessis
An extract from a
poem translated by:
D.Desai

When the Ratiep starts and the Holy Fire
flashes in the dancers' eyes.

When the arm muscle flexes electrically
and the red rebannas thunder
the exulted man at the Bank appears
and his sombre prayers resound,

.....

Heavy hang the incense clouds,
The strong tamboesters shine
Abdullah grabs the razorsharp alwaan,
and lets it sink away in deep

INTRODUCTION

Two similar dictionary definitions of samā' (سماع) are given as:

music; listening to music;
audition; ecstasy caused by music;
sense of hearing
(Qureshi n.d.: 384)

and

hearing, listening, listening in,
auditioning, audition, receiving
(Wehr 1971: 430)

These definitions basically suggest that samā' involves

listening to a musical performance, and the effects resulting thereof.

Yet, Samā' is commonly thought of as those dances performed by the so-called "Whirling Dervishes". This popular notion even exists amongst most musicologists and needs to be examined and the real nature, purpose and function of samā' need to be revealed.

Samā' viewed as a religious concert, ceremony or art form seems popular by many writers (Waugh 1989:23;27). In the case of Waugh (1989:27) he even views it as a musical session. This common view of samā' as a musical event is in a large measure due to the writing of the famous al-Ghazali's Adab as-Samā' (Norms for listening). It may be useful to remember these words by al-Ghazali:

al-Ghazali held that there was a harmony between sounds and rhythmic sounds. Sounds he suggests affect the soul immensely, with some being pleasing, some displeasing, some exciting laughter, some producing a thrill, and some activating the limbs.

(Waugh 1989:28)

A detailed discussion on the permissibility and/or non-permissibility of music has been given in my earlier work (Desai 1983:201-207) and should be consulted by those who wish to pursue the age-old argument of whether or not music is allowed in Islam. Another unpublished work of mine may help that particular kind of research further (Desai 1986). Surhawadi (Currie 1989:62) also lists "the dangers of samā' but when performed under the "correct circumstances" it becomes permissible (i.e. not harām).

Samā' then, in its broadest context, refers to music in its fullest sense; others such as Schimmel refers to it as a mystical dance (1991:118) while at the same time she recognises samā' as the total performance of Muslim Sufis which is characterised by dhikr (recital of religious formulae), a characteristic movement and in some cases the performance of self-mutilating acts.

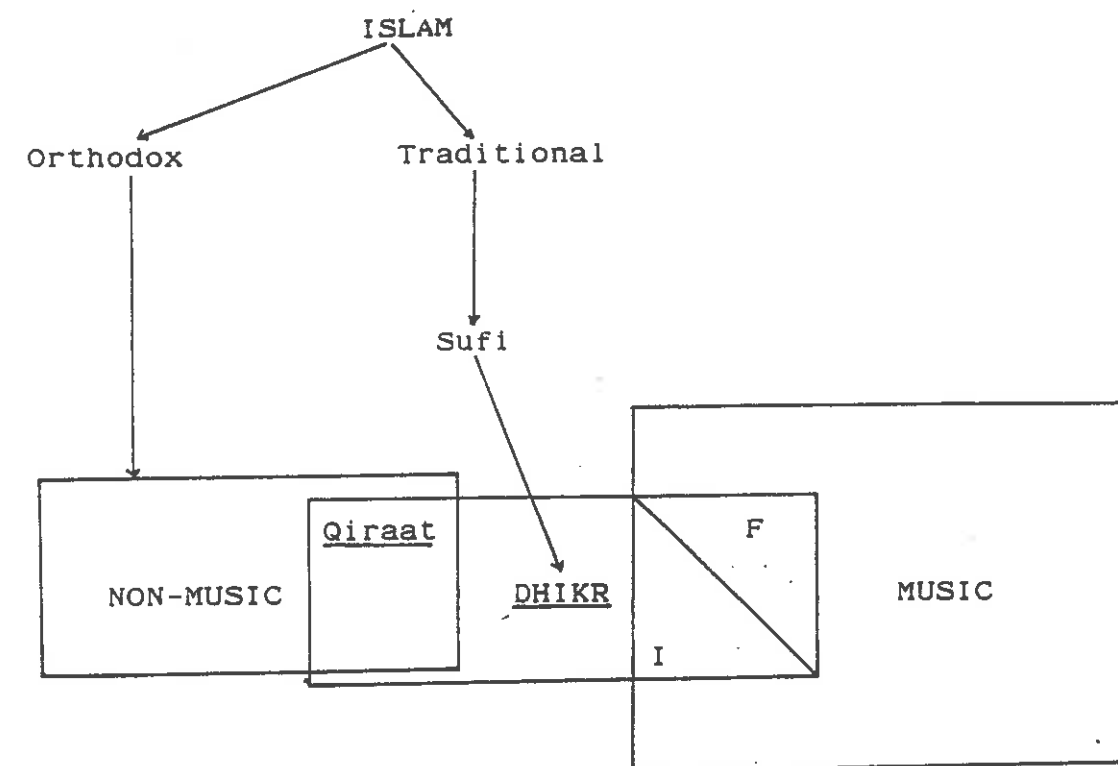
Samā' may even be viewed as "heaven, the celestial sphere" (Shakoor 1988:239).

Samā' may be performed by Sufi brotherhoods such as the

Turkish Mevlevi Sufi fraternity founded by Rumi, Syrian Zikr ceremonies, dabuih in West Sumatra, and ratiep performances in South Africa and elsewhere by members of the Rifa'iyyah brotherhoods, the kaderia groups and the Chisti Sufis who perform ghazals and qawalli.

The origin of samā' as well as Sufism, lie in the ascetic beginning of Sufi brotherhoods. Karamustapha (1994:20) argues that such acts as self-mutilation of the bodies indicate social deviance and a purposeful attempt of Dervishes towards antisocial behaviour. Their purpose was to "die" before natural death. Schimmel links the dancing of Dervishes to the revolving of matter round a central object, and as such the swirling of the body directs it to the supreme centre, controller and master of the Universe. In essence it shows total love of the adept to God.

Musical instruments seem central to samā' in most cases (Figure 1):



F: Forms dilekers - ratiep - rebanna dhol Instruments: I

zikr - dabus - rapa'i dabus

naat & taqsim - Dervishes - ney, rebab & drums

ghazals - Chisti

Figure 1

The Dervish Brotherhoods spread rapidly during the 13th and 14th centuries (Karamustapha 1994:200) and reached places like India and the Indonesian Archipelago.

A fundamental point must now be stressed in terms of my research of the South African ratiep, the West Sumatran Dabuih (1996) and statements such as these:

...we know that what was Hindu could be Muslim, and what was Muslim could be Hindu

(De Tassy 1995:3)

and

Islam becomes one of the channels for
cultural exchange.

(Desai 1986:ii)

The Purpose of Samā'

Samā' flows from Sufism, which is aptly described as
"a living experience and a search for perfection" (Norris
1990:xvii). Sufis themselves have described Sufism in
various ways:

Tasawwuf refers to the spiritual life of man
(Norris 1990:xvii)

Mystical knowledge is the complete knowledge which

enters the heart of man
(Norris 1990:xvii)

The teaching of Sufism gained great momentum through the
life of individuals such as Hallaj, Rumi, Al-Haddad, Al-
Rifaiyyah, to mention only a few (see Desai 1994:164-175).

Samā' singular purpose aims at unifying the adept with God.

An important point should be noted that at all times the
holistic approach to the study of samā' needs to be adhered
to since a skewed or unbalanced or even blatantly erroneous
perception might result otherwise.

Whirling Dervishes

While some Dervishes have only rituals of dhikr, it was through the life and work of Jala-al-Din (Maulana) Rumi that the mystical dance takes a central place (Schimmel 1985:118-119):

Every tree, every flower moves in the breeze of love, the spheres turn around the moon or the sun. In samā' the soul reaches a sphere beyond the spheres, the dervishes listen to a melody which comes beyond the the Divine Throne, their food and wine is the samā', and the Beloved is the soul of the samā' the central sun.

If understood as the above, samā' indeed becomes the expression of the dynamism of life, with everything aimed at God, (Schimmel 1985:119), Dance is also the expression of emotion (Rogers:94).

Movement is indeed an integral of our human existence, and has a definite relationship with music. Also, mathematics considerations of form, space, pattern seem all to fit into the above characterization of the Dervishes samā'.

Circular movement is found in the kransdans, kussingdans and the !Kung Bushmen trance dance (Desai 1983; Newman:4). This circular movement in samā' has been linked to the circumambulation of the Ka'aba during Hajj (Waugh 1989:43).

Vertical and sideways movement of the head, a movement pattern also noticeable during the Whirling Dervishes dances, has been linked to the Muslims methods of praying (Waugh 1989: 43).

I found an example of dhikr performed by Dervishes wherein the call and response between soloist and choir, vertical head movement, the repetitions of basic Qur'anic formulae and the quickening of tempo are clearly observable (Musical Example: Decca 1951:10).

The video recording of Whirling Dervishes in Turkey by JVC Video Anthology of World Music and Dance, Volume 16, I tried to analyse in the short period of a few hours at my disposal.

A full musical transcription with appropriate texts and translations has not been made. Very noticeable on the short 3 min recording was the slow, ornamented start by the ney (end-blown flute) which lasted about 30 seconds. About 15 men

move slowly, and after a bow and loud beat by the kudum (Kettle-drum) the men removed the black cloak they were wearing.

All men folded the arms across the other with the hands resting upon their shoulders in exactly the same manner. After a kiss (message, or some word of encouragement) by what seems like the leader (sheikh?), the dancers started moving in circles. All right palms pointed heavenward, while the left hand was pointed downward (to the earth). The turning on the two toes, basically, with one left lifted into the air at times, were more or less uniform to the speed of roughly 19 full turns to one minute. One suspects that if the show had been recorded for longer, the speed of the turns would have increased which might have shown interesting results.

The simple drum beats were easy to record but the overall pattern difficult to work out. This may be the result of the drums following the mode and melody set by the ney.

While swirling, most of the performers' eyes were closed. Those with open eyes did not seem to be in a trance, although a slight smile because of possible enjoyment was detected.

The smooth boots must have enhanced the spinning movement.

At some point during the cycle of the feet action, the one foot was completely raised. The turning did appear to resemble a basic "swing waltz" type of foot movement.

The piece "Suzidilara pesveri" was performed to the accompaniment of ney (Flute), rebab (fiddle), kanun (zither), tanbur (lute), kudum (drum) which uses two drum sticks to produce a high and low pitch.

Interesting is the use of the term sema for samā

It has not been possible to find the Malay equivalent of the term samā. In South African samā performers do not use the term.

Dhikr, Movement, Breathing and Self-mutilating Acts

Dhikr has been discussed extensively in an earlier work of mine (1986: 42-59).

Movement has also possibly been covered well in my doctoral thesis (1994: 240-278). Today I tried to give you some idea of what I did during my research into the ratiep and my impressions on what still needs to be done in terms of the movement of the "Whirling Dervishes".

Breathing, an important aspect of samā', has been extensively covered by Waugh in his exceptional treatise (45-48). I find his analysis of the breathing patterns in dhikr ceremonies remarkably brilliant. In a previous work of mine I also tried to analyse samman breathing (1994:369; 1986:128-135). I gave a schematic representation of the samman movement in 1986. Waugh does not get that far. A recording of vocal asperated music is also included in a previous work of mine (1994: Example 12)

The nature of self-mutilating acts in the ratiep with its concomitant medical aspects have been thoroughly dealt with in my doctoral thesis and in previous works (1994:456-468)

CONCLUSION

Many forms of samā' exist in the Islamic world. Some have been studied to a greater extent than others, such as the dabuih in North Sumatra (Kartomi) and the Munshidin of Egypt (Wauch). The Dervishes need much more research in terms of their music and movement; Schimmel and others (Oruç Güvenç) seemed to have adequately covered the religious basis of the Whirling Dervishes.

The ratiep art form in South Africa have probably been adequately researched, although further research is needed in samman, kaderia and the mouloud celebrations.

Ultimately our duties remain: Firstly, to understand and contribute towards an appreciation of the various art forms that constitute our "rainbow" culture; Secondly, to actively contribute towards research and preservations of our world cultural heritage, and specifically our unique South African sub-cultures.

Medical and psychological research into the ratiep is presently continuing by university post-doctoral researchers. The medical and therapeutic value of Islamic Mysticism is thought to aid the cure of "mental illness" (Oruç and Güvenç).
INTERNET 1995)

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**CURRENT ISSUES AND TRENDS PERTAINING TO THE ADVENT OF NEO-
TRADITIONAL GENRES OF MUSIC AND DANCE IN THE CONTEMPORARY
AFRICAN SOCIETIES: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE KENYAN SITUATION.**

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ABSTRACT

Peculiar modifications have been observed in the realm of music and dance in the contemporary African Societies. New types of traditional music and dance performances, that may be described as 'Neo-Traditional' genres have emerged alongside the authentic traditional African music and dance activities.

The paper aims at discussing factors that have contributed to the development of the new genres of music and dance, the forums and occasions in which they are performed, and the impact of these 'Neo-Traditional' music and dance styles on the roles initially played by music and dance activities in the traditional African societies. Particular reference will be made to the situation prevailing in the Kenyan Society.

CURRENT ISSUES AND TRENDS PERTAINING TO THE ADVENT OF NEO-TRADITIONAL GENRES OF MUSIC AND DANCE IN THE CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN SOCIETIES: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE KENYAN SITUATION

DIGOLO (1997)

INTRODUCTION

New developments have emerged in the realms of music and dance in the Kenyan society, where- by external influences or cross-fertilization of cultural elements have been noted. New forms of traditional music and dances, which are hereby referred to as the Neo-traditional genres have evolved. The Neo-traditional genres have their roots in what resembles the music traditions of Kenyan society, but in their performances, they make use of concepts or elements that are foreign to the society's musical cultures.

The emergence and survival of the new genres involves re-interpretation and remolding of features inherited from the Kenyan traditional musics and dances, in such a manner as to suit the new patterns of social organizations inherent in the modern Kenyan society.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEO-TRADITIONAL MUSICS AND DANCES

Several factors have contributed to the advent of the Neo-traditional types of music and dance in the Kenyan society. Though each of the Kenyan communities still try to maintain their traditional norms, a number of incidences have interfered with their structures. A new multi-cultural society has been formed in Kenya, necessitated by political, religious, social and economic factors.

According to Omondi (1992), the new society is generally composed of individuals who lack a common cultural denominator. The members of the new society therefore tend to be divided into separate classes, each with its own standards of education, range of experience, outlook and taste. For an individual to adopt to the new socio-cultural environment, and to be a desirable member of the new society, he or she has to modify a number of traditional cultural practices and in some cases, denounce them altogether. The cultural practices that are modified or denounced by the new society include the traditional musics and dances, most of which evolved

in the pre-capitalist, ethnic and rural milieus, and are therefore considered by members of the new society as being completely incapable of fulfilling their musical needs.

In-order to meet the demands of the new society, there has had to be adaptation and reorientation of traditional musics and dances. Features inherited from the traditional genres have been remolded and reinterpreted, and elements borrowed from foreign music areas have been incorporated into the authentic traditional musics and dances, in such a manner as to reflect a completely new forms, suitable for the new society.

Certain institutions have been influential in the development of the Neo-traditional musics and dances. Among of the most outstanding foreign influences on the Kenyan traditional music cultures are the christian churches and schools. The institutions have, for instance been vehicles for the introduction of western harmonies. The western harmonization system has in many cases been readily grasped by the Kenyan musicians, who have experimented their use on the African traditional melodies, thus creating new kinds of musics.

Another major influence has come from the mass media. The advent of the mass media like the radios and televisions, has created in the Kenyan society, a new awareness of foreign music and dance styles. The media have acted as the predominant dissemination vehicles for the Neo-traditional musics and dances in the country. The encounter with foreign elements through the mass media has made the syncretic adoption to become possible on an unprecedented level, especially in the urban areas, since a large percentage of population in the rural Kenya has no access to radios and televisions.

Kenya, like many other African societies, have experienced a period of colonial dominance. During the pre-independent period in Kenya, the traditional societies tended to disintegrate and western life-styles were adopted. The process of acculturation was transferred to the school situation, and as would be expected, no provisions were made by the school system for the promotion of the authentic traditional cultures, including music and dance. The new musics and dances performed in the schools were modelled after the traditions of the dominant white culture. On the other hand, the school system was unable to completely destroy indigenous music. It

instead created new genres that reflected the complex contradictions and interaction between African and Western cultures. Such new genres have persisted to date.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEO-TRADITIONAL SONGS AND DANCES

The process of creating the new musical forms is a complex one. As Manual (1988) explains, it involves the reinterpretation and remolding of features inherited from traditional musics in such a manner as to reflect the new patterns of social organizations. This results into the formation of completely new styles of musics and dances, whose characteristics are discussed below.

According to Coplan (1978), the Neo-traditional genres are syncretic models that are at once authentic and modern, indigenous but not isolated or provincial, African but not ethnically exclusive. In other words, the Neo-traditional music and dance styles are a mix-up of authentic traditional African styles, foreign elements and concepts.

In the Kenyan society, one of the clearest manifestation of the Neo-traditional creations is the incorporation of the western harmonization systems into the African traditional melodies. The African traditional folk songs treated in this manner will adopt the western scales, harmonic progressions, and rhythmic patterns. Such traditional musics are often presented according to the modes of performance and with the mannerisms of western cultures. The song texts of such genres may combine several languages.

The Neo-traditional compositions are also characterized by simplified rhythmic structures. Traditional African musics and dances are celebrated for their complex poly-rhythms and layered syncopations. In the Neo-traditional performances, the rhythms and melodic elements are often simplified.

With regards to the Neo-traditional dance steps there is often a mix-up of traditional and conventional styles. The mix-up is also apparent in the dance costumes. Most traditional dancers in the modern Kenyan society adorn themselves with costumes and decors that are completely improvised from the modern material. Music and dance in the modern Kenyan society, thus

comprise a mixture of indigenous music cultures and the modern music styles. The situation reflects the new patterns of socio-cultural, political and economic development in the country.

PERFORMANCE VENUES AND OCCASIONS: THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEO-TRADITIONAL GENRES OF MUSIC AND DANCES.

The occasions, the venues of performance, as well as the genres of music and dances performed in a given society are all prescribed by the socio-cultural, political, religious and economic factors in that particular society.

In the present Kenyan society, various ethnic groups still strive to maintain their traditional norms. However, certain circumstances have eroded such traditional structures, and in their place, a new society has emerged that has a different and modern outlook on socio-cultural, political, religious and economic issues.

Based on the demands of the new society, certain occasions and venues that had been recognized in the traditional society for music performance have had to be modified or eliminated altogether. Only a few venues and occasions for traditional music performance have remained tenaciously.

On the other hand, in the new society, a host of new occasions and venues for music performance have arisen. These include tourists and national sites, cultural villages, music festival venues and churches. Such venues and occasions have tremendously contributed towards the propagation of the Neo-traditional music and dance styles within the Kenyan society. The performers have had, for instance, to modify certain aspects of traditional musics and dances in order to cater for the audience that is usually from diverse cultural backgrounds.

In the new venues and occasions the traditional music and dances are usually performed for an audience who normally adopt a passive role. This is very unusual because, as Manuel (1988) observes, one of the tendencies of the traditional African music performance is a high degree of collective participation, without which the performer must be considered as facing a completely

new situation. Under such circumstances, the performers are bound to modify certain aspects of the traditional songs and dances and use only the bits that are likely to act as seducing baits to the passive audience.

The national celebrations in Kenya, like in many countries, are attended by an audience that is not culturally homogenous, but a conglomeration of individuals from varying cultural groundings. During such occasions music and dance performers have to provide items that are likely to appeal to the members of the audience irrespective of their cultural tastes.

The performers themselves consist largely of groups of people who come together mainly through the convenience of living or working together. The performances staged by such groups are frequently not authentic. At times, in such performances, are noticed a mixture of traditional music, dance styles and certain elements that are obviously foreign to music and dance traditions of Kenyan Society.

Performance of the Neo-traditional music and dance in the Kenyan society has also been promoted by the inception of the Kenya Music Festival. The Music Festival itself is a borrowed phenomenon that has been ushered into the society by the process of socio-cultural development. The festival has brought with it the new idea of appraising music, and spelling out certain set standards that must be fulfilled. A lot of modifications have therefore been imposed on the traditional musics and dances in order to make them meet the standards.

According to the Presidential Music Commission (1984), some of the requirements set down by the music Festival Organizers, like indicating the time limit for performing the traditional musics and dances, have often led to the songs and dances being altered to fit within the set time limits. In the process, there occurs change in the speed, rhythm and even moods of the genres.

The Neo-traditional folk songs have flourished a great deal in the christian churches in Kenya. The adoption of the tradition folk songs for use in church worship has led to modification of the traditional tunes, in a bid to make them suitable for use in worship. Many songs that were originally used in traditional occasions have presently assumed new texts, rhythms and even

moods, that makes them suitable for the church use.

THE IMPACT OF THE NEO-TRADITIONAL GENRES ON THE ROLE OF MUSIC AND DANCE IN THE TRADITIONAL KENYAN SOCIETY.

In the traditional Kenyan society, like in other African societies, music and dance have been effective means of communication. Omondi (1992) observes that the African traditional musics and dances arise directly from the life of an African society and are normally performed to express shared values. The genres therefore nearly always carry some information which is for the most part intended to elicit some form of response from the listeners, among whom, or for whom it is performed.

An analysis of the Neo-traditional songs and dances performed in Kenya, reveal that they too have messages ostensibly to elicit responses. The audience, however, ignores the messages largely because in the new society, music performance is not regarded as having the purpose of transmitting information to elicit a response. The decoding of a message contained in a song becomes impossible with the diversified audience. Furthermore, at times, the songs and dances may have been mutilated beyond recognition in the process of trying to modify them for the well-being of the new society. Such mutilated songs would not be capable of conveying any sensible messages.

As had been mentioned in earlier sections of this paper, most traditional dancers in the modern Kenyan society wear costumes and decors that are improvised from modern materials and that serve no cultural purpose. In other words, the Neo-traditional costumes worn by the dancers do not actually convey the symbolic meanings of cultures of various Kenyan communities as has been the case when dancers wear authentic traditional costumes.

Lastly, the Neo-traditional musics and dances are often performed with a total disregard of the traditional context. Traditionally, the performance of certain types of musics and dances was strictly restricted to certain specific occasions. Circumcision songs, for instance, were only sang during the initiation periods. In the modern Kenyan society, the same songs are now sang in public arenas, and many times their texts and rhythms are distorted beyond recognition. Such

Neo-traditional performances can not have the same effects that the authentic traditional musics and dances had. Thus the advent of the Neo-traditional musics and dances, has really interfered with the roles initially played by the authentic traditional African music.

CONCLUSION

The discussion presented in this paper bears testimony to the fact that the authentic traditional cultures in Kenya, including music and dance are rapidly disappearing or being transformed.

The situations and venues in which all types of traditional music and dance performances took place within an integrated village life, are rare at present. Such a trend is diminishing the performance of authentic traditional musics and dances in the Kenyan society.

Since the old contexts of performance are slowly ceasing to exist, or to be relevant, new venues should be substituted, strictly with the intention of reviving the authentic traditional musics and dances in the society. As had been recommended by the Kenyan, National Presidential Music Commission (1984), cultural centres should be established for every community at the sub-location level in the rural areas of Kenya. Such centres would cater for the presentation of individual or group performances of traditional musics and dances, in order to revive the genres. It is unfortunate that this important recommendation seems not to have been fully effected in the country. The cultural centres have not been established in most parts of the rural areas. In cases where such centres exist, they are made minimum use of.

Creating forums for performing the authentic traditional musics and dances is an important step towards the revival of our disappearing musical cultures, not only in Kenya but in Africa as a whole. The urgency to undertake actions to correct the desperate situation concerning the disappearance of our authentic musics and dances is paramount.

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THE KIRBY COLLECTION

DEIRDRE HANSEN

During the past century, a growing awareness and appreciation of the value of traditional cultural heritages has stimulated the collecting of musical instruments in many parts of the world. Much of the collecting has been done by specialists in the humanities and music, by museum curators and other individuals who, working within the framework of their academic institutions, folklore societies, museums, or out of personal interest, have assembled notable collections of musical instruments.

Most countries and nations have their regional and/or national collections and South Africa, is no exception. She also has the Kirby Collection of instruments, which is owned by the University of Cape Town and is housed in its College of Music.

The diversity of the instrumental types which make up the Kirby Collection reflects the diverse interests of the man who brought these instruments together - Percival Robson Kirby (1887 - 1970) who, over a period of fifty years, assembled a unique, comparative collection in which South Africa is particularly well represented. Not only did he pioneer research into traditional music systems and practices in southern Africa; he also made important literary contributions to research into 'The By-Ways of South African History', producing works such as The Diary of Dr Andrew Smith (vols. 1 & 2, 1939 - 1940); Robert Moffat's visit to Mzilikazi in 1835 (1941), and The True Story of the Grosvenor (1960), and many others. With all this, Kirby travelled extensively overseas as lecturer, conductor and composer and he was awarded the South African Medal and grant for scientific research in 1938.

Historical Background

Kirby was born in Aberdeen, the 'Granite City', in Scotland and came to South Africa in 1914 to assume duties as Music Organiser to the Natal Department of Education, which had its head office in Pietermaritzburg. It was there that he met Dr Ernest Warren, who was then Director of the Natal Museum and also Professor of Zoology at Natal University College. He showed Kirby around the museum and the latter was very impressed and intrigued by a small collection of traditional Zulu instruments on display and which had been collected some six years before by Father Franz Mayr, an early missionary to the Zulu people. It was in this museum, too, that Kirby was shown a copy of the Travels of William John Burchell, which contains some descriptive accounts of traditional socio-musical activities. Noting Kirby's interest, Dr. Warren suggested that he make a study of such activities; they were bound to change or even disappear, sooner or later, hence the urgent need for indepth studies of these activities and their associated instruments, before it was too late.

As Music Organiser, Kirby had to draw up suitable music curricula for European, Coloured, African and Indian pupils and students. During these visits he saw little of traditional life as it was still lived in the rural areas and 'locations', except when travelling through them - sometimes on horseback. But whenever he could, he attended performances of traditional Zulu music and was able to compare it with the music which was being taught and sung at the African schools and institutions. (which at that time were run by missionaries of different denominations). This was a comparatively inferior, four-part vocal music with pedantic rhythms, which the Zulu assimilated on their own terms, and which strained the voices of young children, especially small boys, who were expected to sing tenor and bass parts long before their voices had broken. Surprised and appalled at the way in which African pupils and potential teachers were taught to sing music which he thought was quite unsuitable for them. Kirby decided to do something to change the situation. In a report to the Superintendent of Education in 1920, he stated, among other things, that 'what in Natal was thought of as the "natural harmony of the Zulu", was not indigenous but had been acquired from the Europeans, especially at the mission stations. His suggestions to improve matters by coming to understand and appreciate the traditional music and to use it in the educational context, included a complete ethnological survey of the African peoples which should be made on the lines of those conducted by the Smithsonian Institution. "As a record, it will be of great interest, while as a guide to educationists, it would be invaluable!" (This report also appeared in the Natal Witness of 25 November 1920.)

So began Kirby's research into the musical practices of the indigenous peoples of southern Africa, a research which was to continue for the greater part of his life. It included serious studies of musical instruments used by African, Asian, Coloured and European peoples. When he left Natal in 1921, to take up his appointment as Professor of Music at the early University of the Witwatersrand (then known as the Johannesburg University College), he had already collected quite a number of Zulu and Indian instruments and acquired an old Edison phonograph, which had been made initially for the teaching of languages. Since the machine was fitted with a 'home-recording outfit' (customary at that time), Kirby was able to make some early wax-cylinder recordings, almost all of which, being highly perishable, have not survived.

The move to Johannesburg proved to be advantageous in every respect. At the University, Kirby found himself surrounded by people coming from disciplines other than music and who were greatly interested in southern Africa's indigenous peoples, their customs and ways of life. Their interest extended to Kirby's special field and gave great impetus to his research into traditional musics. Among them was Clement C Doke (later Professor Doke), an ex-missionary who worked on the phonetics of the Zulu language and who asked Kirby to assist him in musically notating the pitches of nine tones which he had identified in that language. Through Doke, Kirby met Rev A T Bryant, an American missionary who had lived for years in Natal (his Zulu dictionary had been

published in 1905), and who was a visiting lecturer to the University. As a result of this meeting, Kirby travelled to Pietermaritzburg in 1923, to study and record some traditional Zulu songs that were still sung by Zulu living in the Swartkop valley outside Pietermaritzburg. It was at the young University that Kirby came to know Professor Raymond Dart and Professor Maingard, whose interest and enthusiasm were a continual source of encouragement and 'swept [him] into the stream of research'. From 1930 onward Kirby made regular visits to remote rural areas in search of traditional music and instruments. He was usually accompanied by one of the aforementioned colleagues and some students or other individuals who acted as field assistants.

During the next 25 years, Kirby carried out some intensive fieldwork in different parts of southern Africa and also visited other areas in Africa, the United Kingdom and Europe. At this point I think it is appropriate to mention Kirby's views about collecting instruments and his attitude, aims and objectives as a researcher. He has expressed some of them in his publications and his autobiography (Wit's End, 1967), and I had the privilege of talking to him about them, when I was an undergraduate student at Rhodes University, for which Kirby was an external Music Examiner. He always stressed that collecting is not an end in itself and that the collection of instruments without essential documentation, is a futile exercise. Nor was he content to be a 'product musicologist' i.e. one who concentrates on music sound per se, how it is produced, what it means. Instead, he maintained that all traditional practices and instruments should be investigated as integral parts of particular cultural systems and that musical instruments should have the background information which goes with them. Although his field trips were of limited duration (most were made in the University vacations), they were extremely successful in that he acquired not only the methods of playing, learning, and teaching the techniques used in performance, but he also provided each instrument with accurate information about its history, its technology, its social function(s), associated aesthetics or symbolism; techniques of performance (including crucial playing positions) and the resultant musical structure.

By 1934, Kirby had brought together a collection of instruments which is unique in the world, in that it contains a notable area collection of instruments from Southern Africa - the largest and most complete ever assembled. Many of them bear witness to traditions that are lost, but Kirby provided them with good research material and ultimately, produced what became the most comprehensive book on indigenous instruments: The Musical Instruments of the Native Races of South Africa, a mammoth, pioneering work which was first published in 1934 and has remained the standard work on the subject. It was reprinted in 1953, and then republished in a second and revised edition in 1965 (Wits. Univ. Press). The typist of the original manuscript was Kathleen Alister, who later became a noted harpist in this country.

Apart from the indigenous instruments, Kirby also collected a wide range of instruments from various countries elsewhere in Africa,

from Western Europe and from the East (notably China and India). The main reason for collecting European musical instruments was 'to bring to life some of the practices of the great masters of music', for Kirby's students at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Regarding the Asian/Oriental instruments, Kirby felt that they provided some interesting parallels with the southern African instruments, as they do with some of the early Western European instruments which are part of the collection.

In 1952, shortly before retiring as Professor of Music at Wits, Kirby offered the collection on permanent loan to the Johannesburg Municipality. Up to this time it had been displayed at the University, but with his retirement in sight. Kirby felt that it should be housed in a place where it would be properly cared for and preserved for posterity - and where it would be accessible to a wider public. The Johannesburg Municipality accepted and the collection was duly housed in the Africana Museum, where it remained until 1981, when it was bought by the University of Cape Town. The Collection is now on display in a museum situated in two rooms at the College of Music, which were especially painted and decorated for that purpose.

Many of the musical bows are displayed on the ochre-coloured walls, which carry a frieze (near the ceiling) painted in white, black, red and indigo, by Cecil Skotnes, Hamilton Budaza, Wilberforce Majola and Lionel Davids. Running along the lower part of the walls are two strips of colour - dark red (symbolic of vigour and fertility) and brown (signifying the earth, which sustains life), providing a perfect foil for the ochre walls and the variegated wooden floor of the display rooms.

The Kirby Collection was officially opened by the Honourable Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu (now Minister of Home Affairs), on 8th July 1983.

An account of each instrument in the collection is beyond the scope of this article. For this reason I shall briefly talk about some of the most interesting instruments from all four main classes: idiophones, membranophones, cordophones, and aerophones.

Almost all the Venda, Pedi and Shangana-Tsonga instruments were acquired during three trips to the Northern Transvaal - one in 1930 and the other two in 1931. The road journeys were made in 'an ancient Model T Ford' and in his autobiography, there are some candid and, at times, witty accounts of Kirby's experiences of seeing, hearing and learning the traditional music. He seems to have had a remarkable ability to establish good relations and rapport with his informants, and gain a personal intimacy with important persons, their standards of social and musical behaviour. During his visit to the Shangana-Tsonga (when he collected several specimens of mancomane frame drums (used in exorcism rites), and rattles and musical bows (mouth- and gourd-resonated), he was given every assistance by a venerable old Chief, Muhlaba, who gathered all his best musicians and instrument-makers at his homestead, to

collaborate with Kirby. His parting gift to Kirby, when he had to return to Johannesburg, was a buck, which was brought to him by two men who carried the animal slung on a pole. It was, as Kirby himself put it, 'A truly royal gift bestowed in a truly Robin Hood manner'.

The trip to Pedi country (Sekhukhuneland and surrounds) was, at first, a hazardous one. The Model T Ford was unable to cope with the appalling state of the 'roads' and mountainous terrain and burnt out all its 'small ends'. The providential discovery of a blacksmith in the area, who also ran an old Ford car, enabled Kirby to obtain a new set of bearings and the Pedi expedition resulted in the collection of many instruments and good materials about Pedi musical techniques and instrument technology.

The collection has some very interesting Pedi drums. One of them is a tubular drum - moropa - which was made in 1897 at the time of the Sekhukhune rebellion. It has had three drum heads, the original one, another put on in 1900 and a third, in 1914. Traces of the first two drum heads are visible on the instrument. There is also a mosupiane friction drum, which was used at bvale initiation ceremonies of Pedi girls; the instrument was made and played in secret and the sound it emitted (when rubbed on the drum head with a wetted bundle of maize stalks) was believed to be the 'voice' of a shade or spirit. A Pedi frame drum (ntshomane) is displayed alongside Shangana-Tsonga cognate forms of this instrument (ncomane). The sekgobogobo trough zither is another interesting instrument; it was friction-sounded and mouth-resonated and traditionally played by men and boys. The Venda form of this instrument - tshidzholo - is still played by a few Venda wandering minstrels, whereas the Pedi instrument is rarely seen today. It has been replaced by the botsorwane, a one-string 'fiddle' with an attached tin-can resonator.

One of the most attractive instruments on view is a Pedi braced bow with a tortoise carapace as a resonator. Known as sekgapa, it is one of the many specimens of musical bows in the collection. Most, if not all, African peoples in southern Africa, refer to their instruments as 'things which are made to cry, weep, to echo', a description which does not refer specifically to 'music' or 'song'. There are quite a number of instruments on display which are not used in musical contexts, even though Westerners tend to classify all of them as musical instruments. The Pedi naka va sefako is one of these; it is a whistle made from an antelope horn, encased in animal skin and ornamented with a design in iron and brass wire. It was traditionally used by Pedi diviners to ward off hailstorms. The naka va phatola is another 'non-musical' instrument, being an end-blown signal whistle and used in times of war. The same may be said for many end-blown and side-blown trumpets (Zulu icilongo, uphondo, Venda phalaphala and tshihoho, made from wood or animal horns which were 'things' for signalling, rather than for making music. (Nowadays the Zulu instrument is used in the music of the Nazareth Baptist Church i.e. the church founded by Isaiah Shembe.)

The second Venda trip was made in 1931. By linking up with a scientific expedition, which was also carrying out research in Vendaland, Kirby travelled far into that country. Leaving the car at Sibasa, the party then made their way on foot to Lake Fundudzi, a lake which is sacred to the Venda people. The next day, while looking for 'food for the pot', Kirby shot down a wild duck which had been hovering over the Lake. No sooner had he and his assistant settled down to pluck the bird, when a Venda petty chief suddenly appeared. He identified himself as the guardian of the Lake and angrily demanded an explanation for the shooting: the bird was apparently a reincarnation of a deceased Venda chief. After receiving an apologetic explanation from Kirby, who stressed their need for food, the chief took away the carcass in order to dispose of it ritually. That very night there was a heavy cloudburst - an unusual occurrence in July - which drenched the research team and all their bedding and a temporary shelter of light branches had to be contrived under which the team could take refuge and dry themselves over a small fire.

The Lake's guardian again appeared on the scene and blamed Kirby and his team for the cloudburst, which was an indication that they had definitely interfered with the ancestral spirits. They were then taken to, and housed in, a 'Council chamber' at the guardian's homestead, where they spent the rest of the night. Waking in the light of day the next morning, they discovered that the 'Council chamber' was also a place of storage for Venda musical instruments!

It was during this second field trip that Kirby encountered what he afterwards referred to as 'the Steinway of the Venda'. This was their heptatonic xylophone which is known as mbila muthondo, (the term mbila referring to the notes of the xylophone and also of the Venda heptatonic lamellophone, (mbila dza madeza). The xylophone has 21 or 22 slats, each of which is fitted with a large, 'tubular' calabash/gourd resonator (varying in size), and is played by two people. One plays a basic ostinato theme with two beaters on the higher notes at one end of the instrument, while the other plays in cross-rhythms on the lower 'bass' notes, using three beaters, one in the right hand and two in the left hand, held in such a way to form a V. Muthondo is the vernacular term for the Transvaal teak (*Pterocarpus angolensis*) from which the instrument is traditionally constructed.

Kirby learnt to play the instrument under the guidance of a master xylophone player named Sigari, who, after many lessons, expressed his satisfaction at Kirby's performance. As Kirby was anxious to acquire such an instrument and knowing that he could not make an offer for this particular one (a mbila is the property of the group/community and not of an individual), he asked a specialist maker to construct one for him. He was quite prepared to pay the usual fee - which was one live goat or £5 (R25). The instrument-maker accepted and promised to have the instrument ready by September, which was two months away. Pleased and excited about his field results and the prospect of owning a mbila muthondo, Kirby returned to Johannesburg with his Model T Ford crammed with musical instruments and 'looking like a Christmas tree

He returned to Venda in September to fetch his xylophone and found a very good specimen awaiting him. He immediately squatted before it and began to play, to the great surprise of the instrument-maker, who then said that Kirby could have his instrument for half the price agreed upon because he was obviously an mbila player. So saying, he produced from one pocket a handful of calabash seeds for growing the specially shaped 'spare parts'. From the other pocket he took a handful of spider webs which, as vibrators, are an essential feature of the resonators. This instrument occupies a special position in the Kirby Collection and is on display together with three Venda drums. It is of inestimable value, not only because of its age but also because it represents a tradition which is now obsolete. This was confirmed by the fieldwork findings Jaco Kruger, who investigated the present state of Venda instrumental music in the 1980's. He located only one xylophone and two elderly men who could recall its traditional use and the music and playing techniques associated with it. But the instrument has long lost its traditional function and today there are no more bearers of the tradition in Venda. Venda xylophone music as a vital instrumental tradition is, sadly, a thing of the past.

Venda drums are still in use, however, and sets of ngoma (large, pot-shaped 'bass' drum), thungwa (smaller, pot-shaped 'tenor' drum), and murumba (conical 'alto' drum), are still to be found in the homes of chiefs and headmen. Venda drummers are traditionally always women, except at possession dances and performances of important communal music in urban settings, when the drummers are men. All three drums are carved out of wood and are single-membrane drums. Ngoma and thungwa, are unlike murumba, which has one handle (its entire shape is identical with that of the Venda milking jug, ikhamelo), and which is held between the knees and played with the hands.

One of the largest instruments on view in the 'museum' is the shell of an enormous Venda ngoma drum, whose provenance is unknown. According to the De Lange Catalogue of the Kirby Collection, this drum 'stood for years in front of the residence of Sir William and Lady Dalrymple, used as a flower pot'. Although the shell of the drum has cracked, the typical Venda relief carving round the circumference has remained undamaged. According to information from a Venda informant and an expert on Venda language and culture, there is a remote possibility that this drum could be an old and venerated instrument which was lost in the 1800's - the big ngoma that came from 'a region of fire'. It was associated with, and came to symbolise, a Venda chief's power and status and a medium through which he 'spoke' to his people. It always hung suspended from a thick branch of a tall tree and in times of war, and in the face of direct enemy attack, the chief would beat upon the drum. Such was the power of its 'voice' that the enemy always fell senseless on the ground. According to oral tradition, the power of the chief and the unity of the Venda would be maintained so long as the drum remained suspended above the ground and was able to 'speak'. Sometime during the last century, the thongs or vines attaching the drum to the tree branch broke and the drum fell to the ground and cracked and the power of the chief and Venda unity

were broken.... Whatever the provenance of this instrument, it will make an interesting research project for a fieldworker, especially a Venda, whose discreet enquiries among his own people might provide us with more information about this fascinating subject.

It was during his third visit to the people of Venda that Kirby made a visit to the sacred bamboo grove at Tshaulu, East Venda. All the pipes known as nanga dza musununu (end-blown and tuned to a heptatonic 'scale') are made from bamboo cut from this grove, which is looked after by a guardian, whose family has been traditionally responsible for it for many generations. The bamboo is cut by the male members of the family. Kirby bought a set (mutavha) of pipes from the guardian, the price being one live goat. Since he insisted on goat payment, Kirby travelled to Tshaulu with a goat as a travelling companion), in the car. The acquisition of a set of pipes contained in a cowskin bag (tevu va Nanga) more than compensated from the very 'unpleasant' car trip! This bag is a rarity and so far as I know, no other specimens exists in any other museum or collection, nor have any more been located in Venda. The bag and set of pipes are displayed in the centre of the larger display room.

Among the most valuable instruments on display are sets of end-blown-pipes originally played by the San and Khoi peoples. The Khoi are the earliest known players of reed-pipe ensemble music, a performance of which was witnessed by Vasco Da Gama and his crew in 1497, when they anchored in Mossel Bay. The practice was later adopted by the Tswana, who came into contact with the Khoi toward the end of the 18th Century and who retained the original four-tone 'scale' in their music. Kirby procured his reed-pipes in field trips made in 1931 (Botswana), 1932 (Bloemhof, to the Korana Khoi) and 1935 (Namibia, to the Nama), the journey being made in a Fox "Moth" light aircraft, in a series of 'stops' because the plane could not carry much fuel!). Two more trips in 1936 resulted in two more sets being added to his collection: a set of cane pipes from Nama living in Botswana and a set of bark pipes complete with slender tuning sticks. Contributions from the late Mrs A W Hoernle, the noted anthropologist and Mr Carl Berger, provided a set of 17 reed-pipes made from the bark of //Khus roots (the 'giraffe acacia'), and a set of river-reed pipes and two tuning sticks from the Red Dunes San of Namibia.

Many other Khoisan instruments are on display: whizzing disks and bull-roarers (the latter used by certain San people to attract bees and so locate honey) and a type of San harp, known as /ka/kanasi among the /Auni people, which is quite literally an extension of the body - a string of sinew is divided and stretched across a dry skin resonator (antelope skin) which is then fixed onto the players body. This string is plucked with the fingers and thumbs, the player altering the tension of the string by leaning forwards or backwards. A cocoon rattle adds to the overall sound effect, which is 'more rattle and buzz than musical tone'. This instrument was used by one female informant for individual music-making and never as an accompaniment to dancing.

Also on view are several types of musical bows: /gabus (Korana, Khoi mouth-resonated, unbraced bow); /khou, a San shooting bow used also as a musical instrument by men, mouth-resonated; 'wind-bows' (musical bows cum stick zithers, in which the string is set in motion by inhalation and exhalation, e.g. the gora of the Khoi, and cognates used by Bantu-speaking peoples, and the San cognate, //ha, which was contributed by Dorothea Bleek, an authority on the San. There is also a scraped mouth bow of the !Kung (San), known as nxonxoro, and collected in Botswana by the later Professor C Doke, a colleague of Kirby at the early Witwatersrand University; and a Khoi musical bow with separate resonator - khais //Khou), which was used by women for self-accompanied singing. The Tswana form of this instrument - nokokwane (or nokukwane) is also on display, as are two types of temporary resonators - a milk sack and a hemispherical wooden bowl. Most of the bows are displayed in one of the glass-fronted wooden cases in the larger of the two rooms, while several are arranged on their ochre-coloured walls. The larger room contains a beautiful marble fireplace with decorative tiles, above which rests a bust of Kirby which was made by Eduard Villa (plaster with bronze finish). In 1982 the sculptor recast it in bronze and it now occupies a central position in the collection.

Forms of the musical bow are found in many parts of the world but according to some scholars it is found in more varieties in southern Africa than anywhere else in the world. Although many of them have fallen into disuse, we have, at least, a knowledge of how they were made and played when they were still a vital part of traditional musical activities. This applies to all the sound instruments and not only to bows.

As many fieldworkers know, there is always the possibility that their research projects may stimulate peoples' interest in musical practices that they have neglected and discarded. While researching reed-pipe ensembles in the Kalahari (which were always held out of sight and earshot of missionaries, who condemned such "heathen" practices), Kirby suggested to the District Commissioner that he do all he can to encourage the continuity of traditional activities, because of their cultural value. Some months later, Kirby heard that reed-pipe ensembles were flourishing in that area and that the tribal elders went about their 'preservation' duties so zealously, that they actually threatened to circumcise one of their people on the spot, because he had converted to Christianity and was opposing the traditional customs. He had to defend himself with a shot-gun!

Although drums are virtually synonymous with Africa, their traditional use in southern Africa was confined to certain peoples only. The Venda, Pedi and Shangana-Tsonga were, and still are, the only peoples whose use of drums and drumming is in any way comparable with practices in East, Central and West Africa, where many kinds of drums are to be found.

Although there is no evidence of traditional drum usage among the Nguni peoples (the Zulu, Swazi and Xhosa), the accounts of some early travellers among them refer to the use of war-shields by warriors while singing war- and regimental songs (and, among the

Xhosa, hunting songs), who beat their shields with knobbed sticks, or on the ground, to emphasize the songs' rhythms. A Swazi war-shield (lihawu) which hangs on one of the walls of the display room, is a reminder of this practice, which may be observed today in performances of the Swazi Battle 'anthem', (Ihubo lika Ngwane) entitled 'The Cave of Ncofula' (Incaba ka Ncofula), the Zulu clan anthem (Ihubo) and some modern Zulu dances. There are also three specimens of an indigenous Zulu friction drum (ingungu) which was used to accompany girls' dance songs at ukwemula ('coming of age') ceremonies, at which a girl's marriageable status is publicly acclaimed. The ingungu is made from a clay pot to which a piece of skin is attached over its opening, by means of criss-crossing thongs. Playing technique consists of placing a stick on the skin and rubbing the wetted hands alternately down it. The same 'drum' was used to accompany the singing of ukubhina songs at Zulu girls' puberty ceremonies of ukuthomba. On display next to the friction drums is a Swazi intambula, which is contrived from a clay beer-pot, with a temporary skin resonator held in place over its opening. When playing, the drummer beats upon the skin with a stick. Other drums in the collection come from different regions and areas in Africa e.g. Zambia (a pot-shaped drum and a friction drum with decorative carving); from Namibia (including two large tubular drums which were traditionally played at girls' effendulo initiation ceremonies among the Ovambo peoples; from Uganda (including a kettle-drum and a cylindrical drum of the entenga type); from Zaire (two trapezoidal slit-drums which are used for drum language and literature ('talking drums') and also in communal performances of music); and the well-known hourglass-shaped drum which is also used for 'talking' as well as for musical performances. It has a wide distribution, occurring in Africa from Sierra Leone to the Cameroons and north of the Zambezi. Cognate forms are found in Asia.

With regard to drums, there are two 'odd men out' in the predominantly African assemblage: they are two hourglass-shaped, single-headed drums, the open ends of which are decorated with intricate carving. These drums come from New Guinea and are played primarily by male dancers who grip the handles located at the waists of each drum in one hand and beat the skin (usually that of a big lizard - kundu - or snake) with the other hand. The adhesive which is used to attach the skin to the drum usually contains human blood which is believed to add mystical powers to the instrument. (Malm 1977, 1967.)

Western kettle-drums are among the most valuable items in the Kirby collection. One is a pair of Stumpf kettle-drums, the tuning system of which was devised in 1821, while the other is a pair of kettle-drums which originally belonged to the Z.A.R.P.S. (South African Mounted Police). These were made by Hawkes and Son, London, in the latter part of the 19th century.

There are several Asian membranophones on view, among them being:

- a) an example of a pan-Islamic single-headed drum with a pottery vase body. Known as darbuka, or darabukkah, it is found in all pan-Islamic traditions, which extend from Morocco to

Turkey. Kirby obtained this particular instrument in Cairo, Egypt, on one of his return journeys from the United Kingdom and Europe via the East coast of Africa;

- b) Northern Indian tabla i.e. a pair of small drums, one for each hand and called tabla and baya respectively, which Kirby procured in Durban;
- c) a small barrel-shaped drum - kakko - traditionally used in the Japanese court music of gagaku, which flourished during the periods 710 - 784 and 794 - 1185 (the Nara and Heian periods). This particular item was sent to Kirby by a past curator of the King William's Town museum, Eastern Cape.

Two of the most interesting instruments on view are small hourglass-shaped double-skin drums, known as damaru and rnga-chung. The first is an Indian instrument which is closely associated with the cult of Siva (Shiva); the second is a smaller, less elaborate drum of the same shape which is found in Tibet, where its name means 'small drum'. Both drums are played by twisting them back and forth in the hand, so that the seed pellets at the end of the cotton cord (damaru), on the two strips of cloth (rnga-chung), which are attached to the waist of each instrument, will strike the two skin heads alternately. The latter is used in the context of Buddhist activities and shaman rituals, in Tibet and in East Asia. Sometimes the two attached hemispheres which form the body of the Tibetan drum are made of a human cranium and the instrument itself is known as thod-dam.

Among the aerophones, one of the best known Indian instruments in the Western world, is the snake charmer's instrument, known as pungi. It is a double clarinet with free reeds encased in a gourd and Kirby obtained his specimen from Kashmir, India, possibly through contacts in Durban.

The Argul or Yarul is another double clarinet, with two cylindrical pipes, each of which has a single beating reed. A pan-Islamic aerophone, it is found in many sizes. The Indian double reed family of shahnai is represented by the nagaswaram, an 'oboe' made of wood with a decorated brass bell fitted at the wider end. It is accompanied by another double reed instrument with fewer finger holes, which plays a drone and is known as ottu. (The extra holes on the nagaswaram, like those on the argul, may be plugged with wax to regulate the basic pitch of the instrument). Also on display in the same case are two Chinese double reed instruments called sona. This type of instrument was used in Peking opera ensembles, particularly those which play music to accompany military scenes and it is also found in the Near East and in South Asia (Maghrib = zakra, gaita; Persia = surnay, and Turkey = zurna/zorna).

A Malagassy form of the double-reed is also on view and is made entirely from wood. Also representative of music from Madagascar, are three tube zithers, two of which are highly decorated with

purple velvet base covering and ivory and wicker-work ornamentation. Other types of zithers include examples from Zaire (a bar zither); from Malawi (a bangwe board zither with gourd resonator) and, from China, the yang ch'in, popularly known as the 'butterfly harp' because of its shape but which is actually a hammered dulcimer and the Chinese version of the santur zither of the Near East, which was imported into China in the 16th century. Kirby's instrument was made in Shanghai and imported by him into this country.

Most of the Chinese instruments in his collection were made by, or obtained directly or indirectly from Chinese labourers who were employed on the Transvaal gold mines. They include three san hsien (a three-stringed plucked lute with snake-skin head) and, two yueh ch'in (the so-called 'moon guitar', a plucked lute with four strings in double courses). Both types of lute were used in performances of 'a kind of bourgeois music' which emerged in the Ming and Ch'ing periods (1644 - 1911).

There are also three sheng 'mouth organs', each comprising seventeen bamboo pipes set in a gourd-like wind chest. This instrument is said to be one of the oldest known instruments in the world and is linked in legend to the phoenix bird, whose cry its sound is said to imitate. The shape of the instrument is said to resemble that of a phoenix with folded wings. The sheng was subsequently used in Chinese modern music (including Chinese opera) and in the court ensemble music of Japan, where it is known as sho.

Other instruments which are worthy of mention are: an arched harp from Uganda and two bowl lyres (thum), all of which were probably collected by Kirby on his journeys around the east coast of Africa. Thum lyres are played by the Luo and other people of Kenya and are cognate with the krar, the 'devil's instrument' which is widely used in Ethiopian secular music. Bowl lyres are to be found in the region of the Upper Nile, in the areas north and east of Lake Victoria and are often beautifully and strikingly ornamented.

Two-stringed indigenous plucked lutes are found throughout North Africa (as are 'home-made' versions) and the two gunbri/genibri in this collection were obtained by Mrs Kirby in 1928. Both have tortoise-shell resonators. Other lute specimens include the well-known Moslem form, ud, which Kirby purchased in Cairo in 1933 and an Italian lute, which was made in 1661 by Johannes Dinumerato.

These then, are some of the instruments which are to be seen in the Kirby collection. Among the least-known exhibits are seven red clay figurines which were sculptured by Samuel Makoanyane, a self-taught South Sotho artist. Each figurine represents a man or woman playing a traditional South Sotho instrument: a moropa drum; a lekope musical bow (mouth-resonated, played by a woman); a man playing a thomo musical bow unbraced, gourd-resonated), a lekolilo pipe and a setolotolo musical bow (tripartite stave, braced, mouth-resonated); and a boy playing a sekatari bowed lute (with attached resonator) and a lesiba wind-bow

Makoanyane's figurines show careful modelling of playing positions and detailed construction of each musical instrument from pieces of grass, twigs, wire and tin.

The Kirby Collection and its accompanying documentation is a rich resource centre, and is the central feature of our growing ethnomusicology archives. It is visited annually by many people, local and from abroad, for whom we provide talks and demonstrations in which we involve local musicians and our students. Our ethnomusicology programmes are research-orientated, having research and education as guiding principles, with African musicians involved in teaching performance.

Many of the instrument types in the collection are obsolete, and bear witness to traditions that are lost. But just as they stand as records of what musical practice was like at certain periods in history, so do they remain as an inspiration and a stimulus for research and documentation, and the transmission of cultural knowledge, of musical life in these times.

What we in Ethnomusicology are concerned with is the reality of musical life NOW, the current circumstances in which people create music, dance and related forms of cultural expression. Our goal is to promote the continuity of these forms as a cultural heritage, through research, documentation and performance practice, so that future generations will be able to appreciate these forms as living contemporary practice that is still relevant, and that expresses the cultural diversity which lies within our national identity.

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Mitambo: Venda traditional dance theatre

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1 Introduction

On the 17th of June 1988 I was watching beer dancing (*malende*) at a beer house in the Gaba district of Venda. By that time I had been studying Venda musical culture for about five years. What little I knew of Venda dance theatre I had learned from Blacking's description (1969) of certain dramatic aspects of girls' initiation. Thus it was only after watching a performance of a beer song mime for several minutes that I realized that dance theatre was not restricted to initiation. I hastily grabbed my video camera and recorded the conclusion of the mime.

The recording shows the conflict that arises from adultery: three female performers play the role of a husband, his wife and his mistress. The husband wears a white dustcoat typical of migrant labourers from earlier times.¹ He also carries a long stick. The wife wears a yellow oil skin, and the mistress a hard hat. The dust coat clearly identifies the husband. The identity of the wife and the mistress becomes clear from the mime. Their seemingly inappropriate costumes simply show that they are actors.

The performance starts with the husband and wife dancing in beer song style, but is more stylized and dramatic than usual. This is a clear prelude to the action that follows: the mistress enters, and starts arguing with the wife. The mistress then dances with the husband, while the wife casts dice to pronounce the adulterers guilty. The mistress taunts the wife and sweeps the dice away.

2 Some basic characteristics of *mitambo*

The brief description given in 1 illustrates three basic characteristics of Venda dance theatre:

- it is an optional part of most communal dances, and is therefore not as commonly witnessed as the dances themselves
- it promotes social morality
- it usually coordinates group action, and consequently promotes social solidarity.

While most Venda dances contain some dramatic elements, Venda speakers will identify the mime described above as a special component of Venda dance called *mutambo* (pl. *mitambo*). Van Warmelo (1989:244) defines *mutambo* as "play, game, diversion" (from *tamba*, "to play"). Blacking (1965, 1969, 1985) applies the term *mitambo* to Venda musical culture, and defines it as musical "amusements", "recreational songs", or "interludes", the most important being dances of teenagers. *Mitambo* contrast with *dzingoma* which are communal rituals with explicit sacred meaning. They are *tshikona*, the reedpipe dance, girls' initiation schools, and *ngoma dza midzimu*, trance music (Blacking 1985:74-75). However, with the possible exception of

trance music, which has no play element (cf. Blacking 1985:71-72), and the *domba* initiation school in which plays are referred to as *matano* (cf. Blacking 1969:158-173), all Venda dances have optional theatrical components also referred to as *mitambo*.

These *mitambo* are probably recognized for conveying meaning in a more direct way than conventional dancing and singing. Thus the themes of dance theatre may even bear no relevance to their accompanying music. In one such case (Kruger 1993:203-206) women parodied male dance movements to criticize male sexual harassment. This parody was performed to the accompaniment of the well-known hymn *Iyani Mushe* ("Go there Moses"). The song text (which refers to the Jewish exodus from Egypt) had no significance in terms of what the women tried to achieve. They conveyed their disapproval of sexual harassment essentially through dramatic action while the music coordinated their bodily expression.

While people acknowledge *mitambo* as special message bearers, they do not consider them a separate category of dance pattern. Blacking for example notes that "the principal *mitambo* play dances were included in the *domba* initiation and were adapted choreographically to the *domba* context" (1985:75). Similarly, all *mitambo* take their dance pattern from the dance they are part of. For example, people most commonly identify *mitambo malendeni* (beer song dance theatre), *mitambo tshigombelani* (dance theatre of the *tshigombela* female dance), and *mitambo tshikonani* (reedpipe dance theatre).

The root of the word *mitambo* (*tamba*, "to play") suggests that Venda dance theatre has a frivolous function only. However, *mitambo* are similar to the Sotho category of games, *lipapali*, which

stands in a contrastive relationship not to work, but to war. This domain includes not only war but all sorts of disputes, anxieties, discontinuities, and conflicts in life...In contrast, the concept of "games" includes cohesive, continuative actions that help "construct" society...Games are...analogues or metaphors of socially constructed understandings, aurally reordered models of social reality (Coplan 1987:31, quoting Charles Adams).

Mitambo do not merely passively contrast with social conflict. Many of them are "social dramas", defined by Turner (1974:37) as "units of aharmonic or disharmonic progress, arising in conflict situations". As the descriptions above suggest, *mitambo* address and mediate conflict. When, in the context of beer song dance theatre, guitarist Solomon Mathase of Ngulumbi sees somebody "doing something" (meaning something bad or extraordinary), he takes his guitar and criticizes corrupt government, immoral urban women, and unqualified diviners (Kruger 1993). Thus *mitambo* are often the settings of various kinds of rebellion against unacceptable social behaviour. In this context the physical and mental interaction of *mitambo*

performers stimulates group consciousness which may serve as the basis for social action (see 3).

2.1 The nature of dramatic action in *mitambo*

One of the reasons *mitambo* are not commonly observed by outsiders is because they are seldom planned. They usually arise spontaneously from the circumstances of a particular dance. Unplanned *mitambo* are often brief, and may last the length of a song only. However, sometimes a *mutambo* may unfold interruptedly during the course of an entire musical event lasting several hours. Unplanned *mitambo* are usually performed during informal musical gatherings such as beer drinks. Planned dance theatre takes place at formal events like initiation schools, political meetings, cultural festivals or dance competitions.

Props and costumes (excluding normal dance wear) are the exception rather than the norm. This is obviously related to the spontaneous nature of most *mitambo*. In most of the beer song dance plays I observed, performers hurriedly fashioned makeshift costumes and grabbed simple props (sometimes even during a performance). In beer song dance theatre which usually addresses marital and sexual relations, the function of costumes is to distinguish between men and women. As may be expected, props are chosen to illustrate the theme of a particular dance theatre performance: a clay pot is twirled on its bottom in a performance of *Tshidudu tsha mashonzha tshikhoul vhillinga* ("the clay pot with mopani worms is bubbling"),² and a Bible is opened in a performance of a song advocating parental respect.³

The dramatic action of Venda dance theatre unfolds along continuums between dance movement and non-dance movement, and mime and acting. In a beer song dance theatre performance of the children's song *Tshithethenthe Maride* (a courting dance of young teenagers),⁴ adult men and women re-enacted the dance in the setting of a beer song performance.⁵ In another beer song performance three men showed in a mime with very limited dance movement how sticks and fists may be used to mobilize an obstinate donkey.⁶ In an extreme case teenage girls from the Tshakuma Cultural Group began and concluded a short formal play about ritual poisoning with beer song dancing.⁷

3 *Mitambo*: 20th century cultural confluences

Venda 20th century dance theatre participated in the formation of colonial and post-colonial relations (cf. Kruger 1989, 1993). So, for example, beer song dance theatre has retained its function as a setting for the exploration of gender relations. But dance theatre has traditionally also addressed political relations. Not surprisingly, debate in dance theatre about political relations came to the fore in the struggle for democracy subsequent to the institution of separate development.

The first Venda local territorial authority was established in 1954. Territorial authorities sanctioned the precolonial political status of ruling families and prepared Venda for self-rule (1969) and independence (1979) under apartheid rubric. The institution of these authorities militated against the process of detribalization that started in the late 19th century and accelerated in the 20th century. Thus the four decades preceding the coming to power of the African National Congress in 1994 was marked by conflict between supporters of the traditional political order and supporters of democracy.

Rulers promoted traditional dances which cultivate political loyalty (cf. Kruger 1989). Their efforts were channeled through various government institutions like the Department of Education which initiated a national dance competition. Refusal to participate in traditional dance elicited fines and accusations of political sabotage.

Many communal songs which originated around independence (1979) promoted national unity under the rule of chiefs: "Work towards the unity of chiefs: rejoice over the independence of Venda" (a song from the *tshigombela* female dance); "We are going to meet at Pondo Maria"⁸ (a well-known beer song). The nationalistic content of communal songs reflected a degree of spontaneous reaction to colonialism. For several years after independence, many people supported the rule of chiefs through communal dancing because they believed that their material conditions would improve: "We praise President Mphephu with *tshigombela*: he provided electricity and water" (*tshigombela* song).

A change in political consciousness marks communal musical performances from the middle 1980s onwards. This change coincided with the repression of the official political opposition (the Venda Independent People's Party) and the establishment of a one-party state which failed to address the economic and political aspirations of large numbers of poor people. Communal songs increasingly challenged government legality: "Where is unity? We cannot see it"; and "We are tired of dancing for chiefs: we have neither running water nor electricity" (*tshigombela* songs); "Ravele broke the clay pot" (a beer song criticizing the corrupt regime of president Frank Ravele). Feelings against political murders were particularly strong. Mimes of these murders were performed in a number of communal dances.

The Venda government was overthrown in a bloodless military coup in 1990. Some communal dancing subsequently decreased in a number of areas, and ceased in others. New communal songs emerged: "We rejoice over the reign of the young revolutionaries", and "The government of Mandela will rule, the apartheid government will end" (*tshigombela* songs). This type of song was popular with youth cultural clubs affiliated to the African National Congress. And so communal music had become appropriated from the jurisdiction of chiefs and used to mobilize supporters of democracy.

The following short dance theatre case studies illustrate some of the social experiences and political viewpoints of Venda people during the period between the unbanning of the ANC in 1990 and its coming to power in 1994. These case studies date from September and October 1990. They illustrate two extreme positions within the political spectrum. On the one hand were people who submitted to the jurisdiction of traditional political leaders, and on the other hand were people who rejected these leaders, and joined political parties.

The remote village of Tshixwadza in the Rambuda district installed a headman on 29 September 1990. The village had been without a traditional leader for some time, and this absence impacted negatively on village administration. The transfer of power from headmen to municipalities, civic associations, and various government departments understandably occurs slowest in remote rural areas. During 1990 the office of headman of Tshixwadza was still mainly responsible for the development of village infrastructure. Many of the songs and dances performed at the installation praised the new headman and appealed to him for improvements to the local school.

But dependence on traditional leadership is also cast within a larger complex of traditional social relations. One of the dances performed at the installation was *tshifasi*, a courting dancing for teenagers. This kind of dance has become rare. It was revitalized by the former Venda government as part of its claim to legitimacy. However, relations between boys and girls had become westernized, and *tshifasi* teams of the 1980s mostly comprised adult women (cf. Burnett-van Tonder 1984, 1987). Mulalo Nemukonde, teacher and organizer of the Tshixwadza team remarked that *tshifasi* was popular with his pupils because of the remote rural location of their village. By contrast, urban towns like Thohoyandou offered young people a wider variety of entertainment. What was noticeable in the performance was the affirmation of traditional gender relations. *Tshifasi* is a socially sanctioned opportunity for young teenagers to explore gender relations. In the dance boys and girls assemble in separate groups, but dance towards the opposite sex to select partners. In the performance at Tshixwadza, the dance started with two girls slowly moving towards the boys to select their partners. Before they carried out their selection, they knelt in respect (*losha*) before the boys. Traditionally, both men and women kneel when greeting. During colonial times this custom changed. Men stopped kneeling to women, but many women still knelt for men, and certain men and women knelt for headmen. Kneeling in rural areas is now limited, and is mainly restricted to the sphere of traditional politics and gender relations. By contrast kneeling is now rarely seen in urban society. Most urbanized people see this kind of subservience as irrelevant and demeaning.

The second case study showing support for aspects of traditional culture dates from 21 October 1990. On this day I accompanied a class of first year Venda University students to the village of Ngudza (now one of the north eastern

suburbs of Thohoyandou) to watch communal dancing at the home-
stead of headman Abraham Ramugondo. The headman had arranged beer dancing, *tshigombela* girls' dancing, and the reedpipe dance for non-Venda speaking students not familiar with Venda dance.

The first *tshigombela* song unexpectedly stated a very familiar theme: "We are entering (the dance arena). We are children of Ngudza. Venda has prospered through independence." This reference to independence, made only a few months after the unbanning of the ANC and other political groupings, and the military coup in Venda, seems strange at first. However, several of the adult women organizing the *tshigombela* team had been in charge of local *tshigombela* dancing since I first visited Ngudza in 1983, a time when the euphoria of independence was still evident. The dramas surrounding independence and the coup had not affected their political experience which was limited to village politics. The vague concept of independence was best understood as affirmation of traditional culture. This was illustrated in a prepared beer song dance play. The beer song *Dumbu tatanani* ("the bulging stomach") is well known at Ngudza, and I had recorded it before. However, this was the first time the song was accompanied by a dance play. The dance play shows two young girls dancing with cloth stuffed under their shirts to imitate well-fed stomachs. The song relates their bulging stomachs to a traditional horticultural existence ("we are hoeing") and the efficient leadership of their headman.⁹

The worldview expressed in these case studies contrasts with that expressed at a cultural festival held at the University of Venda on 6 October 1990. The festival was organized by students of the Central Cultural Committee. The festival comprised musical performances, poetry readings, drama performances and speeches. Afternoon events like choir performances, gumboot dancing, pantsula dancing, ball room dancing and a karate demonstration expressed some of the social ambitions of the students. However, the entire morning was devoted to outdoor performances of traditional dance and drama. These dances expressed little support for traditional politics. As suggested before, many politically conscious young people appropriated dances for chiefs and other communal dances to advance their own political objectives. This was also the case at the cultural festival with performances of the reedpipe dance, *tshigombela* dancing, beer song performances, and courting dances.

Songs and their accompanying dance movements and dramatic actions expressed clear support for the recently unbanned ANC. Apart from familiar slogans like "amandla!", and references to the leadership of Nelson Mandela, several performances had very strong overtones of violence. In fact, one of the "cultural" events comprised a simulated rifle and hand grenade attack by an Umkhonto we Sizwe youth commando. The commando also drilled, and sang and danced with their rifles.

In terms of local politics the most interesting musical performance was a performance of *tshikona*, the reedpipe dance, by a small group of young men from Lwamondo village, now a western suburb of Thohoyandou. The performance started with a short dramatic prelude: the group entered the dance arena singing a freedom song. With a raised fist the leader of the group shouted: "Amandla! Viva the mighty sound of the AK47! Viva hand grenade! (accompanied by a throwing action) Viva ANC! Viva comrade Mandela! Viva MK! Away with AWB, Inkatha and *Maanda nga u pfana!*" This was followed by a reedpipe performance. The entire performance was unique - it is unlikely that the Venda public had witnessed a similar reedpipe performance before this time.

Because *tshikona* had in living memory always been a dance of peace and political solidarity (cf. Blacking 1976:50-51), the violent overtones of this performance came as a shock to a number of people in the audience. But the peaceful meaning of *tshikona* seems to have been a feature of early colonial existence only. Venda dance theatre is a dynamic cultural institution, and its participants derive their patterns of bodily expression from the historical and ethical context of particular performances (cf. Blacking 1977:4). Thus Burnett-van Tonder (1984) suggests that the reedpipe dance originally was performed in a military context by the bodyguards and warriors of chiefs. I had witnessed in 1986 and 1990 the remnants of this tradition when reedpipe dancers acted as bodyguards at installations of chiefs.¹⁰ The military function of *tshikona* had come the full circle, albeit probably unknown to its present day performers. Also, Blacking (1965:36, 38) in fact records instances of *tshikona* performances not representing political solidarity but division. Similarly, the performance of the Lwamondo group was indicative of serious village conflict. While the performance was of a relatively high standard, it was in a communal sense quite unsuccessful. It was clear from the performance that the reedpipe group was not representative of the entire village. The group only comprised young men in their late teens and early twenties. There were no older adults, nor any women, the traditional *tshikona* drummers of recent decades. The slogans shouted by the leader of the group gives an indication of the nature of the division in Lwamondo village. Most significant is the denouncement of the *Maanda nga u pfana*¹¹ organization. This was the cultural wing of the Venda National Party, the party of Venda traditional leaders. The aim of the organization was to promote traditional culture, thus promoting the ruling status of traditional leaders. The Bugle newspaper of October 1990 (vol.3) suggested that the organization was assuming a violent strategy to achieve its ends. The ANC-aligned South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) was opposing this strategy by organizing protest marches in certain villages. The Bugle quotes a SAYCO spokesperson saying that "on the 8th September [i.e. only a month before the cultural festival] we staged a protest march in the village of Lwamondo, but the presence of the police, VDF [Venda Defence Force], and the vigilante [*Maanda nga u pfana*] group left us with no alternative to

abort the march".

4 Conclusion: Dance theatre as cultural resource

Traditional dance theatre is an integral part of the fascinating, multifaceted whole that comprises Venda traditional musical culture. The recent history of this dance theatre affirms that creativity in expressive culture is the rule rather than the exception. This creativity emerges as a response to social conflict, and manifests itself in new cultural strategies and social liaisons. Thus I have tried to show within the brief scope of this presentation how dance theatre has helped to shape late 20th century social life in Venda.

The social role of Venda traditional dance theatre subsequent to the military coup in 1990 came as a surprise to me. After the coup I foresaw the rapid demise of traditional musical culture. I could not imagine that people would employ the strategies of this musical culture to further democratic political objectives. Therefore, debating the future of indigenous dance theatre is perhaps better avoided. Yet there is no denying the increasing grip of world music on South African indigenous musical culture. Whereas Venda used to be a society of music makers (cf. Blacking 1979), patterns of music consumerism are becoming increasingly evident. Although consumerism is never passive and in fact shapes socio-economic patterns, it is my concern that it may blunt musical creativity to the point where the function of music making as a common cultural strategy may become underutilized and eventually unrecognized (as I have experienced in the western musical culture in which I was raised). There is evidence of the continuity of Venda traditional dance theatre. However, this tradition seems strongly dictated by economic needs and strategies. The annual traditional dance competition has for several years now been sponsored to the tune of thousands of rands. During 1996, cash prizes worth R41 000 were offered to competing teams (The Mirror, 26 July 1996). Large cash prizes are also made available in annual choir competitions. Acknowledgement of the economic potential of drama is evident in the name Nzhelele Bright Future Recreational Club. This drama club is committed to "serious rehearsals" with the hope of appearing in local television serials (The Mirror, 11 April 1997). Professionalism in music and drama is thus already part of the social experience in Venda. Ideas about exceptional talent and elitism may soon follow, further suppressing music and drama as a cultural resource accessible to all.

Music and drama have always been neglected educational resources in South African formal education. I maintain that a kind of introspective, technique-driven professionalism has played a contributory role in convincing the public that music and drama is somehow merely an aspect of human "aesthetic" experience not related to the issues of everyday life. This is also likely to be the fate of South African traditional musical cultures unless a pre-emptive strategy is urgently implemented. Current debates about the educational place of

the integrated arts raise hope for the inclusion of music and drama as compulsory components of the new national curriculum. This curriculum may be a watershed for music and drama in all its local forms. The treatment of dance theatre as an integral part of culture confronts young people with social reality. Through dance theatre they come to have a better understanding of their society, and even actively shape it.

The question of the cultural legitimacy of traditional dance theatre remains relevant. At the 1996 Annual Ethnomusicology Symposium I suggested that traditional music means increasingly less to young South Africans, and should therefore not be forced upon them. The answer I received was unequivocal: the problem does not lie with young people, but with their parents and teachers - if these young people are exposed to meaningful traditional forms, they will accept them.

Let us accept this challenge, and work towards unifying all socially responsible South Africans in re-establishing music and drama as central features of human life.

Notes

1 Dust coats were associated with employment, and thus indicated important social status.

2 At the Ngulumbi home of guitarist Solomon Mathase, 5/5/94.

3 Also at the Mathase residence, 25/5/91.

4 *Tshithethenthe Maride*.
(the name of the game)
Rine a vha ri funi.
(They do not love us)
Vha funa dzikhomba fhedzi.
(They only love big girls)
Vha nengwa ayo maduda.
(They detest mucus)

As in other courting dances, performers of *Tshithethenthe Maride* select favourite partners. In this song certain girls complain that they are never asked to dance. The reason for this becomes clear in the last line: They are so young that they do not wipe their running noses.

5 At a beer house in the Khubvi district, 16/9/89.

6 At the Ngulumbi home of guitarist Solomon Mathase, 25/5/91.

7 At a cultural festival at the University of Venda, 6/10/90.

8 Pondo Maria: The former independence stadium in Thohoyandou. Pondo (or Punda) Maria actually is an area in the north eastern border region of the Northern Province. Because the road to this area leads past the independence stadium in Thohoyandou, the latter also became known as Pondo Maria.

9 Headmen are known as "Dividers of the land", a reference to their duty as land administrators.

10 At the villages of Ngudza and Tshixwadza.

11 *Maanda nga u pfana*: "Power through cooperation".

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The Problem of Literal Documentation in African Dance Studies

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The Problem of Literal Documentation in African Dance Studies

Whilst the models of Rudolf Laban and Rudolf Benesh have conquered the three dimensions of space in Western dances, a similarly universal mode of literal documentation is being earnestly sought in African dance studies. One is tempted to ask: what exactly constitutes the form, content and characteristics of performance as to render such documentation problematic?

- is it because indigenous dances are tied to ecology?
- is the dance in Africa analogous to rhythm?
- is the lack of indigenous writing a factor in dance documentation?
- is the lack of a uniform interdisciplinary field methodology a crucial factor?

These questions constitute a heuristic device by which this paper accounts for the problematic raised in this paper.

I. Methodology

The study of dance and theatrical performances often correspond to the study of human behaviour since the dance is a recognised behavioural pattern (Royce, 1977). Its analysis, apart from offering aesthetic patterns, often accounts for anthropological and historical events. Hence the references to the cave drawings and Palaeolithic rock paintings of Tassili; bas-reliefs of dancers in ancient Egyptian art (Thompson, 1974:29; Tierou, 1992). But since paintings and engravings are static forms, their records are not enough to demonstrate movements and kinaesthetic details in performance. The historical details of motion can, therefore, be supplemented, either in the description of historical records or in the representation of plastic forms and sculptures in various media depicting motion. But there is a limitation still: the details of performance as arrested or frozen on the frame of a mask or a head dress do not reveal the story line or content of a dance performance, given that every performance almost always has a story line (Layiwola, 1989:102). In this light, we must admit the considerable pain to which an art historian like Thompson went in an attempt to sketch a history of the dance in Africa. Though he cites medieval historians like Ibn Batuta (1352/3) and the Portuguese explorer, Ca'da Mosto

(1455 - 7); and noted Vasco da Gama's entry in his log book on 2nd December, 1497 at Mossel Bay, present day South Africa, no uniform method of the dance in Africa emerged. He noted, however, that the documentation of an African call-and-response emerged in the description of William Towerson in 1556 - 7 on the West African coast. The women were seen enacting a dance event. But Thompson regrets that:

We shall never know the calls, nor the motion of the dancers. Assuming a rough degree of accuracy, it is just possible that this ... sixteenth century call-and-response also shows that delivery in singing (and, by immediate extension, dancing) was characterised, in those days, by speed and drive as it is today. [p.29].

We realise that whilst a description of the dance is given, and there are references to the rapidity of drum syllables in the intervocalic consonant 'r', this has not helped in the documentation of the polyrhythmic dance that follows. Both Thompson and Nketia have described the dances of Africa as characterised by 'multi-meter' with simultaneous movements of various body parts (Nketia, 1975: 201 - 13). This is the reason why, unlike in ballet, it is difficult to isolate individual movements or distinct segments and document them as script in multi-metric African dances.

In the 1960s, Peggy Harper had tried to bring her knowledge of Western dances to bear on the documentation of African dances in Nigeria. She concentrated her efforts in the collection of a wide variety of dances both in the forest and savannah belts of Nigeria to see whether a form of uniform documentation method could be synthesised. Harper, whilst realising thus:

It is imperative that the recording should provide an accurate and comprehensive reproduction of the dance in terms which are accessible to the wide range of specialists whose work includes an aspect of dance study;

notes, somewhat, that:

Dance notations, forms of symbolic transcription, are extensively used in Europe and America to record dance. However, these transcriptions are too reliant upon personal and cultural factors to be trusted as a recording technique in Africa where a vast amount of material of great variety needs to be recorded in field conditions. [1968: 12]

Consequently, because transcriptions need to be an exact, or at least a close representation, of the dance form or style; she concludes that at the present time, professionally made films would seem to be the best medium of 'meeting the requirements of accuracy and accessibility'.

It is noteworthy that after an extensive fieldwork in the Tiv culture area of Nigeria, Harper observed of the Tsough dance:

The movements have shape and volume rather than linear definition, so that the accent is on the rhythmic-dynamic qualities rather than on the spatial patterning of the movement.
[1970: 58]

It is a technical observation of this sort which spurred Harper to adapt a tripartite combination of space, time and energy as a basis for further analysis of the dance event in Africa (see fig1).

Most researchers on performance have always expressed the opinion that dance will continue to be a mode of counterbalancing the force of gravity (Humphrey, 1959; Harper, 1968; Thompson, 1974; Tierou, 1992). The same goes for the feeling in agrarian societies that dance expresses fertility in (wo)man and in nature; as Tierou rightly writes:

Whatever the motivation of the dance, it combined the spontaneous expression of human feeling with the higher aspirations of man to communicate with the cosmos

The method of the dance will therefore always combine the element of beauty with that of balance and shape be it in the geometrical definitions of Western ballet or the rhythmic-dynamic potentials of African dances. But there is an increasing need to find a satisfactory method of notation that will combine aspects of multi-metric dancing with the documentation methods which Rudolf Laban and Rudolf Benesh have accomplished for Western dances.

II. The Limits of Literal Documentation:

There is always the suggestion to bring together a large body of African dances as Sachs (1937), Thompson and Harper have done; and thereafter attempt a generic analysis which can constitute theoretical frameworks on group studies. This would, at least, be helpful in the interpretation of dances which are similar in content and form even if ethnic and geographical connections were lacking. We must realise that Africa is a vast continent and historical and cultural experiences often differ as much as they relate. But the task is less daunting if performances can be grouped and analysed using a conceptual tool that is

uniform. This will help to make definitive predictions which can lead to the classification of forms and concepts, and consequently lead to a generally acceptable method of notation and documentation. The limitation of an otherwise far-reaching effort as Tierou has recently accomplished is bedevilled by the insularity of linguistic and conceptual terms.

The mere recording of a dance event on celluloid or tape captures its essence and distinctive qualities, but in that state, they can be unwieldy. And if indigenous music can be scored into notes, there is no reason why indigenous dances cannot be so reduced to script. We cannot pretend to the common fact that the lack of a common alphabet beguiles the common heritage of African oral and literary expressions. In actual fact, this lack of an indigenous tradition of writing is fundamental to the problem of a literal documentation or transcription of African dances. After all verbalised language alone is not complete because renditions of gesture, tone and tempo also matter in performance. Even the existence of one or two written traditions will not be sufficient for the entire continent as there are languages still being reduced to writing at the present time. Africa, like Asia, is diverse in culture and in ethnic grouping; and this itself is a factor which militates against the common heritage of a 'universal' alphabet.

One interesting fact as a point of illustration is noteworthy. Among the Yoruba of South-western Nigeria, the invention of the hourglass or talking drum dates back about three centuries. Royal personages adopted the drum to encode proverbs and witticisms interpretable to only those entitled to the knowledge. The mere beating of the drum is not as nonsensical as strangers to the community often suppose (see, for instance, Soyinka, 1975: 27). Whilst it is beaten around palaces, messages on the environment and of visitors and traffic in the area are transmitted to kings and regents for necessary information or action. Approaching guests are introduced before they enter the palace; ditto for news of invaders and intruders. For a little over a century now, the drum has been adopted by musicians and entertainers because of its enhanced 'glottophilia', adaptiveness and mellifluity. This is one ingenious example which surmounts the frustration of a racial stock in search of new forms of verbal modulation and expression. This becomes an aid to memory and a mnemonic device (Layiwola, 1986:94; Euba, 1990:30,34; Dark & Hill, 1971:76-77). Writing or literal documentation is a tool fashioned to complement or cue the memory of things otherwise forgotten or 'lost'. African cultures have tended to overcome this lapse, in some degree, by a resort to the (re)creation of plastic artforms. Tierou echoes my mind with precision here:

African "memory" exists in other and more varied forms. It slightly resembles a puzzle: it is impossible to recognise the exact meaning of one part without reconstructing it in

full... To Africans, statues and statuettes represent memory inscribed in form, the materialisation of knowledge from every sphere of life: practical, magical, therapeutic, divinatory.
[1992: 9]

III. The Poverty of Theory:

There is another problematic with indigenous, non-secular traditions of art, namely, the documentation of non-material phenomena. One is tempted to think that certain gestural, expressive aspect of African dances use what we have described as their multi-metric and poly-rhythmic aspects as a metaphoric expression of the intangible. There is no dance movement without a story line. Dance, itself, is an aspect of the theatre and cannot but continue to respond, aside from its own laws, to other laws governing performance. Many of the dances we document in the field carry along with them dense accretions of mythology, history, ritual and religion. If indeed we succeed in inventing a method of notation for the dances of Africa, we have to contend with ways of interpreting also the ritual and mythological allusions which often attend these dances. As a concrete illustration of what I mean here, Ulli Beier once recorded a dance event in a small Yoruba town (Beier, 1959: 14). The dance was in the form of a pageant rounded off as a triumphal procession. Though the entire action is danced, the practitioners told him that the fifteen minute dance performance was the re-enactment of a conflict between two mythical heroes. The story was then told in its various manifestations which shed some light on his own research in the area.

There is also a dance called *Nyambi* recorded among the Lugbara by John Middleton (Spencer, 1985). The event is a transvestiture in which the sexual inversion is a metaphoric interpretation for the reversal of cosmic order, or a betrayal of the season in an agrarian society. The women involved are all women of an entire sub-tribe. It is performed on two occasions, neither of which occur together in any single year. An occasion may be after an unusually bountiful harvest or a harvest that has caused so much anxiety because delayed by too much rainfall during the ripening season. Another occasion might be after a drought or a protracted dry season. Either of these two occasions constitutes an unusual cosmic order and scarcity may upset the peace and stability within the various groups. The women would regroup outside the settlement near the raingrove holding gourds and rattles and would dance across the settlements singing obscene songs and challenging any man who might come their way. The hierarchy and roles are reversed so they are led by a male transvestite who wears either the horns of a buffalo or the antlers of a waterbuck. They dance up to the raingrove where the rainmaker receives them and performs his rites to reorder the calendar. Middleton sums up the phenomenon thus:

People say that this dance is a sign that the world has gone wrong and confused, that ordinary social hierarchies and relations are 'lost' or 'forgotten', and that the rainmaker must now 'start' the new year and the orderly passing of time again. [1985: 178]

This dance event travesties the pattern of actual death dances and a grotesque, mirror image of the real dance for a tragic or ritual occasion is enacted as a reflection of the crisis situation. In actual death dances, men dance in definite lines of patrilineal kin, but in this *nyambi* it is danced by women who have no affinal relationship, who do not dance in any definite lines, but appear only like a mob. They sing obscene songs and challenge men (including the subjugated transvestite leading them) to symbolise the fact that their world is amuck and that rules of temporal liminality is broken for a while. The suturing of social and cosmological categories is therefore carried out by the renunciation and parody demonstrated in the temporal world. A question immediately comes to mind: How will a simple notation which is sophisticated in the interpretation of form account for the empirical content of such a dance as we have just described? It is true that in Western dance forms, notes and story lines do accompany dance notation; but where empathy is necessary for the dancer's accomplishment, we are faced with a limitation. An easy way out is to advocate a secularisation of these dances and make do with the forms alone. Afterall, many of the masks we witness in performance have been synthesised by carvers and sculptors under religious instructions. The present writer was told at a *Gelede* festival in the northern Yoruba village of Ijio that mask carvers are sometimes under strict religious instructions when carving or designing works for performance. Thereafter they become co-workers in the preservation of art in the service of religious observances.

In some respect, theoreticians of the dance such as Thompson and Tierou who advocate the study of the dance as part of masking traditions have, probably, anticipated the aforementioned problem. In my opinion, this latter approach is the furthest we have come in the search for a method of dance notation of indigenous African dances. But it is by no means the furthest possible since we have still to contemplate a cross-cultural study of mask forms and dance traditions or patterns. It will thus appear that the approach to the notation of theatrical dances will derive from symbolic transpositions in particular linguistic patterns, if we conceive of linguistic here, not only as language but a whole system of signification. This, in itself, entails a study of the history and classification of particular dances and patterns of expression. Certainly, a cross-cultural appreciation of the wide variety of African dances will, in turn, enrich performance in each of the distinct culture areas. The next turn of research in the area would be, it seems to me, language-based since the notation will

necessarily be a glossary of symbols or vocabulary which are universal within the concept of a unifying culture (cf. Laban, 1975: 6,12).

IV. The Relationship Between Sculpture and the Dance:

The plasticity of these two forms have led, as implied above, theoreticians and experts to study the dance through sculptural motifs. This is eminently justifiable especially as the mask could be more than a medium in performance. The mask also acts as a permanent form of representation in the absence of written script. This idea is conceptually related to the definition of dance derived from the Robert dictionary as "an expressive series of movements of the body executed according to a rhythm, and most often to the sound of music, and following an art, a technique or a social code which is more or less explicit". To this Alphonse Tierou adds the ingredients of "freedom and awareness" (1992: 11).

Thompson consistently links the therapeutic 'cool' of the African masks to the beauty of dance and believes that a unification of the body/soul dichotomy is attained by the inertia achieved through the kinaesthesia of dance (1974: 1 - 45). Tierou, in like manner, bases his idea of the dance on the concept of *dooplé* as he had seen in statuettes and sculptural pieces. He accounts for the concept thus:

The dancer is standing, his knees are bent and the thighs are not held close together. His feet placed parallel and flat, keep close to the ground and are wide apart by between thirty to forty centimetres according to the length of the dancer's feet.

The torso, bent slightly forwards, forms with the pelvis an angle of about 135 degrees... The gaze is fixed on the horizon
[1992: 53]

Roughly the same postural description is given by Nketia:

The postures that are assumed in these dances are directly related to the way the body is used and moved. Certain movements are more easily executed from a position in which the back is slightly bent with the knees slightly dropped and the arms held loose, than from a rigid, erect posture. [1975: 210]

Whilst Nketia believes that music creates the mood and dynamics to complement the posture in improvisation, Tierou believes that the movement in itself creates a tidal intersection which are activated at the shoulders, pelvis or the vertebral column.

V. Improvisation:

Both theorists mentioned above make valid points, the difference in opinion being derived from their training: Nketia is a musicologist who reads a time/space relationship in the skill of the drummer whilst Tierou, a dancer, reads the adjustment of body parts into movement. Both, certainly are justified from the viewpoint of improvisation and the private styles of dance groups, dance traditions and mythical or religious temperament. I prefer to distinguish two major improvisational styles or principles: the first is that which gives much scope to the relationship of the artist to the audible rhythms of the music. This is usually characterised by a lot of leg rhythms with gong or rattle beats. The drum, rattles or gong clearly or approximately delineates the rhythms for the footwork as seen in the *atilogwu* dances of the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria; and the *miango* male dancers of the plateau region of Northern Nigeria. In the former instance, the xylophone or gong rhythm is crucial to the multiple movements of the legs and rattles. Sometimes the improvisation is broadened to include acrobatic displays modulated by the rhythmic timing of the beats. Extensive group and personal initiative go a long way to maintain the regularity and tempo of the movement. There is much emphasis on footwork and motor display woven into short but concentrated dance phrases. Body patterns and movement tessellation are created with human components mounting one another's shoulders or backs whilst responding to the strains of the drums, xylophone, gongs and flute. The dancer can then guide him/herself with the aid of the rattles worn on the ankles, wrists or elbows. Because of the consistent stamping of the feet on the ground and the heavy emphasis on polyrhythm, these kinds of dances occur with a greater number of allomorphokines (dance movements on the meaning level that can be substituted without considerable change in meaning) (Royce, 1977:). Consequently, these kinds of dances also allow for greater improvisation and deviation from rigid rules. It shows that they will adapt better for intercultural conflation whereby classification and notation are easily accomplished.

The second principle relate to those dance events which combine complex facial and physiological expression for both private and public performance. And these are as varied as there are cultures and sub-groups. For, instance the *Sango* devotees and *Bata* dance group among the Yoruba often communicate feelings by the manipulation of facial muscles; they also jerk the thoracic and shoulder regions when invoking the climax of the dance. In the real heat of dance, a dancer takes several somersaults and attains ritual and mediumistic possessions. After the dance experience, devotees find themselves pop-eyed and serene. Others who, during possession, have gone through homophagy or

the ritual mutilation of their organs, re-emerge whole and apparently unscathed. In like manner, Nketia (1975: 209) described that the Anlo-Ewe and the Lobi peoples of Ghana emphasise the upper part of the body. Like *bata* dancers, they contract and release their shoulder blades, they move the shoulders up and down and rotate the upper part of the body. The *Gelede* transvestite dancers, again of the Yoruba, put the line of emphasis on the hip and girdle regions. Whilst posturing in *doople*, the legs go in a rather agile interpretation of the drum rhythms. On the contrary the *nyindogu dancers* of the Dagomba of Northern Ghana and the *Soponna* dancers of the Yoruba create a welling up of forces from the belly and the solar plexus.

In whatever way the African dancer postures on the margin of dance, (s)he dances in multi-meter and often simultaneously battles and relates to the pull of gravitation in a way that generates tension and inspiration which sustains his/her performance. Rather than weave patterns in space, the dancer weaves it in multiple media relating to sculpture and to performance; all in an attempt to gain a certain dynamism and grace without which art cannot attain genuine expression. Rather than create an outward experience, it relies on a measure of infectious inner satisfaction.

Theatre and the Dance:

Once a dancer attains the state of grace describable only within the limits of inner experience, it becomes necessary for the art to rely on costume and plasticism to elevate meaning to the level of an outward performance. It appears that from this point, the boundary between plasticity, theatre and the dance blurs and merges. The one, an integral part of the other, becomes a vehicle through which a theatrical experience is relayed. Hence the role of the masquerader in certain dance performances of Africa. This aspect of the dance enables us to study a material and tangible counterpart of the dance in an otherwise intangible, artistic context. This interdependence between material artefact and a vaporising aesthetic is often acknowledged by art historians and only seldomly so acknowledged by anthropologists (cf. Kasfir, 1988; Adepegba, 1995). This is often due to the emphasis that anthropologists placed on social institutions (content) to the detriment of formalistic features in art, and consequently on the *modus operandi* in research style, analysis, and field study. But this can only remain so to an extent since, at best, content and form in art are profoundly contemporaneous. In like manner, intangible experiences in art often tend to corroborate and elucidate their material counterpart. We seem bound to agree with both Cole (1969) and Thompson (1974) that process and performance are both aspects of one and the same thing. If viewed in semiotic terms, text and context merge in performance, and dance as a theatrical art is both intuitive as well as processual (Kasfir, 1988: 1 - 16). But since the realm of art, ritual and religion are not quite as defined in African and

Indian dances as they are in Western dances, how do we apply the same parameters of notation as have been done for Western dances? Afterall, we would like to have, in the long run, a universal yardstick for understanding all human dance and art forms. Or is it just as well to invent two levels of notation for these dances of Africa which represent four or five dimensions of space in the art?

This is precisely the cultural process extrapolated as the plastic representation of space and time on the frames of masks, costume and body painting. Performance has therefore become a cultural system which goes beyond its modern, physical representation. This is almost completely captured in this statement of Sydney Kasfir:

In much of West Africa, masks are mirrors of this small-scale cultural system. They accurately reflect in a performance frame the system of relationships that obtains in the "real world" outside the frame. If myth is a model which validates cosmology by grounding it in society, the mask system can be understood as its obverse: a model which validates cosmology by grounding it in the cosmic order. [1988: 6]

We can, therefore, conclude this section by recalling that the dance masks would seem to have gone past the idea of the theatre in its 'veritable lie' as a bare-faced illusion. It is true that the plastic phenomenon is sometimes stretched to accommodate aberration and deviance as in the revues of the Yoruba *egungun* and Tiv puppetry theatre where itinerant dancers represent shades of sociological archetypes in wood and mask carvings; or its conceptual counterparts in *gelede* of the Yoruba and the *nyambi* of the Lugbara where transvestism becomes a dislocation of hierarchy and order. What we can say, for certain, is that the invocation of liminality does invent new 'illusions' whilst denying old ones. What we cannot altogether account for, at the present time, is why the responsibility for enactment is foisted on the dance event. Whatever the reason, it has made the re-enactment and representation by dance ethnologists a doubly hazardous affair. It only remains for us to align the kinetic aspect of a material, yet activated, mask to its spatial, levitating potential.

Conclusion: The space-time Interaction:

It is obvious that the geometric aspiration of the dance in western societies cannot be overemphasised with the training of the ballerina as an actress in the construction of a space-time continuum. The dancer leaps and jumps and balances on the mid-point of his/her toes. S/He initiates the grace of birds and butterflies and temporarily conquers the illusions of gravity. The immediate

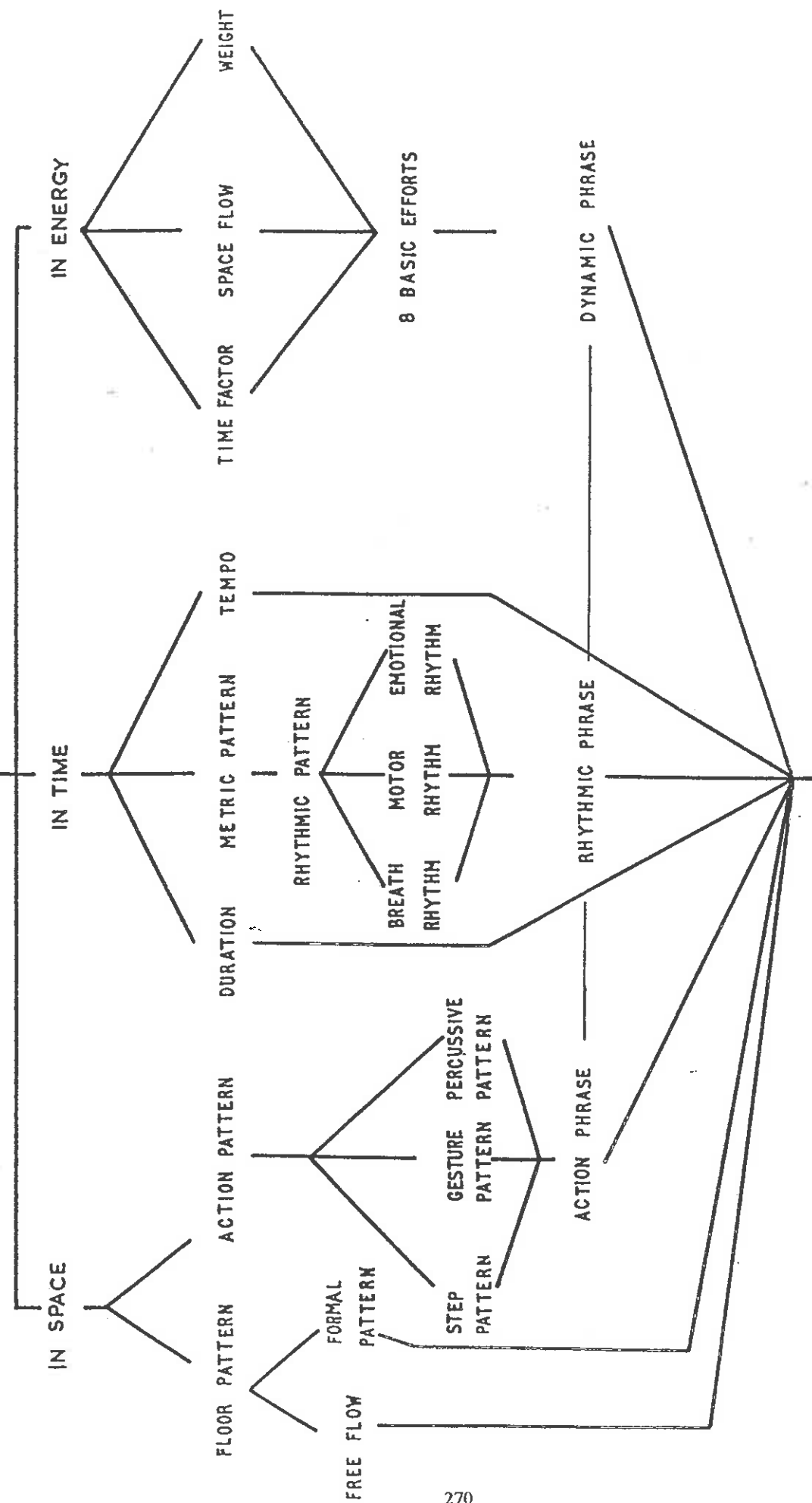
question that comes to mind is whether we can conceive of a masked dancer aligning with space the way a ballerina adjusts to the same phenomenon. Can a masquerade, with all his accoutrements, justify the use of a posture grid for neatness and symmetry? Do the burden and requirements of masquerading cross the boundaries of consciousness in time alone or in space as well? Is the beauty of the mask the same for the reference to geometry in western dances? It will thus seem that an *epa* masker of North-eastern Yorubaland in his gigantic head-dress will conceive of his 'burden' and his encounter with space a systemic aberration should he have to leap up to a height of two or three metres or attempt to stand on pointe. In the end an adequate notation method will seek to combine technicalities with the peculiarity of affective stages in performance.

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DANCE MOVEMENT



SEQUENCE OF PHRASES = DANCE FORM

Fig. 1. Diagram of the elements of the dance.

Fig. 1. Specimen of a Gulede mask





Reproduction of an Epa mask

SUBMISSION OF PAPER FOR CONSIDERATION FOR 'CONFLUENCES' -
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PAPER TITLE:

DISCOVERING SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF NAMIBIAN DANCE/MUSIC

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1997

One of the fundamental points which contributes to the character of Namibian
music/dance is the influence of orality on structures.

This has led to the music being predominantly vocal. Secondly, a very close relationship exists
between spoken language and music. Many Namibian languages are tonal, and therefore the
melodic structures of songs are strongly influenced by meaning in language. Thirdly, because of
the oral, popular nature of performance, people enter into the creation and performance of music
and dance with a freedom seldom seen in western societies. Thus one can safely say that
Namibian musics would not display existing characters had the traditional mode of socialisation,
artistic expression and communication not been oral.

I now turn specifically to dance.

Characteristics of dance structure

In the course of my research, I have discovered an amazing richness in the dances of Namibia. Each area has styles of its very own, yet I found that there were certain commonalities running like a thread through the whole richly textured cloth. I shall not attempt here to describe all Namibian dance, but I shall lift out certain characteristics of Namibian dances from areas with which I have had contact, either by means of personal visits and recordings, or through the use of secondary sources.

Indigenous dance has meaning and function

Dance consists of meaningful, culturally patterned movement sequences. It is given form by the function from which it arises, and the meanings that it encapsulates. As a socio-cultural phenomenon, dance uses the body-in-action in distinctive patterns of performance. It is a "system of ordering movement, a cumulative set of rules or range of permissible movement patterns.. [and it]... is a vehicle through which culture is learned." (Hanna 1979: 30). The result is an infinite number of possible movement combinations from which a particular culture chooses only a few.

- Social values find expression in dance, thereby giving dance deeper meaning than merely rhythmic movement. Meaning is derived from the total cultural environment and dance is given important functions relating to cultural value systems.

- Dance is influenced by the natural world. Cultures are formed and informed by the physical environment in which they function. As a physical expression of life, dance is a reflection of the environment. In rural areas of Namibia, dance traditions illustrate this more visibly than do urban dances. For example, the water scarcity of the arid regions of Namibia affects energy expenditure, and thereby dictates the modest range (size) of movements, and the appeal of dust lifted by foot movements. Where nature does not provide enough wood for drums, alternatives are derived from available sources. For example, instead of a drum, Herero women performing *outjina* and men performing *omuhiva* make use of a large plank (*otjipirangi*) strapped to one foot. This is thumped on the ground and approximates a deep, slow drum beat and forms an integral part of a dancer's movement actions.¹

- The typical occupations of people in the area are also commonly stylized into dance forms. The hunting of !Kung men is not only stylized in dance movements, but is also taken up in the names of music-dance repertoires, for example Eland, Giraffe or Elephant songs. Ju/'hoansi make use of objects from the environment in dance-games like the Melon dance. The occupation of cattle-herder is widely spread across the country. The motion of the animal is concretized in the head and arm movements of Herero women in *outjina*. To properly perform *ondjongo* one should be an owner of cattle. Sometimes a man may crouch on hands and knees, while his wife, hand on his head, moves around him indicating cattle ownership and care.

- Values relating to power and youthfulness, what Thomson (1974: 5) terms ephebism, are expressed through dance. Dancers, regardless of age, find ways to express this power within

¹ Nama people in the south used to manufacture clay pots covered with skin (/x'ay/'e) for use as drums to accompany dance.

the "streams of energy which flow from drums or other sources of percussion" (*ibid.*). This is achieved by skillfully maintaining the equilibrium between musical relationships, by using the percussive strength of the body (section by section), and by moving with a suppleness which resides in characteristic postures such as bent knees, 'oscillations' of the body to the music, and so forth. Therefore an older, heavier person may be as able as a young person to express ephebism or youthful power in dance.

- Related to, yet contrasting with ephebism, is the meaning of 'coolness' in dance. This calls for dancers not giving in to wildness, or loss of control, in their dance. For dance to be cool, there must be composure, unity with other dancers and participants, smoothness, and usually, an unsmiling face. Therefore the body performs 'hot', young dancing with a 'cool' unsmiling face, avoiding eye contact with onlookers. This is apparent in almost all Namibian dance, from Hambukushu dance where eyes are fixed upon the ground and face is 'expressionless' while shoulders and neck are rapidly, 'hotly' vibrated, to Orlam *wals* where partners look fixedly past one another's shoulders without smiles, yet their feet may be executing fancy steps and onlookers may be shouting humorous comments.
- The meanings inherent in Namibian dance relate to the event and function with which it is associated. Events include various rituals such as spiritual ceremonies and transformative or initiatory events, seasonal celebrations, social events, political events, and so forth. Each performance situation is laden with meaning for the participants - musicians, dancers and onlookers. The meanings attached to dance(s) are influenced by historical relationships among communities - in terms of events, individuals, and communities.
- Group relations among participants is an important aspect of Namibian dance. Group participation does not imply that there are no special roles for certain performers, or

exclusions, or that participation is a requirement. Participation in the dance is voluntary and is usually dancer-initiated. But, a fundamental value of Namibian dance lies in the communal expression and sharing. There is a unity between singers, musicians and other onlookers. They are 'with' the dancer, who in fact has no dance without them. This does not mean to imply that the qualities of an excellent dancer are not noticed or valued. On the contrary, the ability to dance and play a musical instrument(s) well is an important requirement for a healer, for example. Hence, when he performs, he praises his own speed, agility, and prowess without undue modesty. But throughout such a performance there remains a cohesion, a unity among all participants. There are certain participant exclusions to dance, for example dances which are meant for only one gender (e.g. *omupembe*) and dances which are secret. *Tcòqmà*, for example, is an initiation/transformative dance for young men, and no women are meant to observe this dance. All participants may relate to one another as equals, or there may be gender divisions activated by means of lines, for example the gender-separate lines in *epera* and *shiperu*.

Dance has structure

Dance consists of relationships between movements as they occur in space and through time. Dances therefore have a spatial (visual) design as well as a time design (Adshead 1988: 42). The time design relates to the aural aspects of music, to performance time, to relationships (in time) between dancers. Spatial design includes the ground plan, the shapes and modalities of the dance.

- The time structure involves entrances and exits of dancers. It is vital for a dancer to enter the dancing space at the correct moment. The aural patterns of clapping and stamps of the feet in *oudano* for example, are structured in such a way that members of the culture know exactly when to enter and exit. If not adhered to the dance would be spoiled.
- The rhythmic and temporal elements are crucial to most Namibian dance. The rhythmic structure of the music is often led by the dance. In modern *oudano* the tempo of movements is very fast (1 clap = 176), although the older version takes place at a more moderate tempo. In the Ju/'hoan Melon game rapid actions (catching and tossing the melon or *tsamma*) are crucial to the aesthetics of the dance-game. The tossing and catching of the melon takes place according to a fixed rhythmic and movement structure.
- In terms of spatial design, the characteristics in Namibian dance are as varied as the particular styles. Most dance takes place within a space surrounded by a circle or semi-circle of people. In general there is a prevalence of curves and spirals. This is so in other parts of Africa as well.

Curved lines, circles, cylinders - which to Africans are characterised by many circles of the same diameter piled on top of one another - spirals, figures which have a helical or ellipsoid form are all integral parts of African culture. (Tiérou 1992: 33).

The exceptions are the festive dances of the Okavango region, such as the *epera* and *dipera*, where the design involves two lines facing one another, with individuals dancing to and fro in the central space. Even here however, dancers draw spatial circles either in combination with others or around herself. *Konsertliedjies* are also initially constituted in formal lines, usually four, with two lines of women in front and two lines of men at the rear. As the song-dance

progresses, they leave this formation and initiate a linear movement circling those who remain standing, until all take in their initial positions once again

- The modality of a dance may involve a solo dance (e.g. *nyakasanga*, *kayowe*, *ondjongo*), twos or threes (*oudano*, *ongandeka*, *omupembe*), small groups (older type of *oudano* for example in Ombalantu uses three to nine dancers), couples holding on to one another (Orlam *wals* or *langarm*, also in *Namastap*) or larger groups (*konsertliedjies*, *Namastap*, *//geis*) and so forth.

Characteristic use of the body

Located in culture, occupations and aesthetics, dances reflect characteristic ways in which bodies are used. These include typical postures, gestures and locomotion.

- Most Namibian dances have what Thompson (1974: 10) calls "a get-down" quality. This refers to the downwards direction and quality of many dance motions, moving closer to the earth. This characteristic use of the body is reflected in many of the basic positions, the bent knees, the strong stamps, the downwards focus of the eyes. It also echoes the often descending melodic patterns.
- Force, or effort-flow, is characteristic to a particular dance or dancer. This refers to the amount of energy expended, as well as the changes that occur in energy expenditure. In very different ways, Namibian cultures tend to value a forceful performance, but at the same time value control and 'coolness'. Dances such as *ondjongo* (in the north-west) and *oudano* (north) and *omupembe* (north) emphasise force in terms of the energetic stamping of feet, strong arm movements, high lifting of knees, and elevations. In *tcòqmà* in the Nyae Nyae area stamps

are forceful but the amplitude is small. The result is that movements appear more conservative. In Herero women's dances the stamp of the *otjipirangi* (plank) is strong, but other movements are almost tentative. The force of *Namastap* actions would fall somewhere in between the extremes of, for example *ondjongo* and *outjina*.

- Using the body in such a way that one is 'looking good' or smart when dancing or playing musical instruments is typical. This has to do with the intensity, skill and style with which a characteristic movement component may be executed. A dancer projects those qualities which the event requires, for example a 'smart' dancer can project sexual attractiveness, or mystical power, or social status. This relates to the particular style, for example 'smart' dancing may involve cutting off a movement sharply (*Namastap* involves stretch and contract), or holding a particular posture until it calls for comment (*ongandeka*), moving with rapidity and dexterity (*omupembe* and *oudano*), or moving with flow and swing (*shiperu*).

I proceed to isolate some common uses of the body in Namibian dance.

1) *Basic stances or movements*

- Basic 'earth' position (*Dooplé*²)

This is the mother-position, with a rootedness in the earth, which I have called basic earth position. The dancer stands with knees bent, thighs slightly apart. Feet are parallel, flat and about a hip-width apart. The torso is bent forwards from the hip-joint. Buttocks and pelvis are relaxed and arms are either next to or slightly in front of the body, or raised. This attitude is claimed to

² A. Tiérou (1992) *Dooplé The Eternal Law of African Dance*.

be healthful, natural, stable, balanced, bracing and economic. It facilitates recovery, elevations and backward movements as well as the 'normal' range of movements.

This position, which is peculiar to African dance, is very aesthetic and does not require any superfluous contractions; on the contrary it produces an extraordinary quality of relaxation which is a guarantee of the dancer's symbiotic state with his environment (Tierou 1992: 53).

All the Namibian dances I describe commence from and work through this position.

[TRANSPARENCY ILLUSTRATION]

- Secondary 'earth' position (*Soumplé*)

In this position the knees are also bent with feet flat and parallel on the ground, but feet, legs and thighs are closer together. This allows the dancer, according to Tiérou, to accumulate or dispense energy during the course of the dance. In male dances among Ju/'hoansi, one finds this used with a small, rapid vibration movement of the legs and hardly any locomotion. While performing this rapid leg movement, a slow track is made through the sand - all energy is focussed on the legs.

[TRANSPARENCY ILLUSTRATION]

- One foot flat, one on toe

In this movement the knees are bent, with feet flat and parallel on the ground, slightly less than a hip-width apart. Thighs are close together, but weight placement is on one foot only, so that the other foot may lift the heel and rest on the toe portion (*demi-plié*). In Namibian dances, such as Tswana dances and certain Ju/'hoan dances (*tcòqmà*) as well as *Namastap*, the accentuation is in the foot flexion. The heel-up movement and simultaneous weight shift onto supporting leg is inclined to be a fairly sharp snap. This creates a rhythmic thump on the ground by both the toe section of the lifting foot and the heel section of the supporting foot. This is sometimes emphasised by knocking a walking stick on the ground to coincide with the movement.

[TRANSPARENCY ILLUSTRATION]

- Extended leg (*Djiétéba*)

This movement is dependent on the basic earth position. From a position with bent knees and spaced flat feet, one leg takes the weight while the other extends to the side with a flexed foot. This position allows the hips more flexibility and accentuates an undulation of the torso from top to bottom. This movement is seen in the Caprivian dance, *nyakasanga*.

[TRANSPARENCY ILLUSTRATION]

- Edge position (*Tchinkoui*)

From a starting basic earth position, the body weight is shifted onto the outside edge of for example, the right foot, while the left rolls onto its inner edge and the right hip is directed outwards. This rolling onto the sides of the feet may be seen in some individual performances of *Namastap*, where both feet may roll onto their outsides, or only one. I have also observed this in a performance of *konsertliedjies* by an older woman.

[TRANSPARENCY ILLUSTRATION]

- Turned-in position

The feet are turned inwards, knees are bent. Big toes face one another, the legs may appear bow-shaped. Men dancing *Namastap* tend to favour a turned-in movement, both feet are placed on the toe portion, or ball of the foot. The weight is on one foot, while the other is lightly tapped to the ground in this turn-in mode. [TRANSPARENCY ILLUSTRATION]

- Knee-lift position

The dancer is balanced on one flat foot with knee bent, while the other leg is bent and lifted high. The lifted foot is usually at knee height or higher. The torso is inclined forwards. While the knee is lifted, the lifted lower leg may remain static, or it may be swung in and out, for example. The

lifting (up movement) of the leg is emphasised in some dances e.g. *oudano*, while the downwards motion is emphasised in others, e.g. *ondjongo*.

2) Feet

A variety of different placements of the feet are possible in conjunction with the body and legs described above. These include: [TRANSPARENCY OF ALL PLACEMENTS AND DEMONSTRATION]]

- a) flat placement of the foot on the ground (-Kwanyama *oudano* and in -Himba *ondjongo*).
- b) the pounding of the ground with the heel or with the outside edge of the foot (*Nama-stap*, -Tswana dances, and *oudano*, among others)
- c) the pounding of the ground with the underside of the toes, or tapping in front of the other foot (*oudano* and -Gciriku *shiperu*).
- d) heels slightly lifted - heel lifted with a pause (*Namastap*), or both feet perform on the ball of foot (women's *epera* movements).

In general, feet have an almost intimate connection with the ground or the earth. For this reason, much Namibian dance seems to lose its impact when dancers perform on an indoor floor.

3) The head

In most Namibian dance the head is carried in a position held fairly still and facing slightly downwards towards the ground. Exceptions to this practice is -Mbukushu dances where a slight forward head or chin movement accompanies the prominent shoulder movements. Herero women perform a similar but slower and more sustained head/chin movement that mirrors and symbolises the movement of cattle heads when they are walking. In *epera* the dancing men turn

their heads to face women on either side in turn, but continue to maintain a forward inclination (towards the ground). In *nyakasanga* and *kayowe* these movements involve tossing the head forward or sideways, or maintaining an inclined position for a short period. The healer's head movements, using *singalangala*, are central to the power of his performance, due to the potions residing in the head-dress.

4) Hand and arm gestures

[TRANSPARENCY & DEMONSTRATION]

- a) an open stretching of hand with palm facing outwards, both arms raised and bent (men in *epera* and *ongandeka*).
- b) a close-fingered extension of the arm, hand in line with the arm, raised or hanging (*oudano*).
- c) an extended arm with close-fingered hand curving downwards at a right angle (*ongandeka*)
both hands may curve downwards, but arms are raised at different angles.
- d) an extended arm with hand flexed upwards (outwards) at a right angle (women's *epera*) the base of hands touch or are held close, on extended lowered arms, with hands at almost right angles 'upwards', palms facing outwards. Also seen in *ongandeka*.
- e) arms raised in a 'horn' pattern - curved, elbows outwards, palms face down or outwards or inwards, depending on custom. The important commonality is the symbolism of cattle horns (*epera*, *ongandeka*, *omuhiva*, *outjina*).
- f) bent arms swing loosely and relaxed from side to side, crossing in front of and behind the body, hands relaxed (*konsertliedjies*, *Nama-stap*, *shiperu*, *simbayoka*).
- g) arms are bent at the elbow, with the hands and lower arm raised - almost all Namibian dances at some point (*oudano*, *Namastap*, *ondjongo*, *omupembe*, and so forth).

Many dancers make use of musical instruments while dancing, for example hoe blades, adzes, shakers, rattles, and so forth. Thus in dances which are most likely to be laden with meaningful gestures, for example spiritual healings in the Kavango and Caprivi regions, healers make almost continuous use of shakers in both hands while dancing. This naturally dictates the movements of the arms. In other dances the actual arm motions are of lesser importance, and function largely to facilitate balance or natural body rhythm, for example a sway where the arms move in opposite direction to the sway of the body. In *langarm* dancing the hand of the partner is held lightly, while the other hand either rests on the partner's back or shoulders in a relaxed manner, or the free arm is extended outwards while the partner performs a turn.

5) Shoulders

In -Mbukushu and -Kwangali dances the shoulder movements are aesthetically very important. In -Mbukushu dance a woman raises and lowers her shoulders (shrugs) in rapid small movements, while her eyes remain almost hypnotically focussed on the ground. In a -Kwangali *epera* a girl's shoulders are either rapidly shaken alternately from side to side with a small motion, or lifted in a way similar to that of the -Mbukushu dancer. In *nyakasanga*, *liyala* and *kayowe*, shoulder movements (*makumbi*) are the central aesthetic component of the dance. In other dances however, shoulders may be of lesser importance or are not isolated as a characteristic.

Characteristic movement components

The repeated use of a movement, for example a jump, a stamp, or a turn, may qualify it as a characteristic component of a specific dance. This component may be repeated by the same or different dancers. Tracing such a component can help one to trace the structure and character of the dance via repetition and possible variation of that component. One may find a set relationship between two different components, the ways in which they are juxtaposed. In *omupembe*, the leap (over a standing man's head) is a characteristic component of that dance. Its combination or juxtaposition with the prefacing turn and (small) elevation of the facing man is a variation and an addition to the basic leaping component. In *epera* the small, quick combination of three steps is a characteristic component, while the rapid vibration movements (created by alternate flexions of the knees) is a characteristic component of !Kung trance dances. In *ondjongo* the rapid forward rotation of bent arms (see (g) above) from both shoulder and elbow sockets is an important characteristic. These components do not stand in isolation, but are related to a multitude of other components, not all of which may be considered characteristic of that specific dance.

1) Patterns

Dances everywhere contain patterns. These patterns may become characteristic components of the dance. A dance pattern consists of a movement sequence, comparable with a time-line in music, or it may even be as long as a cycle in music.

2) Repetition, variation and improvisation of patterns

Patterns in dance are created by means of repetition and variations, such as elaboration of an idea, inversion, addition, subtraction or 'free' improvisation. Tiérou (1992: 19) considers improvisation to be a law of African dance repetition - "the new must be born from the old". Improvisation arises from repetition, and is not based on spontaneity, he says, but "the creative

imagination of the improviser who applies himself to a given subject known to everybody. The spectators judge it as connoisseurs." (*ibid.*) The nature of improvisation in *oudano* is to explore given components characteristic to the dance (the use of stamps) and then to exploit this movement to its fullest within the pattern. According to Tiérou collective improvisation is considered to be the most refined and enjoyable form thereof. In this form there is an awareness of partners, so that dancers do not move without any constraints, but take account of the basic patterns and the actions of partners. In this way a dancer almost reflexively executes a gesture, posture or movement which complements that of the partner. In the *ongandeka* and *ondjongo* dances of the north-west, one is able to see this collective improvisation function in a delightful fashion. A young man enters the circle and performs his actions. Towards the end of his pattern (it appears usually to be 8 beats before the end) a second man enters the circle, and even though they perform without facing one another, they execute improvised but complementary or even matched movements to complete the cycle.

While I do not claim that the above deconstruction of performance - which should in reality be seen as a holism of music, dance, ritual, social interaction, meaning-giving, confirmation of identity, education, history, and so forth - is complete, the discussion may provide a *beginning* structure for the understanding and teaching of Namibian music and dance in inter-cultural situations. Certainly for me, discovering the performance diversity which yet contains within it a certain identity, a Namibian-ness, has been which a most rewarding experience which I hope I have been able to share in a limited way.

GLOSSARY OF NAMIBIAN TERMS

Term	Language	Meaning
//geis	Khoekhoe	dance, prior to hunt or spiritual healing, rarely seen today
dipera	Thimbukushu	celebratory dance
epera	Rukwangali	celebratory dance
kayowe	Silozi	third phase of spiritual healing
konstertiedjies	Afrikaans (Khoekhoe)	urban performance genre
Namastap	Afrikaans (Khoekhoe)	social dance
nyakasanga	Silozi	first phase of spiritual healing
omuhiva	Otjiherero	men's dance
omupembe	Oshingandjera	young men's leaping dance
ondjongo	Otjihimba	social dance-game
ongandeka	Otjizemba	young men's 'fighting' dance-game
otjipirangi	Otjiherero	plank attached to foot
oudano	Oshikwanyama	girls' and women's dance-game
outjina	Otjiherero	women's dance
shiperu	Rugciriku	celebratory dance
simbayoka	Silozi	girl's initiation/coming-out dance
singalangala	Silozi	healer's head-dress
tcòqma	Ju/'hoansi	boys' initiation dance

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Brief Biography

Minette Mans is at present Senior Lecturer at the University of Namibia. Previously Head of Department and Deputy Dean of the Centre for Visual and Performing Arts, Ms Mans has for the past year given her time fully to research on Namibian music and dance. This will be extended into a four year research project in collaboration with a French institute, drawing up a geo-music/dance map of Namibia, preparing publications for schools and the public on this diverse performance practice.

Ms Mans has written a Ph.D thesis on this field, and is awaiting results. She has presented papers at a number of ISME World Conferences and seminars for the Commission on Music in Schools and Teacher Education, and has published internationally in various music journals and monographs. Her first book, *Ongoma. Notes on Namibian musical instruments*, appears in 1997.

Previously Chair of the national Curriculum Panel for the Arts (appointed by the Permanent Secretary for Basic Education and Culture), she still contributes her experience to the Panel, as well as chairing the Subject Committees on Dance, and on the Primary Curriculum. She is a member of the Integrated Performing Arts Committee for junior secondary education. New curricula and teaching materials for all school phases have recently been completed for Namibian arts education.

As a member of the Board of Directors of the Namibian Society of Composers and Authors of Music, Ms Mans is involved in the rights of commercial musicians. Strangely enough, she is also Education Officer for the Southern African Rock Art Research Association, working to study, save and promote awareness of the rock paintings and engravings of southern Africa, by preparing workshops and materials for schools on this topic.

John Blacking's Contribution to Dance Research

LYNN MAREE

John Blacking died in Belfast in 1990. His obituaries acknowledged the debts owed by both anthropology and ethnomusicology to this innovative, energetic, persuasive and intellectually stimulating man. Adam Kuper, the South African social anthropologist, (who was one of Blacking's first students at Wits) writing in *The Guardian*, indicated how Blacking was a pioneer in using fieldwork in the Malinowskian tradition in musicology. The chance that this fieldwork took place in South Africa, among the Venda, and that he stayed on in South Africa after that, meant that the concerns of British social anthropology were introduced to South Africa. Many were his students, and great was his influence. I leave the detail of that contribution to South African anthropologists, and to a social anthropology conference. For Blacking, anthropology was about seeking a better understanding of general principles of human action by studying cultural variety in relation to biological proclivities. Early western anthropologists had treated dance and music with the same sense of unimportance as they were treated in their own industrialising European and American societies. Blacking was a part of the correcting of this great misunderstanding.

I leave to others too a full account of his immensely important work in the field of ethnomusicology. As Professor of Social Anthropology at the Queen's University of Belfast from 1970 until his death, he raised the profile of ethnomusicology in the UK, and developed the first post-graduate programme in ethnomusicology in Europe--a programme which drew students from all over the world. The European Seminar on Ethnomusicology, which he founded, dedicated its 1990 volume of proceedings to him. *The World of Music: The Journal of the International Institute for Traditional Music* had as their sole topic for the 1995 issue: Working with Blacking: the Belfast years. His study of Venda children's music and "How Musical is Man" are still drawn on forty and twenty years since their publication.

All this: the social anthropology fieldwork, done among a people for whom music-making was intimately bound up with movement; his fascination for music's motional aspects; and his convictions that musical creativity is an essential feature of humanity, and that artistic performance always has a social context--led him into the field of dance and dance creation--and this is not as publicly recognised nor acknowledged.

In this lecture I want to do two things. One is to integrate his writings and lectures on music, music-making, music education and the need for an arts curriculum, into dance, dance-making, and dance education, in the way which I know had become explicit for him, but which is not always visible to his public, mostly because the dance section of his audience was almost always the smallest part. There is a great deal for the dance world to learn from it, and a great deal of strength to be gained.

The other is to reiterate the theoretical and polemical positions argued by John Blacking, often as a keynote speaker at distinguished and international gatherings, because they are singularly pertinent to the debates on what sort of national arts heritage South Africans should be building, and what sort of arts curriculum should exist in our schools. And I know that were he still alive, he would still be arguing his case with zest--and putting it forward, in South Africa especially, with all the fervour he was capable of. There would have been no argument over who, for instance, should have opened a conference called *Confluences* in Cape Town in July 1997--for

his agenda was always to tear down barriers. (That is, if he deigned to recognise them as barriers in the first place!)

My claim to having the right to deliver this paper is minimal—I am sure that there are others with more formally credible rights. For a very brief period in 1966 I was taught by John Blacking at Wits; I approached him from London in 1980 when attempting to write a Dance Anthropology course for a BEd in Human Movement (Dance). We became friends, and served together on the Council for National Academic Awards on both the Creative and Performing Arts Board, and the Dance Board of which he was Chair. I also was a member of a working party set up for the Humanities and Performing Arts Section of the CNAA to look at all courses from a multicultural perspective, again which Blacking chaired.

It was as Chair of the Dance Board (an inspired appointment by Peter Brinson, when he retired as the Dance Board's first chair) that Blacking found the place and the space to see just how much his writings and theories on music applied also to dance (an equally nonverbal form of communication)—and in some ways **even more** essentially—to dance, given that the body is the dancer's instrument, thus making it possible for every human being to be a dancer, not merely a potential dancer. It reminded him that in most cultures dance and music are inextricably linked, that "How Musical is Man" (Blacking, 1973) and "To Dance is Human" (Hanna 1979) were making the same poignant point: that man's humanity as well as much of his intellectual and technical development are based on, backed by, dependent on, those creative impulses which make rhythm and movement and sound together, for the pleasure of making them. That dancing is constitutive and defining of what it means to be human.

In 1988, he was the keynote speaker at the YOUNG PEOPLE DANCING: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE Conference held in London by DaCi (Dance and the Child International). His paper was published as part of the Conference Papers, but has not found its way into the bibliography published posthumously in *Ethnomusicology* (Spring/Summer 1990). More than any other paper that I know of, it pulls together his thoughts on dance: the same thinking provides the philosophical underpinning of the six-part television series he made for Ulster Television at around exactly the same time, called *DANCING*.

What follows in this paper draws on earlier writings relating more to music and to arts education in general, and gets its endorsement from Blacking's application of those writings to dance, from the DaCi paper, and from *DANCING*.

THE PLACE OF DANCE IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

I focus first on the need for creative movement (i.e. dance) in human intellectual and human development. The argument goes like this: movement in ordered rhythmically based ways can be seen in all human babies, the body is used in interaction and communication long before speech takes over, infants show full competence in using non-verbal modes of communication: if that stage is curtailed or constrained or missed out on, then cognitive development suffers. Some therapists go back over those physical development stages to assist normal cognitive development.

Blacking goes further than this: he argues, from his Venda research, and from his basic beliefs about the building of a better world, that the exercise of the feeling imagination in movement and

music, exercised collectively, plays a crucial part in our growth as human beings, beings in full possession of our humanity, a humanity which links us to all others and which is the bedrock of a peaceful and individuality-encouraging society. Movement **affects** mental states as well as reflects them. Children come "trailing clouds of glory", in touch with a spiritual life, trusting everyone, experimenting with everything. The practice of dance, with its aesthetic and co-operative characteristics, maintains this child-like quality into adulthood. The use of the artistic imagination helps in problem-solving, in the creation of social affects.

Shared conceptual thought can come from communal movement....from this came his claim that in dance body and mind are one. For a right-functioning society, the equal use of both hemispheres of the brain is essential. So much of scientific rationalism emphasises the need for socialisation into the dominance of mind over body....the history of the twentieth century shows us that it has not succeeded in making rational wise peace-loving people, nor could it. We will only enter our common humanity, resonate with others' feelings, when that creative force which comes from the physical interaction of moving together for aesthetic purposes is nurtured.

A society like that of the rural Venda community he studied had it right, Blacking believed. (He refers too to rural Zululand, where dance was part of work, part of social, political, economic and religious activity). In western society we have a number of aspects very badly messed up. One, we have separated dance and music into two separate art-forms (and incidentally made our most highly valued music something one had to sit still and silent to appreciate), two, we separated these performing arts from the rest of life—we put them into specialised boxes, or into leisure or play or the trivial in comparison with our modes of production and social organisation; and three, we said that only some people were any good at them. And yet we live in societies where individuals are alienated, personal satisfaction is low, wars are endemic, people are bored and lonely. Precisely the sort of society in which that which encourages self-actualisation, the emancipation of the senses, empathy and a feeling of connectedness should be sought after and nurtured.

Hence his insistence that an education system should put that collective exercise of movement at its core: that the movement choirs which Rudolf Laban introduced in which large numbers participated together should never have been departed from (as it was in the popularising of Laban's work by his disciples). Instead it should have become more widespread. This education system would, he acknowledged, call for superbly imaginative teaching.

And, further, we should avoid singling out individuals for specialist training, and for superstar adulation. "The notion that artistic ability is a special gift possessed only by a chosen few is false". We want to feel that dance is a general human capacity, and that performance of it is both for the aesthetic pleasure of doing it and of watching it. It should not be shared out selectively. It is the intrinsic meanings which come from being involved in performance which are important—they help us know inside that the human environment is essentially co-operative.

One of the most endearing (and occasionally frustrating) thing about John Blacking is that he never saw contradictions. Where others might see inevitable tensions or dilemmas, where others might say "on the other hand", John would say "and". His own ability to play the piano, and his pleasure in playing meant that he organised public performances, and expected an audience. For him a world in which performances are offered by amateurs was the right world. He wrote that

if you felt good, you would perform well, and give enjoyment. Your achievement could be publicly assessed. "Art and the equipment to grasp it are made in the same shop". We need to please ourselves and to please others: we all need to exercise our artistic capabilities and our artistic cognition. When it really worked, audience and artist would share in the same transcendental somatic state, physically relaxed, physically involved, uplifted, connected.

He asserted that arts education should not be vocational, that we should get away from ascribing market value to the practice of the arts: it should not be a commodity for sale. And yet, in his work at the CNAA in Britain in the eighties, he played a prominent part in the professionalisation of the performing arts. (Probably because, at the very same moment, under Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, vocationalism and career preparation were consolidating their grip on higher education) He campaigned long and hard for performance to count in the awarding of degrees, particularly at the higher degree level. A PhD in Choreography or in Dance Performance should not have to be a written theoretical thesis: it should be the performance itself which was examined. He spoke on the occasion of Dame Beryl Grey's award by the CNAA of an honorary Doctorate, and saw the need for the status of the study of the performing arts to be raised.

It is in those academic areas where dance has reason already to be grateful to him (among other giants, like Peter Brinson) The Laban Centre's M.A. in Dance owes much of its rigour and confidence to the academic grilling he took it through. Service on those CNAA Boards played a role in the development too of the dance degree at the University of Surrey, which has grown since its beginnings in the early eighties to a student body of over 130. Students of his, like Andree Grau, continue to influence both dance practitioners and dance academics.

In that sense he can be said to have played a role in establishing legitimate spaces where further research into the usefulness of voluntary collective dance performance in the development of cognition and the restoration of fellow-feeling, can be carried out and taken seriously. And the possibilities for this sort of research in the changing cultural and educational structures in the new South Africa are both infinite and potentially significant.

A WORLD VIEW

The fact that Blacking spoke as a social anthropologist, and not as a preacher-idealist gave weight to all he said and wrote, and brought a world view to the studies of dance which were becoming established in Britain in the eighties. What had been subject areas called "Dance History" became more clearly recognised for what they were --studies of western theatre dance in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

He was aware that a further failure of the European system of education came from that imperial past in which westerners had felt superior to the rest of the world in everything, including their own, particularly elitist, forms of the performing arts. His studies had shown him what there was of social and spiritual value in other societies' participative engagement, and that there was nothing inherently superior in western forms of theatre dance and music either: the complexity of other musical scales, the intellectual challenge of learning a new dance genre which immediately opens up subtleties of flexion, isolation, weight distribution, musicality, made that instantly apparent. What that new window on the world proves to all who try it, is that there is a biological deep structure to dance, underlying all those variations of flexibility and plasticity.

For Blacking this did not lead simply to a cultural or artistic relativism, nor to an acceptance that national cultures should feel the need to elevate themselves over others. It led instead to a belief that the specificity of a social context, the fact that each individual's upbringing leads to a particular social construction of reality--if it has, as he believed it would, led to the psychically normal, affective, fully human being--then each of us would be, should be, could be, able to live through our local culture and beyond to share in the variety of life.

Springing from that is the certainty that one can enter the artistic life of another culture: we have Japanese cellists, French Bharata Naryam dancers, white gumboot dancers: not easily, the training is arduous. But Blacking was adamant that the individual artist always transcends cultural boundaries--that truly fine work resonates at the common level of humanity. We cannot be boxed into any one particular heritage--we will resist such boxing--we cannot be cut off from one another. And he believed with great firmness and conviction that the restoration of dance to a central place in the life of all societies, would produce that fellow-feeling which encourages creativity, problem-solving, and the production of lives of beauty and harmony.

Lynn Maree
June, 1997

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"THE FAMOUS INVINCIBLE DARKIES"

CAPE TOWN'S COON CARNIVAL:

AESTHETIC TRANSFORMATIONS, COLLECTIVE REPRESENTATIONS,
AND SOCIAL MEANINGS*

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New Year at the Cape

Cape Town, early in the evening of December 31, 1994, in the Bo-Kaap (also known as the "Malay Quarter", at the foot of Signal Hill): people, very often whole families, start gathering in the streets and try to find a good spot to watch the choirs when they come. Numerous food and beverage stands are erected. Until the morning of January 1st, *nagtroepe*, as the *singkore* or Malay Choirs are called on this occasion, march in the streets wearing their special track-suits, stop and sing in front of friends' houses or of social clubs and are offered a *tafel* (a table, that is food and drinks).

The same day, in the morning, Coon¹ troupes begin gathering at their *klopskamer* (club headquarters and rehearsal place). They are dressed-up in colourful uniforms and make up their face in black and white or in glittering colours. They usually perform a few items there before boarding buses which drive them to the stadia where competitions are to take place.

On the afternoon of January 1st, carnival competitions begin at the stadia. They include about 20 items, for adult or "juvenile" participants: different types of marches, various repertoires of choral and solo singing, drum major performances, band performances as well as "best dress" (for the nicest uniforms) and "best board" (carved or painted emblem of the troupe carried on top of a pole). Competitions attract several thousand spectators. They are judged by "adjudicators" and, eventually, trophies are handed to the winners in the different categories.

Apart from competitions at the stadia, an important moment of the festivals is *Tweede Nuwejaar* (the second New Year) when troupes march in the streets of Cape Town. Starting from the former limits of District Six², they follow a traditional itinerary through the town center, then the Bo-Kaap, to Green Point. Again, in broad daylight, crowds gather on the sidewalks to "watch the Coons".

After their street performances of New Year's Eve, *singkore* (Malay Choirs) hold their own competitions in various concert halls during the months of January and February. They perform four songs belonging to four traditional repertoires. In the concert halls, choir members wear suits and fezzes: they are also judged for "best dress". Malay Choirs sometimes assemble in a stadium when they march and present their floats.

Finally, in January, competitions of the Christmas Choirs (Christian brass bands) also take place. They march, play in their own arrangement a hymn selected by the organizers and display their uniforms (suit and hat) and banners. They are judged by experts seconded from the Church Brigade and the South African Defence Force.

In order to get ready for the New Year, troupe and choir

members, captains, musical coaches, tailors have devoted long hours of hard work. Leaders of troupes, choirs and bands are busy all year round with preparations for competitions and marches. Active members usually start meeting and rehearsing in August or September; many other join them as the end of the year nears. Important sums of money are involved, especially in the confection of costumes, but also in renting the venues where competitions take place. And, especially during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, nothing could happen without tedious negotiations with government authorities³.

The Coon debate

Over several decades, the Coon carnival celebrated in Cape Town has generated heated controversies. An essential part of the New Year festivals⁴ involving mostly members of the group which, for a long time in South Africa's history, has been classified and labelled as coloured, they mobilize thousands of people every year. Impulsed by a competitive spirit, characterised by the wearing of special costumes, inextricably tied to singing and dancing, the Coon carnival can be seen as a manifestation sharing striking similarities with festivals in Europe, America or Asia. Like most passage and renewal festivals, it stages in a disguised and symbolic fashion the interplay of life and death, the resilience of communities in spite of the disparition of their individual components. Generally speaking, these festivals provide an occasion for having fun in ways which break with social conventions, they allow for the utterance of humorous and sarcastic, sometimes obscene, speeches and songs, they generate particular body behaviours and, most of all, revive social links through consumption, sometimes excessive, of food and drinks and participation in troupes or bands of disguised revellers (Bakhtin 1984; d'Ayala, Boiteux 1988). However, in the South African context where a distorted notion of civilisation based on Victorian ideas prevailed, and served as an excuse for discriminating between human beings (Bickford-Smith 1995; Lewis 1987), such behaviours were not always accepted. They aroused opposed feelings, especially during the apartheid era, between 1948 and 1990.

For a large number of coloured people living in the Cape Peninsula, in particular for the workers and the underprivileged, the festivals were and still are the climax of the "big days", a time for rejoicing and having fun. They provide the possibility of reaching "*die tariek, to put [oneself] in another frame of mind, [to be] at another level*" (interview, January 1994); then all the pains and toils of the year can be forgotten.

For many members of the coloured educated elite after 1948, the Coon carnival was a display of alienation, an "*undignified and degrading*"⁵ occasion where "*idiots [were] making monkeys of themselves*"⁶. It thus reinforced white prejudices regarding the uncivilized nature of coloured people. Moreover, because the festivals were presented as "*a coloured thing*", an evidence of the existence of a separate coloured culture, they were seen by

the elite as a "pseudocultural activity [which] gives people a false sense of identity" (*Argus*, 31/12/1980) and substantiated the racial theories underpinning apartheid⁷.

As a matter of fact, a large proportion of the white spectators who flocked in the streets or went to the stadia to "watch the Coons" were looking for some entertainment, but it was not without a condescending bias towards the "happy", "jolly" performers; this attitude clearly shows in the benevolent articles on the Coons which were a regular feature of Cape Town's newspapers in December and January. Finally, politicians and government officials of the old South Africa did try to manipulate the Coons and the Malay Choirs. They attempted to make them into emblems of the social situation they wanted the coloured people to occupy as, in the words of Jan Christiaan Smuts: "an appendage to the Whites" (Lewis 1987: 210)⁸.

Time has now come when it seems possible to revisit the history of Cape Town's New Year festivals, and in particular of the Coon carnival. The fact that they have been going on for more than a century, in spite of many political interferences, in spite of all the disputes they have aroused, and in spite also of a continuous commercialization process, tells something of their importance and of the social dynamics that have fuelled them. It therefore appears that an investigation into the history and social meanings of the Coon carnival may contribute to a better knowledge of social and political evolution in twentieth century Cape Town, and to a finer understanding of how a great number of people, over a long period, reacted to oppression: both adapted to, and resisted a system of power characterized by the use of brutal force to implement racial separation and discrimination.

Such an investigation should definitely shed some light on what Robert Shell has called the "creole culture of South Africa" and it may be in order to reproduce here excerpts from the last page of his study of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope:

"Cape slavery has another legacy. Slavery brought different people together, not across the sights of a gun, as on the frontier, but in the setting of the home. Each slave was exposed to each owner and each settler to each slave on a very intimate footing. There was, in fact, a common reciprocal legacy, which might one day be considered more important than the unfair, but temporary and wholly wordly, advantages that the slave owners enjoyed through slavery. This legacy was the as yet unexamined creole culture of South Africa, with its new cuisine, its new architecture, its new music, its melodious forthright, and poetic language, Afrikaans, first expressed in the Arabic script of the slaves' religion and written literature." (Shell 1994: 415)

The New Year festivals in Cape Town have not been given the scholarly attention they deserve⁹. This paper should therefore

be read as a somewhat tentative research note which is but a part of a larger programme¹⁰. It is based mainly on a compilation of newspaper articles, and some other written sources, material which have been complemented by information collected through interviews¹¹. The object of this study is to illustrate how organizational and aesthetic transformations which took place in the Coon carnival during the twentieth century have been linked to political developments, and how both permanence and change in the Coons can be interpreted in relation to these political evolutions¹². I shall therefore begin with an overview of the history of the New Year carnival, in order first to underline the main aesthetic changes that have affected it, and then to relate those changes to political events.

A brief history of the Coons

Carnival and music are inseparable, and without doubt the musical manifestations that were to become an integral part of the New Year festivals find their roots in the musical activity of the slaves¹³. Dance bands playing for European settlers in their mansions or for sailors in bars were often composed of slaves (Bouws 1966: 138, 140-141). After emancipation, former slaves and their descendants continued to form dance bands that were very much in demand in nineteenth century Cape Town among all classes. Before and after 1833, they mostly played European dance music of the times: waltzes, postillions, cotillions, polka, mazurka and, most of all it seems, quadrilles (Bouws 1946: 104-105; Bouws 1966: 92; Pertinax 1961). But coloured musicians played other repertoires too. Weddings were always accompanied by singing, and picnics, which were a favourite form of social meeting and entertainment during the summer, were an occasion for much singing and dancing: *ghoemaliedjies* and the cushion dance, for instance, represented creolized forms in which Eastern elements of various origins were mixed with European elements.

Apart from music played in ballrooms or bars, outdoor music was therefore very common and bands paraded in the streets, especially at the New Year when slaves were given a holiday; the tradition remained after emancipation (Pertinax 1961). An old, undated, engraving kept at the South African Library shows such a group playing wind instruments (possibly zurna, a kind of oboe), violins and drums. It is titled "Cape slaves celebrating their emancipation by an Act of Parliament, 1833". Historian Achmat Davids confirms that, on this particular day:

"[...] the people took to the streets of Cape Town to sing. It was a time for the enjoyment of all. They were invited into the houses, they were entertained, invited to eat. It became a tradition. At a later point they shifted the day to New Year which was the original slave holiday." (*South*, 21/1/1994: 8).

The first mention of a street parade at New Year apparently goes back to 1823 (Van Der Ross 1973: 598). By the end of the nineteenth century, it had become a usual sight and in 1886 one

observer could write:

"The frivolous coloured inhabitants of Cape Town, who take a holiday on the slightest pretext, indulged in their peculiar notions in regard thereto by going about in large bodies, dressed most fantastically, carrying "guys", and headed by blowers of wind and players of stringed instruments, who evoked from their horrible monsters the most discordant and blatant noises that ever deafened human ears. At night time these people added further inflictions upon the suffering citizens of Cape Town in the shape of vocalisation, singing selections from their weird music with variations taken from "Rule Britannia" and the "Old Hundredth". They also carried Chinese lanterns and banners as they proceeded through the streets playing their discords, beating the drum, singing and shouting, and the strange glinting from the combined light from the street lamps and the Chinese lanterns fell upon their dark faces and they seemed like so many uncanny spirits broken loose from say... the adamant chains of the Nether World."¹⁵

At this time, singing societies were organized. They were tightly linked with sports clubs, and often the same people belonged to both groups¹⁶. It is those societies which "buried the old year" in Church Square (Stone 1971: 2; Franck, Hatfield, Manuel 1967: 111) and it was probably a march by such a group in 1888 that was later described as the first carnival, although reports differ as to its importance¹⁷. Nevertheless, in the 1880s and 1890s, bands and groups of singers, organized in societies distinguished by emblems and dress, marched the streets of the City and suburbs on New Year's Eve (Cape Argus Weekly Edition, 2/1/1889; Argus, 1/1/1908). Costume became an important element of these parades; societies prepared special outfits for the new year, hung their colours across the street where their headquarters were located and informally competed with each other in singing and marching, in elegance and originality, drawing their inspiration from many sources: the Darktown Fire Brigade wore firemen's uniforms and drew a water pump; others reproduced the stage costume of American minstrels who had been extremely popular since the middle of the nineteenth century (Stone 1971: 3; Franck, Hatfield, Manuel 1967: 110). At the turn of the century, it seems that the minstrel or Coon troupes were already organized as later sources describe them¹⁸. There certainly was an element of emulation between the troupes, and they probably tried to outdo one another when singing in the streets. There is at least one mention of organized contests in the nineteenth century:

"In 1874 a concertina competition for a gold wristwatch was held in the garden of the Good Hope Lodge, and there is mention of a competition in which a duet "a la nigger minstrels" with the accompaniment by a banjo and "bones" was performed." (Bouws 1966)¹⁹.

Then, eventually, on January 1st, 1907:

"Residents in the Peninsula were [...] afforded an opportunity of viewing a gathering on the Green Point Track of two or three hundred of those coloured mummies without whom New Year's Day in Cape Town is not complete. The occasion was a coloured carnival, and apparently the event must have been considered one of the main events of the holiday, for close on 7000 people found the road which led to the Track, packed the grand stands, and bordered the railings for a considerable distance. Naturally the coloured community was in force to cheer their compatriots engaged in the competitions, but there were also upwards of two thousand Europeans on the ground.

[...] There were seven bands of mummies, decked out in the brightest colours, and accompanied by string bands. These formed the procession from the Parade. They created something of a stir on their passage through the streets, and were followed by a huge crowd of all colours, classes, and creeds. [...]

The marching competition was the first item. The troupes paraded on the cinder path, every member of each troupe, with coat tails flying, prancing fantastically along the rattling of the bones, the tum-tum of the drums, the banging of tambourines, and the strumming of banjo and guitar [...] Each corps had its marching song. Sung in that half chart, half mumble of the Cape mummer, and almost drowned in the strumming of the string instruments and the cheers of the spectators, it was difficult to ascertain what these were. They were typical coon ditties, and the guitar and banjo formed an effective accompaniment. [...]" (Cape Times, 3/1/1907: 7).

As is often the case with the history of the New Year festivals, the events leading to the first organized competitions at the Green Point Track are not very well known. The story, many times repeated, according to which the "early coons sang and danced without thought of reward. In 1906, however, The Cape Argus offered a trophy and organized the first Green Point Track carnival" (Green 1951: 193) is clearly inaccurate: the date is 1907 (although preparations started in 1906) and there is no mention in the Argus that this newspaper had the initiative of the event (Argus, 2/1/1907). Another story seems more plausible: the Green Point Track carnival was organized in order to raise money for the Green Point Cricket Club, crossing at the time difficult financial straits²⁰. Whoever was responsible for it, the carnival was a success, not only in that it drew large crowds to the Track but also because it set a frame within which the Coons inscribed their more prestigious activities, and provided a channel for the public expression of their competitive spirit.

Competitions at the Track were repeated in 1908 and 1909. Then they were discontinued until 1920 when, apparently at the last minute, Dr. A. Abdurahman and Mr. S. Reagon, the leaders of

the African People's Organization, decided to organize a "Grand Carnival on Green Point Track" to close the coloured people's effort "on behalf of the Governor-General Fund"²¹. The event was such a success that it was repeated the following year, on January 3, in aid of the Cape Town and Wynberg Board of Aid. Also in 1921, the Cape Town Cricket Club organized a rival carnival at Newlands and, in 1922, it managed to book the Green Point Track before Dr. Abdurahman and Mr. S. Reagon could do it²². From then on, every year without exception, Coon competitions took place in various venues, gathering increasing numbers of revellers and attracting large audiences to such an extent that they became big commercial endeavours. Boards multiplied, sometimes (e.g. in 1960) as many as five rival boards were in operation; entrepreneurs, like Sonny Lloyd or J.W.G. Allen stepped in, who made a business of carnivals and caused troupes' captains to try and organize independently in 1961 and 1993. Eventually, a unified Carnival Development Committee was launched in 1994 and organized the competitions in the following years.

The important point here is that, whatever tribulations members of the troupes suffered, they continued to participate in the type of festive event that was inaugurated in 1907. They gave their time, their energy, their talent, and their money²³, to enter in competitions and proudly bring back some of the trophies to their *klopskamer* and show them around. They went on in spite of the difficult conditions most of them lived in, in spite of the war that made satin for the "uniforms" almost unavailable, in spite of political constraints that grew more severe over the years, in spite of the scorn they were at times showered with by many intellectuals. These competitions must have meant something to them. One of the main questions raised by a study of the New Year festivals is therefore: what did it mean to the people who participated in them?

The emergence of the Cape Town Coon

A brief review of influences that had a decisive impact on the New Year festivals and on the aesthetic features of these competitive celebrations may offer some clues in that respect. Singing and parading in the streets, visiting friends from house to house, entertaining them and accepting food and drinks from them became a Cape Town tradition in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries²⁴. A Cape Town tradition, that is an already creolized tradition, therefore pre-existed what was to become the main model for Coon aesthetics: the black face minstrel show. It must be emphasized that it is from the encounter of Cape Town creole musicians with American minstrels that the image of the modern Cape Coon evolved²⁵.

The encounter was at first indirect: Coon songs reached the Cape brought by visitors, sailors or foreign comedians; some were possibly printed. The song "Jim Crow", for instance, was famous even before the first troupe of American minstrels visited Cape Town (Bouws 1966). Local groups were formed who specialized in the performance of the minstrel repertoire, or at least

interpreted a few "Coon songs" whenever they sang²⁶. Some of these groups were called "Serenaders", which seems to indicate that they directly came from the Cape tradition of outdoor singing, and one can get an idea of their style from a later description:

"In the beautiful starry evenings your hear their part-songs, some of the fellows singing at their open windows; and now and again a string of them extending across the broad street and shouting ballads to the accompaniment of guitar and concertina... the latest success of the concert-room is reproduced immediately in the streets of the Malay Quarter." (quoted in: Bickford-Smith 1995: 188)

However, the qualifiers added to "Serenaders" already show a minstrel influence: according to Jan Bouws (1966), the first group to appear was called the "Celebrated Ethiopian Serenaders", others were named "American" or "Darkie Serenaders", and even, in Burgersdorp, "Ethiopische Club" (Bouws 1966). One such group performed when Prince Alfred visited the Cape in 1860; he was treated to a "grand lingho and kalifa dance" and Serenaders entertained him with "choice negro ballads" (*Cape Chronicle*, 7/9/1860).

When Christy's Mintrels arrived from the USA, they were already famous in South Africa, as they were in several other parts of the world. During a month or so (August-September 1862), their concerts caused a sensation and so did their return in November of the same year²⁷. They gave a new impetus to the minstrel rage which seems to have affected all classes of the Cape Town population. New local groups were organized and Coon acts became a must in most public entertainments and social functions. There were the "Ethiopian Minstrels", alias the "Fête Serenaders" (*Cape Chronicle*, 15/3/1861), the Rover Minstrels (*Argus*, 9 & 13/1/1888) and the Amateur Coloured Troupe headed by Joe Lyal who, according to Veit Erlmann, presented weekly shows in 1869 (Erlmann 1991: 31-32). After the Christy Minstrels, other troupes from overseas came to the Cape and contributed to maintaining the taste for black face minstrelsy and probably to increase the number of songs local groups could use. In 1887, H.A. Devere's Novelty Company arrived from Great Britain but probably included several Americans (*Cape Argus*, 11 & 14/6/1887); in 1889, the Empire Minstrel had a great success (*Cape Argus*, 10/12/1889); in 1890, the Mississippi Minstrels and Burlesque Company gave several performances (*Cape Argus*, 21/12/1889; 7 & 23/1/1890).

If songs composed during the American civil war were soon incorporated in Cape Town singers' repertoire, it is quite unlikely that members of the crew on board the notorious Confederate raider The Alabama could have brought them to South Africa, since a majority of these sailors had been recruited at Liverpool. The popular song "Daar Kom Die Alabama" (Here Comes The Alabama), with its peculiar structure, is definitely a Cape invention (Rosenthal 1938: 133-139; Winberg 1992). In the same

legendary vein, it is very often mentioned that, on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, in 1887, a group of "Jubilee Singers" performed at the Cape and had a special impact that was to be decisive on the shaping of Cape Town Coons musical and dress aesthetics²⁸. Minstrel performances were in effect given at the time of the celebrations by local groups or bands from the British army and navy: Devere's Novelty Company, the Cape Town Amateur Band (*Argus*, 21/6/1887), the "Christy Minstrel Troupe of H.M.S. Raleigh"²⁹, and the "Royal Scots Variety Company"³⁰. This confirms that black face minstrelsy was a necessary part of any entertainment at the Cape in the 1880s, but there is no notice in Cape Town's newspapers of any visit by an American troupe. It is actually in 1890 that a touring group of African-Americans, Orpheus McAdoo's Virginia Jubilee Singers, stopped at the Cape. On the whole, between July 1890 and June 1898, they were to spend about 5 years in South Africa and it is highly probable that some of their members, through contact with groups of coloured serenaders in Cape Town, contributed to the definitive inclusion of the Coon as the central character in New Year festivals.

Orpheus McAdoo's Virginia Jubilee Singers opened at the Vaudeville Theater in Cape Town on June 30, 1890 and closed their South African tour again at the Cape on January 25, 1892³¹. They returned in June 1895 and the company remained in South Africa until 1898, not without facing many problems and undergoing changes³². The sources mentioning concerts by "Jubilee Singers" in "1887" emphasize that members of the Singers established a close relationship with coloured musicians of Cape Town. Veit Erlmann writes that at least one singer, tenor Will P. Thompson, after directing for a while the Diamond Minstrels in Kimberley (and singing with the Colonial Concert Company and the Philharmonic Society), re-joined Mac Adoo's Virginia Jubilee Singers to leave them again at the beginning of 1898, when he settled in Cape Town and performed with "[...] the Cape Town based, predominantly 'coloured' Buffalo Glee and Concert Company with I. Bud-M'belle [...]" (Erlmann 1991: 36, 50). Given the length of Mac Adoo's Singers' stay in South Africa and the time they spent in Cape Town, taking into account the association of Will Thompson, until his death in 1900, with Capetonian entertainers, one may wonder if the American performers who made friends with the Dantu brothers³³ in the 1890s were not members of the Virginia Jubilee Singers, one of them being possibly Will Thompson. The fact that one of the companies organized by Will P. Thompson and Isaiah Bud-Mbelle, the Diamond Minstrels, played for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee could bring some credit to this hypothesis, although the concert took place in Kimberley in 1893 (Coplan 1985: 41).

The creolization of the Coon

It is therefore over a period of almost half a century that Cape Town's New Year festivals progressively integrated minstrel elements. However, even at the turn of the century, those elements were far from being exclusive of other forms of entertainment. "Minstrel Show" programmes often included variety

acts and even renditions of classical European music favourites and singing of operatic arias. The Virginia Jubilee Singers repertoire was composed of religious hymns, Coon songs, glees and, at least on the evening of October 17, 1890, in King Williamstown, an air from Wagner's Tannhauser (Erlmann 1991: 35). When the first organized carnivals were held in stadia, they included Coon troupes, of course, but also, groupes of disguised revellers sporting costumes of a totally different inspiration: the Firemen of the Darktown Brigade were there, a good illustration of the "mixture" prevailing then, since they wore firemen's uniforms but called themselves a "Coon troupe"; the Rosebuds and the Princess Escort Masquerading Troupe had period costumes; the American Sporting Troupe played the "Wild Indians", with masks, bows and arrows, but "hospital nurses" also marched within their ranks³⁴.

The first carnivals staged a large variety of troupes: there were the Coons and the Atjas (American Indians), but there were also the Glee Parties and the "Privates". The latter had a "more dignified" behaviour and "where the coons blacken their faces, the privates are more serious and they whiten their faces as much as possible, put on beauty spots and often wear wigs." (*Cape Times*, 23/12/1937). They played "Cherry Pickers", "Lords of London", "Bull Fighters", "Beau Brummels", "Spanish Noblemen" and "Spanish Mountaineers Outlaws", "Cattle Thieves", "Mexican Cow Boys", "Sea Pirates", "Greek King's Bodyguard", etc.³⁵. It is at the end of the 1930s that the Privates fade out and that the Coon becomes the dominant character. There was an attempt to artificially revive the Privates in 1953-1954, but it does not seem to have roused much interest, may be because it could have been seen as a follow-up on the parade of historical troupes on the occasion of the Van Riebeeck Festival in 1952. After World War II, alongside the Coons, there remained only the Atjas and the "Bits and Pieces" or the "Odds and Ends" who consist of small groups in rags or heterogeneous dress.

Among the Privates, were also "African Warriors": "Matabele Warriors", "Kikuyu Warriors" and "Zulu Warriors" and there was one instance at least, in 1909, when efforts were made to include African dancers in a carnival programme, the "Kafir Dance", however, "had to be abandoned on account of the opposition of the coloured missionaries" (*Cape Times*, 1/1/1909: 8). At the beginning also, it seems that Christmas Choirs and Malay Choirs were not seen as separate as they are today from the minstrel troupes. For example, the College Boys, a *singkoor*, sang at the Green Point Track in 1924 (*Argus*, 3/1/1924); competitions for brass bands were organized in 1907, 1908 and 1909; and, for many years, Christmas bands continued to accompany *nagtroepe* and *klopse* on their New Year's Eve marches (Aschman 1948). In addition to the variety of troupe types, competitions and shows were also more diverse than nowadays, and one could admire lantern processions, stilt walkers and dancers. The latter competed in the "buck and wing", "cake walk" (single or double), "clog dancing", "step dancing" categories and "Eastern dances" featured in 1908. It is at the end of the 1930s, again, that dance competitions are deleted from the carnival programme.

Not only did the style of dress change and the dance competitions disappear, music and songs also transformed. The element of novelty was always important and the "hits" of the day usually found their way to Cape Town's stadia. But a double process was at work: not every popular song was adopted by the Coons and some of those which were retained remained in their repertoire long after their popularity had waned elsewhere. Moreover, the songs were often reworked and included in pot-pourris which appeared like an original bricolage of material gleaned on the international pop music market. This means that, although new songs could be adopted and performed every year, they were given a particular form, inserted in a special local mode of expression which conferred on them a particular signification in the local Cape Town context. Musical instruments used to accompany marching troupes or to back singers also changed. At the beginning, string bands were the rule and, among the percussions, the "bones" were frequently mentioned. The bones seem to have progressively given way to the tambourines; and the string bands that still share the stage with Malay Choirs in competitions, have been succeeded by brass bands. When interviewing Capetonians who have been involved for a long time in the Coons, at the question "what have been the most important musical changes in the history of the carnival?", the answer was invariably the passage from string bands to brass bands, without any reference to the styles of music, nor any precise information as to when this passage occurred. However it probably happened during the 1950s. Another evolution that took place in music played during carnivals is the introduction of Afrikaans songs. From the start, it was noted that "with regards to the songs, it was a pity that nearly all of these were of THE AMERICAN COON variety; and that hardly a single Afrikaner song was heard throughout the afternoon or evening." (*Cape Times*, 3/1/1908: 3). After World War II, competitions were introduced for Afrikaans liedjies and Afrikaans moppies.

In brief, the main lines of change that affected Cape Town's New Year festivals were the following: during the second half of the nineteenth century, minstrel elements became integrated in Serenaders' and klopse's performances and affected both their way of presenting themselves (dress and make-up) and their musical productions (style of playing, instruments -- banjo and bones in particular --, repertoire). At the beginning of the twentieth century, minstrelsy had become an integral part of the aesthetics of the New Year festivals; it did feature in the competitions which were organized in stadia, but did not exclude other forms of masquerading. In the 1920s and 1930s carnivals offered their audiences a wide variety of entertainment and music. It is between the end of the 1930s and the beginning of the 1950s that carnivals took the form that they have, more or less, kept until today. The Coon became the dominant character; items in competition were fixed in a way that was not going to change much later³⁶. Dances disappeared. Afrikaans liedjies and moppies were added. Later, brass bands took over string bands. In other words, over about a century, between mid-nineteenth century and mid-twentieth century, there occurred a steady process of "coonification" of the New Year carnival.

I would like to suggest that it is this global and protracted process that has to be taken into consideration when one tries to understand the social meaning of Cape Town's New Year festivals. Therefore, it may be useful to present some hypotheses relative to the local understanding and signification of Coon troupes, before assessing briefly the amount of political interference that the carnival had to suffer from successive South African governments and Cape Town city councils.

A way to keep in touch with a wider world of modernity

The origins of the New Year festivals pre-date the emancipation of the slaves. Then, Christmas, a summer season, New Year celebrations and holidays for the slaves coincided and were an occasion for building and strengthening social links within a community of persons coming from various cultural backgrounds and grouped together by the sharing of the same condition. There is nothing specifically South African in the "invention" of festivals and the creation of informal organizations to construct a community liable to make sense for its members in a situation where their inclusion into this particular group has been imposed by force from the outside. The same type of phenomenon was part and parcel of strategies of "adaptive survival" (Bastide 1967) in most slave societies, especially in the West-Indies and in North-America (Martin 1991).

After the slaves were set free, there happened a fusion between the celebration of the emancipation anniversary and the New Year. New Year festivals, picnics, weddings were times for singing and dancing, for visiting friends and partaking in food and drinks, traditions which are common to civilisations of Asia, Africa and Europe and may have provided one of the "overlapping areas" from which creole manifestations can develop to form an original culture (Martin 1991). It appears to have been the case in Cape Town also, where social links within the community constituted by former slaves and former political exiles were consolidated through such social practices. In the middle of the nineteenth century, elements entering in the "creole" blend were, as far as one may know, mostly from European and from Eastern origins. Religious Muslim songs and music played to accompany *ratiep* (or *khalifa*³⁷) had roots in India and the East-Indies (Desai 1983). Lay musical repertoires seem to have been in part European, derived from Dutch songs, English glees or popular songs, but their rendition certainly encompassed Eastern techniques, such as the *karienkél* (ornamentation of melodies which is still one of the main traits of Malay Choirs' interpretations of *nederlandse liedjies*, Desai 1983). Original creole songs such as the *ghoemaliédjies* had already been created (Winberg 1992). Dances using body languages from the East took place at picnics or in the streets (interview). Some of the instruments played were European, but it should be remembered that violins, guitars, mandolines had already been adopted by musicians in Asia and that they may have reached South Africa both from Europe and Asia, accompanied by playing techniques peculiar to one region or the other. As a matter of fact, Asian

adaptations of European music and instruments (such as the *ra'king* lute) most probably formed a part of the Eastern elements that entered into Cape Town's creole inventions. The emblematic *ghoema* drum is a good example; although it may be related to drums from Java, Sunda Islands or Malaysia (Desai 1983: 32-35; Kirby 1939), it is made from a barrel and is similar to drums found in creole societies where liquor was produced, like the West Indies; finally its very name sounds amazingly close to the pan-bantu root *ngoma* which connotes drum, drumming, dancing and music in general. If the *ghoema* has become a symbol of Cape Town's creole culture, it may be precisely because Asia, Africa and Europe meet under its skin.

Consequently, it is at a time when a creole culture, characterized both by social relations and by cultural productions, had already been formed, two centuries after the arrival of the first settlers and of the first slaves, and their meeting with aboriginal people, that minstrel influences became felt. It is therefore this creole culture that provided the substratum on which minstrelsy was grafted. The invention of a creole culture at the Cape (including the creation of the Afrikaans language) took place among people (whether they were *khoekoe*, slaves brought mostly from Asia or political exiles sent to Southern Africa by the Dutch) who were dominated by European settlers, then among their descendants whose social situation was always one of subordination and who, from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1980s, were progressively deprived of whatever rights they may have enjoyed at the time of emancipation. This creole culture was a means to build social links within this group and to strengthen its cohesion. It was a way to give meaning to these social links by, on the one hand, signifying the inventive capacities of its members, therefore their humanity, and, on the other, by providing an original channel for expressing their situation as people whose experience was one of oppression in a context of intense cultural exchanges, whatever the dominant ideologies of inequality and separation may have been.

Minstrel elements were added to certain manifestations of this creole culture. After almost one century, they became dominant in one type of manifestation, the *klopse* carnival, although they certainly also influenced *singkore* (as can be seen in their performance of the moppies). Consequently one may assume that the social meaning of the main public event where this creole culture was displayed, the New Year festival, was not radically altered by the inclusion of elements of minstrelsy, but, on the contrary, that minstrelsy contributed to refine its meaning³. The question to be asked is: what signification did the selective integration of Coon minstrelsy, as it was locally re-interpreted and re-enacted to become dominant in post-World War II carnivals, add to social links and creole practices in nineteenth and twentieth centuries' Cape Town?

The answer is complex indeed. First, the American origins of black face minstrelsy must be remembered. The Coon was an offensive caricature of African-American southern rural slaves

brought to the stage by white comedians for the enjoyment of white patrons. Both the word and the type of show it served to name were racist and based on the belief in the inferiority of African-Americans, who were called "niggers", "negroes", "darkies", and also "colored people". The identification of South African Coloureds with the Coon seems to confirm an attitude of self-depreciation that was rampant in the community, especially in the under-privileged classes (O'Toole 1973; Stone 1971: 43; Stone 1991).

However, one should also consider other aspects of minstrelsy when seen from Cape Town, and how they evolved. Minstrelsy came from overseas, it was one of the main types of entertainment at the end of the nineteenth century, it was therefore fashionable and provided an opening to the world beyond South Africa. That it was fashionable gave it a particular aura when it first reached Cape Town. For people who were already considered musicians *par excellence*, and able at playing all sorts of popular dances, becoming minstrels amounted to keeping up with their times. When minstrel shows were no longer internationally in favour, every new style appearing on the pop music market was eventually integrated in what had become Cape Town's own minstrelsy: American standard songs of the 1930s as popularized by jazz singers, rock, soul music, latin music, and today rap, disco and techno. The aptitude to assimilate new styles, to re-interpret certain songs and to fit them in the minstrel format is definitely one of the most important features of the Coon carnival³. In this process, films were important purveyors of new tunes. The bioscope (cinema) was a centre of District Six's social life (Jeppie 1990; Nasson 1989). Coon captains used to go to the Star or the Avalon to see if there was anything they could use for the next carnival. Of David Petersen, the leader of the famous Spes Bona Coons, it was reported that:

"So keen is he to do the best for his troupe, that throughout the year he goes either to the Star or Avalon cinema in Hanover Street every Friday and Saturday to pick up catchy tunes for carnival time or ideas for brightening up costumes or the dance and solo numbers his club will present at New Year." (Aschman 1951).

Characters and costumes were reproduced from popular films: cow boys, Indians, outlaws of every description. The Coon type itself was given a new impetus by the fact that the first talking film featured a black face minstrel hero: when heard for the first time in Cape Town in 1929, Al Jolson's initial phrase "Hello Mam'", in Alan Crosland's "The Jazz Singer" (1927), ensured the victory of the "talky" and gave the Capetonian Coon a new flavour of modernity. Identifying with the American stage minstrel, then with the cinema "jazz singer"; framing all new fashions in popular music within the carnival was definitely a way to signify one's participation in modernity.

The Coon as a figure of ambivalence

The Coon's and the popular music's modernities were not, however, just another form of modernity. Minstrelsy included aspects of African-American culture. At the beginning, it made a mockery of it, but the success of the Minstrel Show persuaded groups of African-American artists to make up their faces and don worn tailcoats. We saw that the entertainers who probably had the strongest impact on Cape Town coloured musicians belonged to such a troupe which, in addition to minstrel songs, also introduced South African audiences to spirituals and other types of songs and did not hesitate to sing parts of operas. In South Africa, some of the first groups of local minstrels had African, European and coloured members (Coplan 1985: 41). Later, jazz and swing became popular in Cape Town, as well as other styles originating either directly or indirectly in the African-American communities of the United States: rhythm and blues, rock, soul music, disco, rap, funk, techno; that is the "mestiza" music which came to dominate the world of entertainment after radio and records, then television, became the main media of communication. There appears to be at least two sides at the Cape Town Coon's passion for fashionable pop music. It demonstrates the will and capacity to participate in modernity, at every stage of its development. It shows adhesion to an alternative form of modernity, a modernity which did not conform to ruling South African canons: in particular because it was a non-white modernity, a mestiza modernity.

The aesthetics of the Coon carnival are one of heterogeneity; they associate step dances and instruments that come from the nineteenth century with the latest productions in music or in film; they combine elements that have clearly their roots in Cape Town's creole culture and traits which are borrowed whenever possible from across the oceans. They are symbolized by the "copy-cats" who have always been dear to Cape Town's carnival audiences: Cape Town's Charlie Chaplin; Cape Town's Al Jolson; Cape Town's Paul Robeson; the coloured Harry Lauder; the coloured Bobby Breen⁴⁰; the coloured Caruso... It is the aesthetics of heterogeneity which may help understand some of the social significations involved in Cape Town's New Year festival and the place Coons occupy at the center of it. Heterogeneity is a reflection of the formation process of a creole culture and is therefore emblematic of those who have carried and developed it for several centuries, of those who, in the words of librarian and trustee of the District Six Museum Foundation, Vincent Kolbe, "have come from the coloured experience". For those who were confronted with the closure of South Africa during the apartheid years, the accumulation of discriminatory laws which clearly signified that the rulers considered coloured people as a "negative group... the left-overs"⁴¹, the eclecticism underpinning an aesthetics of heterogeneity was one way of keeping in touch with a world of ever increasing modernity and ever more intense cultural mixing. The progressive "coonification" of the carnival eliminated most elements which carried references to the European past, or to cultures that were not perceived as mixed. Attempts

at reviving them, as in 1952, 1953 and 1954, failed by lack of popular support. The Atjas remained, because they had become symbols of street culture and were a special enjoyment for children who at the same time loved and feared them⁴², but they were, like all other troupes, given a severe blow by the Group Areas Act and the destruction of District Six. Finally the predilection for opera was incorporated in minstrelsy. Solo singers, when not "crooning" in the manner of American stars, sung their item with an operatic voice. In 1994, a singer in Coon uniform was acclaimed after singing "Nessun Dorma" from Giacomo Puccini's "Turandot", and one of the highlights of the 1995 carnival was when James Bhemgee, Dennis Weindell and Fuad Sawyer played the "Three Tenors" for the Penny Pinchers All Stars...

In the end, the Coon appears as the figure of ambivalence (Stone 1991: 98). He embodies at the same time elements which express self-depreciation affecting important numbers of coloured people in Cape Town, and elements which symbolically contradict the inferiority feeling by building bridges with modernities invented in creole societies and by identifying with their musical ambassadors⁴³. If James O'Toole is right when he writes: "Coloureds are taught two mythical lessons: (1) white is positive and black is negative; and (2) racial purity is superior to mixing" (O'Toole 1973: 27), then Coon troupes and their performances look very much like a discreet rejection of these myths. This is probably why the carnival have survived the commercialization process, restrictions of all sorts to the freedom of marching in the city, and political manoeuvres aiming at making it into a demonstration of what James O'Toole calls the "mythical lessons" taught to Coloureds.

Apartheid and the coon

As far as we can know from written reports, the three first carnivals, in 1907, 1908 and 1908 went smoothly. It is most likely though that to klopse members and their friends, the big affair then was not so much competitions in stadia as marching and singing in the streets, visiting friends and sharing tafels. This attitude may have prevailed as long as District Six was inhabited; the more so since many people were too poor to afford buying an entry ticket to the stadia. When public competitions resumed in 1920, things had already begun to change. The organizers of the Green Point Track carnival were Dr. A. Abdurahman and S. Reagon, leaders of the African Political Organization (APO) that was to be, for several decades, the main coloured political body struggling, even if without much success, against the adoption and implementation of segregationist laws affecting coloured people. Benefits from the gate takings at the Track were presented to charitable organizations; it became a matter of principle that whenever any profit was made from carnivals, donations should be given to charities. The involvement of APO's leaders in the Coons lasted until 1940 when A.E. Abdurahman⁴⁴ was the chairman of the Western Province Jubilee Carnival Board.

In 1921, a rival carnival was held, under the auspices of the Cape Town Cricket Club, at the Western Province Rugby Ground, Newlands. It was advertized as a "Monster Minstrel Carnival" and the ad indicated that there was a "special reserved area" where seats cost three times the price of the regular admission (*Argus*, 31/12/1920; *Cape Times*, 1/1/1921). This marked the beginnings of segregation within carnival venues. In 1923, carnivals at the Pier (*Argus*, 29/12/1922) and at the Green Point Track had "reserved seats for Europeans". From then on, segregation steadily crept up on the carnival. In the 1950s touring Coon troupes performing in Port Elizabeth, East London, Kimberley, Bloemfontein had to put on shows for Europeans only (*Cape Times* 5/2/1951; 15/11/1956). In Cape Town, arenas where the Coons used to compete were closed to them because they were located in "white areas": Rosebank Stadium in 1953, the Green Point Track in 1967. Certain venues, the Athlone Stadium in particular from 1971, were reserved for "non-white" spectators. In places where multi-racial audiences were still allowed, organizers had not only to isolate Whites from "non-Whites" but also to provide "separate amenities".

The authorities imposed segregation on carnival competitions held in stadia. They also tried to modify their organization and transform their content. A leitmotiv of white opinion on the carnival was that it was poorly organized and propositions were made to improve it, suggesting that it be taken over by other bodies or by the City Council. I.D. du Plessis was extremely consistent in that opinion:

*"The carnival spirit, which was strongly evident in the abandon, the good spirits and joyous dancing of the competitors, was marred by faulty organisation; and yet one realised that here was a material for a carnival which, if properly organised, would be one of Cape Town biggest attractions during the festive season."*⁴⁵.

During the war, between 1941 and 1945, carnivals were organized by an official from the City Council, the Municipal Manager of Beach Entertainments. For a long time (as press reports go, from 1925 to 1973) prizes were handed out by or in the presence of officials: City councillors, Mayors, Mayoresses, MPs, the Commissioner for Coloured Affairs (I.D. du Plessis in 1960, F.L. Gaum in 1973), foreign diplomats (including the French Consul, Jean Ortoli in 1968), a Chairman of the Executive of the Coloured Representative Council (Tom Swartz in 1970). The presence of these personages cannot be simply interpreted as an endorsement of the Coons as representatives of Cape Town's original culture; it was also, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, an indication that the Coon carnival was seen from officialdom in the perspective of the type of coloured identity that suited apartheid theory and practice. This was even more evident when the participation of Coon troupes and Malay Choirs in the 1952 Van Riebeeck Festival was required, and it raised a heated debate among cultural activists⁴⁶.

From this point of view, the carnival had to abide with ideas of Afrikaner superiority and with segregation regulations; it had to demonstrate that coloured people were different but that their only source of culture was white. Two major stakes were involved in the carnivals: language and Cape Town's identity. Although coloured people living in the Cape Peninsula have Afrikaans for their mother tongue (Stone 1991), the language of the Coons was mostly English: songs were sung in English⁴⁷, the troupes' names were in English. From the beginning of organized competitions, white observers complained about the lack of Afrikaans songs (or songs in "kleurling taal") in the carnival (*Cape Times*, 3/1/1908; *Cape Herald*, 7/1/1967) and pressures were exerted on the Coons to the end that they sing Afrikaans songs in competition (Aschman 1949). In 1949, in spite of the reluctance of troupe captains⁴⁸, two new items were introduced⁴⁹: the Afrikaans combined chorus and the Afrikaans moppie. They are still part of the carnival programmes today.

The battle for the street was tougher. New Year festivals were born in the street. Parades in various Cape Town districts and in the city were an integral part of the celebrations. It was right in the center of town that the old year was buried in the nineteenth century. And, as soon as competitions were organized at Green Point, Coon troupes spectacularly marched to the Track from District Six and southern suburbs, crossing the city on the way. Many testimonies, including those recorded in 1994, link the marches in the heart of Cape Town with a feeling of possession. "We -- meaning coloured people -- are Cape Town" is a common statement, often continued by "without us, Cape Town would have had no history and no culture". In the conditions of hardening segregation, then strict apartheid that prevailed from the beginning of the century to the 1980s, parading the streets of the town centre was therefore construed as an affirmation of the right of coloured people over Cape Town, over all of it; as a claim that the Mother City in fact belonged to them. Thus the restriction and suppression of the right to march in Cape Town was logically understood as an insult added to the injury of eviction and dispossession under the Group Areas Act. The City Traffic Department granted permits to each troupe to parade through the streets in November, December and January. But the number of Coons on the road was limited at 200 per troupe (*Cape Times*, 8/1/1951). Traffic was never stopped to make the marches easier; on the contrary, dislocation of automobile traffic was the most frequent excuse used to limit the right of marching, as in 1955 and 1956. Then, when Green Point was declared a "white area" and the use of the Track was forbidden for carnivals, parades in central Cape Town became even more difficult: the more so since people started being expelled from District Six and other neighbourhoods to be relocated in the Cape Flats, in places from where it was no longer possible to walk to the centre. In these new conditions, transport had to be organized, and of course renting buses added to the costs of running a troupe to such an extent that it acted as another strong deterrent to parading in the centre. Finally, in 1977 all Coon marches, in any part of Cape Town, were forbidden under the Riotous Assembly Act. Parades in the City centre were allowed again in 1989 and

attracted huge crowds, after permission had been given to use the new Green Point stadium for a Coon carnival (Cape Times, 4/1/1989).

Through the tribulations of the Coons, one may read yet another history of how segregation and apartheid entered every sphere of life⁵⁰, of how the government attempted to limit the expression of a form of popular culture while trying to use it to their own ends. The mere fact that carnivals went on from the 1920s to the 1990s bears witness to the endurance and resilience of the Coons and of the people who supported them. Sometimes, they provided occasions for outbursts of anger, when the social and political context spurred disappointment and discontent. The 1886 riots that developed following the New Year festival can be seen as a forerunner of what was to happen sporadically later⁵¹. Carnivals in Cape Town must have been, as elsewhere, a privileged occasion for singing satirical songs and ridiculing those in power; such words and behaviours, however, were not likely to be recorded in the local press. Political songs were created in the 1880s (Bickford-Smith 1995: 188; Winberg 1992: 93). Shamil Jeppie reports that in 1952 a popular song announced "Van Riebeeck's thing is finished" (Jeppie 1990: 61); he also quotes Alex La Guma who saw in 1957 "a trouper, 'with a picture of Herr Strijdom sewed to the seat of his pants'" (Jeppie 1990: 61). Such expressions of overt opposition, even though isolated, may have been much more frequent. Disturbances did feature in the newspapers, and it is striking that the sequence of troubles linked to carnivals more or less corresponds with a sequence of important political events. In 1948, or soon after, violence erupted during the carnival: the Mayoress had to present the prizes from behind a steel-mesh screen (Pinnock 1984: 162)⁵². In 1964, there was a brawl involving rival troupes over the award of trophies, the police intervened but were then attacked by spectators and showered with bottles. In the streets, cars were attacked by Coons and their drivers molested (Cape Times, 6 & 8/1/1964). In 1975, policemen were attacked by revellers coming out of the Athlone carnival (Cape Times, 9/1/1975) and when they showed up again at Athlone stadium in 1977, they were welcomed by hostile cries⁵³. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, incidents multiplied when Coons smeared white passers-by in the streets, sat in the "white section" of trains or threw various objects at the police (Argus, 27/1/1977; Argus, 2/1/1979; Argus, 27/12/1982).

New Year festivals as contested terrains

That there were occurrences of trouble, violence and even open contestation does not mean that Coon carnivals can be interpreted as "weapons of the weak", as media of resistance, even in a subdued or symbolic form. However, they were not either simply degrading manifestations of alienation in the course of which people were "celebrating their enslavement for the amusement of the Herrenvolk."⁵⁴ If the Coon is, as has been suggested, a figure of ambivalence, the carnivals were a two-sided affair where adaptation and resistance to the system were

inextricably intertwined.

Coon troupes and carnival boards evidently conformed to segregation laws, apartheid and, especially, to the Group Areas Act. They complied with regulations that were imposed upon them, not without much grumbling and foot-dragging, but not sometimes without complacency. This is exemplified, for instance, in the declarations of one carnival organizer, J.W.G. Allen, when anti-apartheid groups advocated a boycott of the 1952 Van Riebeeck Festival. He insisted on displaying the "festival spirit" as "interpreted by the coloured people" (Cape Times, 27/2/1952). This generated a heated debate, replicating in the cultural field controversies opposing political organizations⁵⁵. The same type of controversy developed on other occasions, notably in 1977, after the Soweto upheaval, and in 1985, when the Western Cape was boiling with student unrest and mass action. Appeals were made not to celebrate the New Year festivals; but the carnivals eventually took place. For the organizers, the financial stakes may have been too high to adhere to the boycott; some of them probably did not want to incur the wrath of the authorities. On the part of the rank and file revellers, the carnival clearly played the role of a safety valve: it was the time when one could let go and forget about 52 weeks of humiliation; they could not see any reason why they should have renounced the one occasion they had during the year to really enjoy themselves and reach "die tariek", to forget about it all.

At the same time though, their stubbornness in celebrating the New Year, whatever happened, had another dimension. A feeling of political powerlessness prevailed among coloured people, especially in the working class (O'Toole 1973: 115). But it was counterbalanced by a feeling of belonging, which did not correspond to the type of "coloured identity" the government wanted to engineer, and was materialized, expressed and perceived in the New Year festivals. A theme which runs like a red thread in non-directive interviews conducted in 1994 is articulated as the imperative necessity to "preserve the culture". By this is meant an ensemble of values and practices which ties together the members of a community. For at least two sets of reasons, the New Year festivals form an important, albeit definitely not exclusive, part of this ensemble. Firstly, because they were, from the beginning, during slavery, an occasion for establishing social links and giving, then consolidating, social cohesion to a collectivity of people brought together not from their own free will but by forced deportation and enclosure within the bounds of a common condition. When one looks at the organization and functioning of today's Coon troupes and Malay Choirs, it becomes quite evident that they still play the same role⁵⁶.

Secondly because, from a comparative perspective, Cape Town New Year festivals appear to be renewal festivals, a transposition in South Africa's climatic and social conditions of festivals celebrated in many parts of the world as a cyclical reaffirmation of the continuity of life, in the form of a collective rite of passage in which change is placed under the sign of recurrence. Writes anthropologist Marc Augé:

"The momentary coincidence of the singularity of many specific itineraries with the global character of one collective history, this is what passage festivals celebrate." (Augé 1988: 8).

Cape Town New Year festivals display features which are common to renewal and passage festivals all over the world: the use of masks (that is an inter-related ensemble of facial decorations or make-up, costume and other accessories), the importance of music and dance, the sharing of food and drinks, the organisation in identifiable groups, the competitive spirit, the freedom to act in unusual and normally objectionable ways, and even some behaviours such as smearing oneself and other people with dark and sticky matters. These festivals provide occasions when one can be at the same time oneself and another; when one, who cannot normally escape one's condition, can choose to be the other he wants to be. Cape Town New Year festivals indeed provide such an occasion, and the final collective choice was the Coon, with his companion the "American Indian", complex figures able to personify ambivalence for people living in a "world of dilemma" (O'Toole 1973: 28) where they were hardly free to choose what to do with their own life. These festivals, coming back every year at a fixed time historically associated with freedom, made also evident the permanence of the community of those who celebrated them.

From 1823, and probably before, until the 1990s, New Year festivals have taken place in Cape Town. Individuals have disappeared, aesthetic characteristics have changed, organizations have evolved, in the twentieth century, many Coon troupes, Malay Choirs and Christmas Choirs have disappeared, others have been created, but every year on January first and Tweede Nuwejaar people marched, as much as they were allowed to, and sung in the streets, entertained friends and visitors, imagined extraordinary costumes and partook of *tafels*. The meaning of recurrence is clearly explained in interviews. At the initial prompt used in non-directive interviews, "what do the Coons mean to you?", a great number of interviewees reacted by saying something like: "My father was in the Coons, I am in the Coons, and my children will be in the Coons. The Coons will never die"⁵⁷. The Coons, and the New Year festivals, therefore appear as a proclamation of an indestructible capacity of survival. The evidence, dancing in the streets, that an oppressed community of people who felt like a minority of "in-betweeners" (interviews), could continue to exist in spite of all the tribulations they had to endure.

One troupe, at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, was called the "Famous Invincible Darkies". That was quite an eloquent manner of associating several traits which figure prominently in the carnival. Darkies: the interiorization of the stigma with a pinch of self-mockery (O'Toole 1973: 111-112) that may help to diffuse it; and, at the same time, the identification with a world of modernity and a *mestiza* culture. Famous: the affirmation of the creativity of members of the community, thence of their humanity; a creativity that translates in the emergence

of talents during carnivals and in their ultimate recognition by audiences beyond the limits of South Africa⁵⁸. Invincible (as a matter of fact an extremely rare occurrence in troupes' names): the capacity to endure and survive.

Assessing the social impact of carnival in Trinidad and Tobago, Kim Johnson writes "Carnival has meant different things to different people" (Johnson 1984: 134). The same obviously goes for Cape Town's New Year festivals. They provided an arena where contradictory forces interweaved and fought. They constituted a "contested terrain" (Jules-Rosette, Martin 1997) where one of the highest stakes was the definition of an identity. In the Cape region, a group of people, born as a group, and even if under duress, from the South African particular situation, was confronted with recurrent attempts by South African ruling classes to impose upon them boundaries and negative stereotypes, to deny their history and culture, their capacity to make history and culture, and their share in the creation of a creole culture. They invented a festival, original although related to general types of festivals found all over the world, where they could symbolically express their main concerns: building a community and a culture and preserving them. Those festivals therefore enacted one conception of a communal identity (just as language did, Stone 1991) encompassing all sorts of ambivalences. Political authorities tried to exploit the festivals in order to give credence to their own beliefs in a hierarchy of human beings and in their necessary separation. The ambivalence of the Coon gave him a plasticity that allowed him to accommodate both discourses on coloured identity (Martin 1995a, 1995c): the racist one, implying inferiority and dependence on what was unduly presented as a "white superior culture"; the communal one, based on a feeling of belonging but implicitly defined by an openness towards the world (thence the possibility to add, fuse or change identities), systematic practices of blending cultural elements from various cultures, and the will to participate in every stage of modernity.

The Coon was the locus of a brutal but disguised confrontation; he could not be a fighter; but he survived and with him survives, in the new South Africa, a silent discourse on one communal identity.

NOTES

*. I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Gerald L. Stone for comments and corrections he made on an earlier version of this text. However I only remain responsible for its content, and its possible weaknesses.

1. When dealing with the Coon carnival and Cape Town's New Year festivals as a whole, one is confronted with words loaded with history. The word Coon is commonly used in English, without any negative connotation, by most participants to mean both the member of a carnival troupe, the central character of the carnival, and sometimes even a troupe (it is frequent to hear a captain say "my Coon", meaning his troupe). Coon is derived from raccoon, and was used in 19th Century USA as a racist designation for African-Americans (the stereotype combining their alleged taste for raccoon meat and their pretended resemblance with the animal). Because of its original meaning and how it translated in South African Society, many have rejected the use of "Coon", either condemning altogether the word and the carnival, or suggesting that the word be replaced by "minstrel". In Afrikaans, the Coons are referred to as *klopse* (from the English "clubs", most probably because, at the end of the 19th century, a number of coon troupes were born from sporting and social clubs), and it has sometimes been suggested that *klopse* be used instead of Coons. However, in this paper, I have found it more convenient to stick to participants' usage for the sake of accuracy and simplicity, rather than invent from the outside an artificial "political correctness".

2. District Six was a predominantly coloured neighbourhood located close to the city centre. Although it became overpopulated and somewhat dilapidated, it was home to a very active social and cultural life and the cradle of the New Year festivals. It was declared a "white zone" under the Group Areas Act and its inhabitants were expelled and resettled in other neighbourhoods, mostly in the Cape Flats, sometimes as far as thirty kilometers from the town centre (see: Jeppie 1990; Jeppie, Soudien 1990).

3. The abrogation of all racist and apartheid laws has obviously transformed the relationship between festival organizers and public authorities, especially after the unification of the different carnival boards in a Carnival Development Committee in 1994 and the election of a new Cape Town City Council. However the Committee still has to deal with the Council in matters regarding the organization of the carnival.

4. The New Year festivals result from the coincident activities of Coons, Malay Choirs and Christmas Choirs, which are closely associated in the minds of most participants and spectators. However, space does not allow this paper to envision the New Year

festivals in their totality; it will concentrate on the Coons and only cursory references will be made to Malay Choirs and Christmas choirs.

5. Dr. H. Kotwal, Chairman of the Cape Muslim Assembly, Argus, 29/12/1973.

6. Letters to the editor. Cape Herald, 11/1/1975.

7. This point of view was vehemently articulated in The Torch, a Cape Town weekly supporting the Non-European Unity Movement and its programme of non-collaboration with white institutions. A comment on the 1948 carnival read: "[...] *The annual throes of the death of a people's spirit in the form of this volcano of primitive ritual-dance are a welcome sight to slave-drivers.*" ("X-Ray of the News by Dr. Pangloss", The Torch, January 5, 1948, p. 2).

8. Dr. I.D. du Plessis, an academic "expert" on "Malay culture" turned Commissioner for Coloured Affairs, played a prominent role in this respect. On the one hand, he stressed that the carnival represented an asset for Cape Town (Cape Times, 6/1/1936); he was instrumental in the foundation of the Cape Malay Choir Board. On the other, he explained that his work at the head of the Department of Coloured Affairs "although done on a basis of separation [...] did not push the coloured man away but clasped him, as a Westerner, even more strongly, to the West" ("Coloured people belong to the West", Cape Times, 26/8/1960). On I.D. du Plessis, see Jeppie 1987.

9. Compared to the vast literature devoted to festivals around the world, in particular of the carnivalesque type, texts dealing with, or at least taking into account Cape Town's Coon carnival are amazingly few. It goes without saying that my debt to these pioneering works is enormous, and I wish to acknowledge it here: Howard 1994; Jeppie 1990; Jeppie, Levitan 1990; Layne 1992; O'Toole 1973; Stone 1971; Winberg 1992.

10. My research on "The New Year festivals in Cape Town" has been funded by the Fondation nationale des sciences politiques (Paris), the Institut français de recherches en Afrique (Nairobi), and the Institut français d'Afrique du Sud (Johannesburg), and supported by the English Department of the University of the Western Cape. Field work has been conducted in 1993 and 1994; it involved observation of the festivals and a series of non-directive interviews, as well as reading in the South African Library. It has, up to now, resulted in a video documentary (Martin 1995b), and a few articles (Martin 1995a; Martin forthcoming). I wish to thank the institutions that have made this research possible and all the Capetonians, too numerous to be mentioned here, without the generous help of whom such an investigation could not have been conducted.

11. 41 interviews have been recorded in 1994, several of them collective; the total number of interviewees was about 80.

12. Which does not mean, of course, that all changes in the Coons were caused by political events; only that they must be understood against the backdrop of political transformations.

13. Slavery lasted until 1833. It has been estimated that of all the slaves brought to South Africa, 36.40% came from India, 31.47% from the (Dutch) East Indies, 26.65% from Africa (of the latter, more than half were brought from Madagascar) (Da Costa, Davids 1994: 2; Shell 1994; Worden 1994).

14. Interestingly, Guy Fawkes' Day has been celebrated by coloured people until today. A nice etching by Heinrich Egersdörfer, titled "Coloured Orchestra" and possibly done in 1886 was published with the following caption: "It is Guy Fawkes, and we all know this coloured orchestra, which is going from door to door, collecting pennies. With drum, fiddle and squashbox, their main purpose is to make a noise, and who will doubt that they have succeeded?" (Rosenthal 1960). Interviews conducted in 1994 tend to indicate that Guy Fawkes is frequently seen as a prelude to the New Year (see also: Keeton 1987; O'Toole 1973: 103).

15. "New Year's Holidays", The Cape Times, January 4, 1896.

16. For instance, the Pumpkin Darkies came out of the Cape of Good Hope Sports Club, and the Highborn Coons, of the Roslyn Sporting Club.

17. George Manuel quotes: "[...] one old writer describing the event in 1888 said that their torchlight processions with 'impromptu bands innumerable' added 'to the grandeur of the funeral rites of the dead year' [...]" (Franck, Hatfield, Manuel 1967: 111); but the Cape Argus Weekly Edition of January 6, 1888, printed: "A Malay torchlight procession paraded the streets during the evening; but it was a sorry turn out, consisting of about thirty torch bearers and individuals with chinese lanterns, the cortege being escorted by a couple of policemen in order to preserve order" (p. 17).

18. A painting by James Yates, "Tweede Nuwe Jaar" (ca. 1905) represents Coons in District Six; the troupe's colours are hanging across the street; six men in top hat and tail coats, with large bow-ties and black and white facial make-up sing in front of a house while children are listening (South African Library, Readers' Digest Collection).

19. I wish to thank Mr. Gerald L. Stone for having given me a copy of his translation into English of this article by Jan Bouws.

20. In the Cape Times of January 10, 1959, Mr. Bert H. Hart (71 at the time of publication), life member of the Green Point Cricket Club, recalls how the first Coon Carnival competitions were organized at the Green Point Track "55 years ago" (that is in 1904, here the date is erroneous):

"The whole thing was the result of a gamble by a live-wire

Australian. He was Harry Coggins, whom some old-timers will remember as a Western Province cricketer. Harry, a member of the Green Point club, knew that the club's finances were at rock bottom.

Yet he persuaded club officials to spend about £100 - mostly on tick - on trophies for the Cape Coons. In those days they performed only sporadically. He suggested that a Coon Carnival should be held at the club's headquarters, the Green Point Track, and that the club should take any profits from that venture.

You will appreciate that £100 was a great deal of money in those days and there were some people who felt the gamble might prove costly. However, Harry was right. The Track was crowded and the carnival such a success that it became a regular feature ever after.

The Green Point Cricket Club was put back on its feet and all the trophies were paid for. I know that because I was the man who sold them to Harry. I used in those days to work for a Cape Town firm of silversmiths."

In the report published by the Argus on January 2, 1907, it is mentioned that the carnival was "inaugurated by the Green Point Cricket Club", which seems to substantiate this story.

21. "It was intended to close the coloured people's effort with the Water Carnival and Regatta at Kalk Bay; but it is now decided to finish off with a Grand Carnival on Green Point Track on Monday, 26th January, at eight o'clock." The A.P.O., January 17, 1920. See also The A.P.O., January 31, 1920.

22. "For the past two years a number of Coloured troupes held a Carnival on Green Point Track and handed the takings over to Charity. Last year the Cape Town and Wynberg Board of Aid benefited to the extent of over one hundred pounds. The Cape Town Cricket Club -- a white club -- ran a Coloured Carnival for its own benefit at Newlands. Whether that venture was a financial success or not, is not known. But, apparently, the Club saw more profits going into its pockets if it held the Carnival on Green Point Track than at Newlands, so it forestalled the Coloured Committee and booked the Track months ahead and held two Carnivals, one in the afternoon of 3rd January, and the other the evening of the 23rd January.

How much money the white Cricket Club made out of these Coloured troupes is a secret. The profits will probably be devoted to improving the stands on the cricket ground on which no Coloured person will be permitted to sit. [...]" "Exploiting the Coloured Troupes", The A.P.O., January 28, 1922.

23. For, if the spectators at the stadia pay to watch the Coons, the Coons themselves have to buy their outfit.

24. These activities were at the center of celebrations that took, and still take place in various countries when Winter yields to Spring, in Christian cultures either at Christmas or before Lent, sometimes both (d'Ayala, Boiteux 1988). Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiros analyzes how they were transported from Portugal to Brazil and how the Rio carnival developed and transformed from a European tradition to become a creole

celebration (Pereira de Queiroz 1992); a similar story can be told à propos of the Trinidad carnival (Martin 1996; The Social... 1984; Trinidad... 1988) and of most American or West-Indian ones.

25. Space does not allow for even a brief history of the birth of the minstrel show in the United States. A few words on the origins of the use of "coon" may however be useful here. A raccoon appears as the trickster who gains the better over the opossum in the song "Opossum up a gum tree", possibly the first slave song to be adapted and interpreted by a white American singer in the 1820s. This song and many others based on the rivalry between an opossum and a raccoon (including some versions of "Jim Crow") became widely used in a new form of entertainment developed by white comedians, which became known as the "Minstrel Show" (1843). One of the main characters of the Minstrel Show was the "Zip Coon", or "Dandy Jim", and Minstrels were sometimes called "Coon Minstrels". At the beginning, minstrels were white comedians who made up their faces with burnt cork and drew white circles around their eyes and mouth; later, black artists also created troupes of minstrels, but they too continued to make up their faces and dress in ragged tailcoats and top hats (see: Lott 1993; Nathan 1946, 1952, 1977; Toll 1974).

26. For instance, The Cape Mercantile Advertiser of September 20, 1869, announces a show by an "Amateur Coloured Troupe" to take place at the Old-Fellows' Hall, Plein Street, on the 20th September; among the items to be performed were: the overture of *Lucrece Borgia*, "When You and I Were Young, Margie", "De Darkies' Jubilee" and "Malingo Hoy, the Cape Town Coolie (Dutch-Mozambique Lingo)". Printed on the same page, another announcement advertized a show by the Cape Town Amateur Minstrels, also on the 20th September, at the Cape Town Institute, Burger Street, "to conclude with a New Negro Walk-round (written by Howard Clifton) 'A Jolly Place is Cape Town'".

27. See: Supplement to the Cape Argus, 21/8/1862; Cape Argus, 26/8/1862; Cape Chronicle, 22/8/1862; Cape Chronicle, 26/9/1862; Cape Chronicle, 7/11/1862.

28. See: East 1956; Franck, Hatfield, Manuel 1967: 110; Stone 1971: 3; as previously, the source seems to have been: Green 1951: 195.

29. A British vessel which was then anchored at the Cape, "Christy Minstrel" denotes the genre of the troupe but the troupe itself was probably composed of amateur comedians who may have been members of her crew (Argus, 21/6/1887).

30. The Cape Argus announcement reads: "The Royal Scots Variety Company: Part II, Minstrel Troupe, songs, jokes and ballads; Part III, side-splitting Negro farce entitled: 'Waxination Gratis'" (Argus, 5/7/1887: 2).

31. Their first concert in Cape Town was acclaimed in the press and reports stressed that MacAdoo's Singers were no ordinary black-face Minstrels: "Singing such as is given by the Virginia Concert Company has never before been heard in this country. Their selection consist of a peculiar kind of part song, the different voices joining in almost unexpected moments in a wild kind of symphony." (Argus, 1/7/1890). The editorialist of Imvo Zabantsundu (an independant black weekly published in King Williamstown) expressed eloquently how they were perceived by black South-African audiences: "It would strongly savour of presumption for a Native African of this part to venture a critique on his brethren from America who are now visiting this quarter of their fatherland, and whose position socially, is being deservedly pointed at on all hands as one that Native here should strive to attain to. But we may be allowed to join in the huzzas that have greeted their musical entertainments in the towns and cities they have visited." (Imvo Zabantsundu (Native Opinion), 16/10/1890).

32. Their story is told in: Erlmann 1991; see also: Erlmann 1997.

33. The Dantu (or Dante) family has long been associated with Cape Town's clubs, from the Darktown Fire Brigade to contemporary Good Hope Entertainers, via the Honolulu Dainty Darkies. They have also been among the founders of the Cape Malay Choir Board.

34. Nurses and medical doctors are favourite masks in many a carnival; in Cape Town they still appear in the "special item" competitions of the 1990s; and there was a time when there used to be quite a number of them in Port of Spain's streets on Fat Monday and Tuesday.

35. In 1921, for instance: "One of the best of the troupes was the 'Queen of Tar Tars' [...] The Queen was Mazepa (not Mazepa). She was quite a young girl; rode in what looked like a grandiose or metamorphose peanut barrow, and had her guard of honour, which fired a salute from a solitary cannon. The Queen was attired mainly in couleur de rose and wore a paper crown. Her gallant henchmen wore yellow costumes with green stripes, white stockings with green ribbons, white feather hats, and black shoes [...]" (Argus, 4/1/1921: 8).

36. There was a period when drum majorettes' competitions were introduced, from the end of the 1950s to the beginning of the 1970s; they were dropped in the 1970s, although some troupes continued to include groups of majorettes in their marches until the beginning of the 1990s. I have been told in interviews that it had become too costly to arrange for special majorette costumes to be cut. Recently, young girls continued to parade but they wore the same juvenile uniform as the boys.

37. Originally performed in the honour of Abu Bakr, the first Khalif, friend and successor of Prophet Muhammad, it has become a ceremony whereby the rule of faith over the carnal envelope is demonstrated by flagellations and piercing of parts of the body with sharp objects (Desai 1983: 110-123).

38. As it did in other contexts: elsewhere in South Africa (Coplan 1985: 71; Erlmann 1996) and also in West Africa (Barber, Collins, Ricard 1997).

39. Is it just by chance, for instance, that in January 1994 audiences at the Green Point stadium danced in the stands to the sound of "Give Me Hope, Johanna", a song created a few years earlier by Eddie Grant, and which before the South African general elections was dubbed the "national anthem of Mitchell's Plain"; and that another very popular song with the troupes was borrowed from Walt Disney's studios "Aladdin" and announced "A whole new world / A dazzling place I never knew [...] Unbelievable sights / Indescribable feelings / Soaring, tumbling, free-wheeling / Through an endless diamond sky" (words copied from the rehearsal board at the Good Hope Entertainers Klopskamer, December 12, 1993)?

40. Bobby Breen was the star of an American film which met with an incredible success in District Six's bioscopes: "Rainbow on the River" (1936, directed by Kurt Neumann). It tells the story of a white orphan who, after the Civil War, is brought up by a "black mammy" and later discovers that he is rich...

41. Marike De Klerk, wife of former President De Klerk, quoted in: "What Marike De Klerk once had to say about other race groups", The Sunday Tribune, February 2, 1989.

42. Moreover, the Apaches and Indian troupes have probably been started in Cape Town by West-Indians. Victor Bryan who was, in the 1950s, the captain of the Wild American Masqueraders, a troupe that was created in the 1920s or earlier, recalled that his "father was a West Indian, and he had the idea to dress us up as Red Indians" (Argus, 31/12/1957). Another source confirms that The Wild American Masqueraders were founded by "a Negro from America" even if his country of origin cannot be traced precisely (interview, July 13, 1997). "Fancy Indians" are a traditional mask in several West-Indian carnivals, and of course the Indians are emblematic figures of New Orleans' Mardi Gras. But, in the case of Cape Town's Atjas, the West-Indian connection is substantiated by the association, in older times, of stilt walkers, very much like West-Indian "moko jumbies", with Wild Indians' troupes (Trinidad Carnival 1988).

43. Troupe names reveal this humoristic, sometimes contradictory, denial of inferiority. A complete analysis of 485 troupe names collected in printed sources is not possible here of course. It should be noted, however, that it is after 1952 that qualifiers such as "fabulous", "famous", "grand", "great" and "invincible" are added to written troupe denominations. Calypso singers' sobriquets had the same function in Trinidad.

44. When the Coloured Affairs Department was created by Jan Smuts' government in 1943 to separate the administration of coloured affairs from the administration of white affairs, A.E. Abdurahman, the son of Dr. Abdurahman, was, within the APO, one of its staunch opponents and fought against any collaboration

with it. (Goldin 1987: 56; Lewis 1987: 213, 222).

45. "The coons'carnival, an asset which is not fully appreciated", From Dr. I.D. Du Plessis (University of Cape Town), Cape Times, January 6, 1936. See also: "Co-ordinate the Coons", From Dr. I.D. Du Plessis, Cape Times, November 8, 1940; "City could have fine coon procession" (an interview with I.D. Du Plessis, former Secretary for Coloured Affairs), Cape Times, January 8, 1970.

46. See: Cape Times, February 27, 1952; March 14, 15, 18, 1952; on April 2, 1952, the same daily carried the following titles: "Coloured people's pageant to-day, Boycott plan finds no support, Close identity with S.A. life". Appeals to boycott the Van Riebeeck Festival were regularly published in The Torch see for instance: February 12, 26, March 4, 25, 1952.

47. Lyrics of the Malay Choirs' songs are in Afrikaans, or in forms of High Dutch orally transmitted.

48. "The organisers are gradually trying to get the troupes to sing more Cape liedjies and 'moppies' [...] but the Coons dearly love the American sentimental songs [...]" (Aschman 1949).

49. "Dr. I.D. du Plessis, who helped adjudicate the Afrikaans liedjies, appealed to the troupes not to neglect the songs of South Africa and of the Cape. He hoped that the Cape 'moppies' or comic songs and the liedjies would become a regular feature of future carnivals. [...]"

A feature of the coon song competitions at the Green Point Track yesterday were the Afrikaans 'moppies', or 'liedjies'. The troupes were congratulated by Dr. I.D. du Plessis, one of the judges, on bringing this innovation into their carnivals." (Argus, January 10, 1949).

50. This could be further illustrated, much beyond the format of this paper, by taxes imposed on the troupes, by the tender system adopted to allocate stadia to carnival boards, etc.

51. In an interview with Shannon Neill of the weekly South, Achmat Davids says: "In 1886 there were very active street parades of the Muslim street choirs and the Coons. In the same year there was a move to close the Muslim cemeteries in the Bo-Kaap."

The people were able to organize resistance to this because of their tradition of organization with the Carnival" (South, January 21, 1994: 8). See also: Davids 1995.

52. Don Pinnock quotes an interview with Hadji Noor Denis. The Argus reports in its edition of January 9, 1950, that after a dispute had developed between rival Coon troupes while the trophies were presented, the Mayoress was hit by missiles aimed at Coons.

53. "Boos greet riot squad at stadium: [...] A tenth group, dressed in gay and fashionable camouflage uniforms came bouncing into the arena but instead of the traditional cheers, loud boos and jeers heralded their appearance.

They were a 20-man unit of the riot squad. As they sat down a coon captain said to me: "Now there is going to be trouble. This is unnecessary."

However, their appearance was brought to an end long before they got the chance to sing the "juvenile sentimental" or the "Afrikaanse moppie" when they were invited to leave by M. Cassiem Banoo of the Athlone and District Coon Carnival Board. And they promptly left." (Cape Herald, January 4, 1977).

54. "Behind the Festival of Hate, "The Cape Colourful Coons'", The Torch, March 25, 1952: 2.

55. See: Cape Times, 23/1/1952, 27/2/1952, 14/3/1952, 15/3/1952, 18/3/1952, 2/4/1952. The members of a troupe booked to perform in the United Kingdom were refused passports to travel outside South Africa after they declined to take part in the Van Riebeeck Festival (Cape Times, 15 & 22/7/1952).

56. The duties of a troupe captain such as described and analysed by Gerald Stone in 1971 have not changed much (Stone 1971). After District Six's inhabitants were relocated in distant neighbourhoods and people who used to live in the same building or in the same street found themselves scattered in the Cape Flats, the fact that most klopse (sometimes in spite of their names) attracted people coming from many "townships" helped create social networks in this new hostile environment.

57. Interestingly, in her study of oral literature in Martinique and Guadeloupe, Maryse Condé, stresses the ubiquitous phrase "Un nègre ne meurt jamais", a negro never dies: "Paradoxically, negroes have faith in themselves, in their resistance, in their capacity to survive. 'A negro never dies'. They are the weed none can get rid of. Negroes have survived the middle passage. They have survived strokes, scaffolds, dogs' jaws... Hated, scorned, they have nevertheless invaded the islands; they have nevertheless shaped the Whites to their semblance, before giving West Indian civilisations their idiosyncratic figure" (Condé 1978: 32).

58. Interviewees discussed at length the wealth of talents hidden in the community, the fact that it was impossible for them to blossom in apartheid South Africa, and that when given the chance they achieved world-wide fame. The most often mentioned names were jazz musician Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand), pop guitar player and singer Jonathan Butler and opera tenor Joseph Gabriels, and it was always emphasized that "they began in the Coons".

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TRADITIONAL MUSIC THEATRE IN CONTEMPORARY
CONTEXTS:
PERSPECTIVES FROM ANIOCHA IGBO OF NIGERIA

Abstract

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In African societies, musical idioms exist within contexts that sustain particular modes of interaction and participation, which portray significant levels of cultural meaning. Drama is one of the basic modes of communication in such contexts. Accordingly musical performances tend to have a theatrical orientation. That is why among the Aniocha Igbo, for example, the term *egwu*, meaning play, is used to describe performances of music and dance.

This paper discusses the implication of *egwu* as theatre and examines the issues that arise when traditional music theatre is presented in contemporary contexts or used as a creative resource.

TRADITIONAL MUSIC THEATRE IN CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS: PERSPECTIVES FROM ANIOCHA IGBO OF NIGERIA

Introduction

In African societies, musical idioms exist within contexts that sustain particular modes of interaction. Drama is one of the basic modes through which significant levels of cultural meaning are communicated in such contexts. Accordingly musical performances tend to have a dramatic orientation. That is why among the Aniocha Igbo, the term *egwu*, meaning play is used to describe such performances in which organized music-making goes beyond the physical act of producing sounds by instrumental and vocal means to the generation of attitude and moods that lead to the interaction of music-makers and audience. As Nketia 1973:30 points out

Approaching music-making as a play activity can enhance the conviviality of an occasion, facilitate the sharing of individual and group sentiments or the communication of both aesthetic and social values.

The Aniocha Igbo concept of *egwu* however is not only a functional but also a formal one. It denotes the presentation of music as theatre; that is an event which combines sound, music, movement and spectacle. Hence when a song or an instrument is not performed as part of this complex it is not referred to as *egwu*. An instrumental solo music for example is referred to by the name of the instrument and similarly a song is referred to as *abu*. On the same basis complementary objects such as costume, props and even musical instruments are referred to as *ife-egwu* meaning *egwu* implements or literally things for *egwu*.

Because music theatre is performed in social, ritual and ceremonial contexts, *egwu* normally takes place in a courtyard, a grove, the front of a homestead, a shrine, the ceremonial ground of a palace or in the case of processional performances even in the street. The occasion may be celebrations of life cycle such as birth, marriage and death, ceremonies and festivals of installation, ceremonies of associations such as hunters and activities of cult groups.

A few examples of this may be illuminating. The first, activities surrounding the birth of a child illustrates how a spontaneous outburst could develop into an

informal or semi-formal *egwu* situation. As soon as the good news of a new born baby is announced, the grand mother or any other close female relation, claps a few beats of danceable rhythm and then proceeds with a short dance motif while she smacks her lips to an imaginary gong rhythm sometimes with interjections of an appropriate song such as behold a child, child, child, child (*Nei nu nwa-o, nwa nwa nwa*). This is repeated over and over. This musical type which is referred to as *ngogo* could be called *egwu ngogo*, literally dance of joy or interpreted as performance of joy. *Egwu ngogo* also features at other happy moments such as when a mother receives a present from an offspring, since the typical *Aniocha* expresses extreme joy by dancing. This invariably serves as an announcement of such unscheduled events to the immediate neighbors who turn out to join in the impromptu performance in the spirit of good neighborliness.

The second example, the Aniocha traditional marriage, illustrates how *egwu* and non-*egwu* forms may be combined and structured as a musical event. This features joyful songs accompanied by dance while the bride is being escorted along with her dowry (which includes a box full of clothes, cooking utensils and other household items) to her new home by the married women from the bride's homestead (*ikpoho idumu*.) This is done in a procession while singing to the rhythm of definite foot-stamp-steps. The foot-stamp-steps as choreographed by tradition are relied on for basic rhythmic accompaniment because the women have to support the loads on their heads with their hands. In cases where the women out-number the items to carry, the processional performance is enriched by the use of portable percussion instruments such as wooden blocks, metal gongs and gourd rattles. On arrival the women, after depositing the property in the bridegrooms home re-group for a more elaborate dancing session to create a convivial atmosphere in the couple's new residence, this time to the rhythm of hand-clapping and available percussion while they sing and dance to traditional marriage songs. The songs which are quite entertaining are on a more formal level highly philosophical and full of advice and prayers to and on behalf of the couple for a meaningful, peaceful and fruitful union. While the processional songs are named after their function, in this case *abu iduna nwunye* literally song for escorting wife home, the phenomenon of *egwu* is completely realized when they arrive and put their loads down and are able to sing, play instruments and dance.

The third illustration is taken from funerals which in many African societies is an important social occasion. Burial Among the *Aniocha Igbo* is associated with various traditional rites which are accompanied by music. Death of a prominent

Aniocha Igbo adult is announced by the lone sound of a gourd trumpet at dawn *uz'ututu* or at midnight *odii nabi*. The *okwa akpele* solo virtuoso gourd trumpeter is also at hand to play his instrument in order to calm the living by enriching their vital force and to assure at death a new birth through re-incarnation. Other types of music associated with burial rites and ceremonies include dirges, marches, songs of lament, poetic and praise songs. The poetic renditions which are performed in recitative form are known as *ngigo* or *mkpukpo*.

In the early hours of the morning following a death, the bereaved relatives pass on the sad news from house to house around the neighborhood in groups of three or more, processing and singing songs such as the following to hand claps and regular foot steps as they dramatize the search for the dead relative.

Ana'm'acho nwannem (song text)

Solo : *Ana'm'acho nwannem-o-o* ---I am searching for my relative

Nwannemo-o nwannemo-o --- My relative my own relation

Chorus: *Ana'm'acho nwannem-o-o* --- I am searching for my relation

The widowhood rites commences soon after the first burial. The widow's head is clean shaven and she is dressed in black cloth which remains her mode of dressing for the whole of the calendar year. She is confined to a secluded hut near the main house. In the hut she lives a very basic life style performing her dirges and laments amidst tears (see appendix 1). It is common to be awoken by a widow when she breaks into song, as she is mandated to do in the early hours of the morning, recounting life with the late husband, praising his good deeds and regretting her resultant solitude without him.

Whereas the first burial features *ngigo* and *mkpukpo* the more formal, purely vocal styles in recitative form to reflect the mood the second burial is more or less a social event featuring various forms of *Aniocha* social and ceremonial music, depending on the status of the deceased. The second burial features; *egwu olimgba* (drum music), *ukpukpe* (processional marshal music) as well as purely entertainment forms such as *egwu ohiho* and *idegbani*.

Other illustrations of *egwu* could be drawn from performances in recreational contexts featuring all forms of performances not ritual or ceremonially bound but preceding, accompanying or following the actual programme of events.

What becomes evident when all these are examined is the fact that as an integrative concept, *egwu* represents not only a process but also a particular form of theatre.

Egwu in contemporary contexts

Until recently *egwu* was performed in traditional *Aniocha* communities in everyday setting for the renewal of musical experience and interaction occasioned by it. Although it has continued to flourish in this context, cultural changes brought about by the disintegration of the traditional socio-economic system and the consequent displacement and exodus of members of the society to the more industrialized and developed capital cities in search of modern standards of living has encouraged the performance of *egwu* outside its original setting.

In these new environments immigrants from *Aniocha* keep in touch with each other by organizing themselves into social groups which meet regularly for the purpose of sharing group sentiments and also to entertain themselves through the practice of *egwu*.

There exists a number of such groups in Benin-City, situated about two hundred kilometers away from the *Aniocha* Igbo enclave. They pay particular attention to the artistic as well as the aesthetic aspects of their performance and presentation while they endeavor to retain their identity through costume, repertoire, dancing techniques and instrumentation, including particularly the use of *akpele* gourd trumpet, the indispensable master instrument of the typical *Aniocha* ensemble. Due to constant practice some of these groups eventually attain such a high level of dexterity that they are invited to perform on social occasions both by the *Aniocha* Igbo community and other members of the cosmopolitan society. The frequency of invitations has transformed a number of such groups into professional companies, an example of which is the *Otu ife onye wepu anya* an entertainment dance group based in Benin-City.

Re-contextualization of *egwu* in contemporary settings invariably results in creative transformations which raises a number of questions. Since performances are presented primarily for the purpose of aesthetic pleasure and satisfaction rather than in fulfillment of social ethics, emphasis is laid on the artistic dimension and the subsequent development of the material as fine art. There is a change from real life enactment to acting and make belief involving a transformation of social interaction into entertainment and an invention of characters who act out communal expressions

of real life situations as fictional events. This necessitates a change in choice and modification of materials. Such modifications in production arise because of the fact that the indigenous audience is replaced by a not-so-critical one, who unlike the ethnic audience would not spontaneously express their feeling about the authenticity of an on-going experience.

Egwe as creative resource

Alongside *egwe* in contemporary contexts are two contemporary performing arts categories namely social and literary drama both of which draw on traditional sources. While social drama refers to the popular traveling theatre which combines music, dance and acting, literary drama refers to contemporary African drama in written tradition studied and propagated by university intellectuals.

In both genres traditional materials could be transferred to the contemporary stage or arena. However such transfers raise dramaturgical issues that need to be addressed. In transforming the original material from tradition to performance, real life to acting, the ability of the producer to utilize the still vital theatrical vocabulary of the culture is put to test. First is the special separation from ordinary life on to a closed space clearly marked out from everyday surroundings within which a new set of rules obtain. (Huizinga 1976) Secondly the context becomes important in the choice of relevant material for presentation and thirdly emphasis is laid on the artistic dimension to ensure that materials presented are primarily aesthetically satisfying and capable of entertainment.

The traveling theatre concept combines tradition with internally and externally inspired innovations which portray the characteristics of *egwe* while at the same time extending and elaborating the dramatic process through dialogue and action. It exemplifies the confluence of ideas and practices that shape creativity and performance in contemporary contexts but which result in new art forms that maintain continuity with the African past while adjusting to the realities of cultural social and economic change.

While the traveling theatre and concert parties have won the hearts of the African audience, judging by their popularity. The still experimental literary drama is yet to attain such a status. In spite of the fact that most contemporary playwrights derive their themes and content from culture, most of them tend to neglect the associated vital artistic elements of the culture which cannot be meaningfully separated

from its practice as well as the issues that surround its socio-cultural contexts which are needed to complement the total impression of the creative piece of art work.

This prevailing situation is probably attributable to the fact that there has not been enough systematic analysis and interpretation of traditional forms and practices along lines that can appeal to the creative imagination of writers of literary drama and on which the application of such procedures may be based. It also accounts for the slow development of an African theatre that truly reflects the African experience.

The contemporary playwright and director therefore must be encouraged to acquire knowledge and understanding of tradition from which their materials originate in order to maintain some identity and authenticity. This knowledge comes handy in the choice of appropriate setting, casting, costume, props, choice and inclusion of music/dance to match the repertory codes. It will also provides them with the myths, belief systems, philosophies, mytho-poetic images and concepts required for and artistic realization of African experience which as Sofola 1978:316 points out should be recognized as "a mold that serves as a living cosmos in which exists a chain of interrelationships with a centre that holds".

Summary and conclusion

Among the Aniocha Igbo, the organization and presentation of music is characterized by a dramatic orientation and so it is not enough to listen to music, it is more important to see the music (in performance) because apart from the spectacle it provides, there are various levels of cultural interaction which manifest and are transmitted during these presentations.

Since these practices are based on oral tradition the elements and procedures associated with the experiences are not available in any recorded form or documentation but are rather inherent in the carriers of the culture who recount the attitudes, forms and techniques and principles from memory as and when necessary within the performance context.

In view of the fact that it has certain idiomatic characteristics in its components which reflects and expresses African identity, perhaps a case could be made for its use as a criterion for the categorization or evaluation of performances in both traditional and contemporary contexts. It is therefore contemporary theatre which satisfies the criterion of *egwe* that makes the greatest appeal because it shows continuity with tradition even though it may be different in repertoire, style, content and context.

African theatre must not lose sight of its own tradition as it comes to terms with contemporary realities.

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Appendix 1:

Widowhood rite song text

Ubosi ij'onwu dim ayali mu na-a

On the day of death my husband abandoned me

Ubosi akala'ka dim ayali mu na

On the day of destiny my husband left me behind

Ilolo ejum obi-o, onye ge lolu me

I am so pensive, who is going to aid my thinking

Onwu adiak'ij'oyada-o, o-o-o

Death is but a disgrace, oh-oh-oh

Onwu adiak'ije'yada-o, ilolo ejum obi-o

Death is but a disgrace, I am so full of thoughts

Dunam-o na'nam-o, dunam-o na'nam -o (twice)

Take me home I want to go home (twice)

Ebe so nw'ogbenye k'ogebi n'uwa -o

A destitute wanders along destination unknown

Osokwai nweludi-o- me nwelumgba-o halim nye

Whether or not I have a husband let me be

O-o-o-o onwu adiak'ij'oyada o, ilolo ejum obi-o

Death is but a disgrace, I am so full of thoughts

CONFLUENCES: FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DANCE AND MUSIC IN SOUTH AFRICA - JULY 1997, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN.

AN AFRICAN AND WESTERN PERCUSSION-BASED APPROACH TO MUSIC EDUCATION: CONTRIBUTING TO AN INTEGRATED ARTS CURRICULUM

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Key words: percussion, integrated arts, process, ways of knowing, cognitive functioning, learning experience, curriculum development, cross-cultural context, African and Western music education.

Introduction

Our national education system is undergoing a transformation from a content and structure-based syllabus to a curriculum intended as "*a framework of principles and guidelines*" [National Department of Education: 1996] that will offer more participation-orientated programmes and opportunities from a learner perspective. During this transition, it is inevitable that a corresponding shift in the cognitive functioning of the learner will take the emphasis off knowledge as an external source of reference, the *what* aspects, and place it more on *ways* of knowing. Our Western world-view has, to a certain extent, imparted to the arts a somewhat separate and "finished product" perception. While we do not discourage the pursuit of excellence in specialised arts training, the perspective held in this paper encourages re-establishing a sense of community and accessibility within a diverse cultural educational setting, whilst demonstrating how the arts can assist in exercising dimensions of mental activity that are essential for lifelong learning.

Percussion playing is proposed as the medium through which to access more participation-based and experiential modes of artistic expression because it is culture-friendly and promotes group interaction. The conceptual framework presented in this paper supports the curriculum and in-service training projects being piloted in African and Western music education and the integrated arts at the University of Cape Town in collaboration with the Western Cape Education Department.

Knowledge as Process (Knowing)

An interest in different ways of knowing music was initiated when, in the workshops presented to teachers of diverse educational and cultural backgrounds, their varied responses to the same auditory task indicated firstly, that everyone experienced it in a uniquely different way and secondly, that the conceptualised experience differed from the real or actual experience. The exercise in this instance namely, repeating a relatively uncomplicated rhythmic fragment, presented little problem to those with no prior experience in music while the musically literate participants found it easier once presented to them on paper. However, the converse also holds true since in certain other settings a more complexly co-ordinated activity presented on paper to the same group of schooled participants became easier once demonstrated as an auditory reference. It was this

discrepancy in learning preferences influenced by different educational contexts that led me to realise the importance of incorporating the natural auditory inclinations of our African music into the music education programme by taking into account the body's own intelligence and ability to recognise, co-ordinate and memorise complex activities that are processed and directed through different routes in the brain. It also raised the question as to whether reading and writing music, as favoured by our Western system, should be a pre-requisite for the music-making experience, or an added value.

The methods of scientific inquiry that dominated our Western world-view have emphasised rational thinking over other modes of expression, in some instances even rendering them inferior, such as the aesthetic dimensions of knowing associated with the pursuit of beauty, balance and harmony, a more emotional way of knowing. This perception consequently imposed on the arts a somewhat structured and finished product perception, that of being separately framed, choreographed, scripted or scored, normally in the competitive context of the stage performance. In certain indigenous cultures however, and in our African traditions, knowledge is treated with a spirit of constant renewal. The observer is not separate from that which is being viewed but enters into direct relationship and co-operation with the experience: *"in a universe in which time turns in a circle, and in which the ceremonies of renewal are the continual obligations of the people, the emphasis is always upon balance and harmony as opposed to progress, advancement, and accumulation."* [Peat: 1996]. Rather than separately documented occurrences, the experiences are often relayed through story-telling, metaphor, mythology, rituals and ceremonies, dreams and images in which one is left to make one's own associations and draw from one's own understanding of what it may be illustrating.

How do we reconcile these two world views and consequently the cross-cultural music education context within which the learning experience unfolds? The education system, in its quest for opportunities for lifelong learning, will surely need to address the different dimensions of knowing in order to achieve optimum functioning [Dostal: 1997], not in a way that merely allows for specialised access in the case of music, but in a fully integrated way within the general curriculum so that candidates can flexibly exercise their aptitudes and preferences: *knowledge as an integral part of the total flux of process may lead generally to a more harmonious and orderly approach to life as a whole rather than a static and fragmentary view*" [Bohm: 1980].

Cognitive Functioning and Transfer of Meaning

Whilst in pursuit of a conceptual model through which to view and formulate this phenomenon, it became apparent that, in developing learning methodologies with respect to different cultural expressions, we would need to establish a learning environment that is on the one hand universal in that it transcends cultural boundaries, while providing ample opportunity for the expression and development of unique cultural attributes.

Knowledge as process employs a complex inter-relationship of different types or modes of cognitive functioning. Recent brain research has revealed intricate inter-cellular networks

indicative of a complex web of neural processing that replaces earlier theories of learning as involving mainly simple conditioned responses. If we conceptualise the brain in terms of hierarchical organisation into levels [MacLean: 1985], newer and more complex structures overlay older and simpler ones in a way that modifies and transforms the simple structures into more complex ones. Newer parts are therefore not merely added on but are connected through more complex circuits to higher brain functions which in turn integrate and determine the activity of the lower levels of the nervous system, utilising them for simpler input and output functions [Jackson: 1956].

Since functions of the subordinated levels are represented at each higher level (the neo-cortex integrates all functions), complex structures predominate over simpler ones whenever both participate in the regulation of a given activity [Sabelli: 1989]. This demonstrates the recursive nature of information processing in which the result of the initial operation becomes an input for further processing. According to Hofstadter it is this phenomena which may be responsible for the emergence of higher order functions from simpler processes, based on a reciprocal interaction between levels of the brain, a kind of self-reinforcing resonance in which *"the explanations of 'emergent' phenomena in our brains - for instance, ideas, hopes, images, analogies, and finally consciousness and free will - are based on a kind of strange loop, an interaction between levels in which the top level reaches back down towards the bottom level and influences it, while at the same time being itself determined by the bottom level. In other words, a self-reinforcing 'resonance' between different levels"* [Hofstadter: 1987].

Hence cognitive development is not confined to mental processing alone - the mind and body being a complex inter-relationship of biochemical processes in which the nervous system communicates the flow of matter, energy and information through the passage of nerves and the immune system. This it achieves by constant dialoguing, interchange and recycling of information through complex and non-linear activities. In this research attempts have been made to investigate the extent to which the arts and music can influence the process of cognition by their ability to recognise, access and process complex neural patterns that may assist in maintaining a flow of meaning and transfer across levels, a transposition of activity that involves other modes of mental functioning for a fuller realisation. Meaning depends on a variety of contexts and can unfold in a variety of ways: *"there is no single, unique reading to a story, but rather many enfolded and interpenetrating levels, none of which needs be thought of as being more fundamental than the other. Understanding comes from a direct experience of the dance between these levels of meaning"* [Peat: 1996].

In order to explore the implications for cognitive functioning more fully, we will need to identify and move between levels more comfortably to observe in what way an event at one level of perception can emerge as a translation on another level of description.

Different mental activities in the context of brain functioning have been formulated by various researchers. It was, however, a psychological assessment procedure developed by Herrmann [Herrmann: 1988], used more in non-formal and business communities as a career-enhancing aid than in the education literature [ERIC: 1980-1995], that appealed in this instance; also because it resembles to an extent Jung's four psychological functional types, the symbols of which transcend particularities of individual cultures [Jung: 1968].

I have therefore, for the purpose of this study, conveniently synthesised the different approaches to brain research into universally observable functions namely, A- mental functioning (thinking, cognitive domain), C - emotional functioning (feelings, affective domain), B - physical functioning (sensations, physio-biological domain) and D - intuitive functioning (spiritual, aesthetic domain):

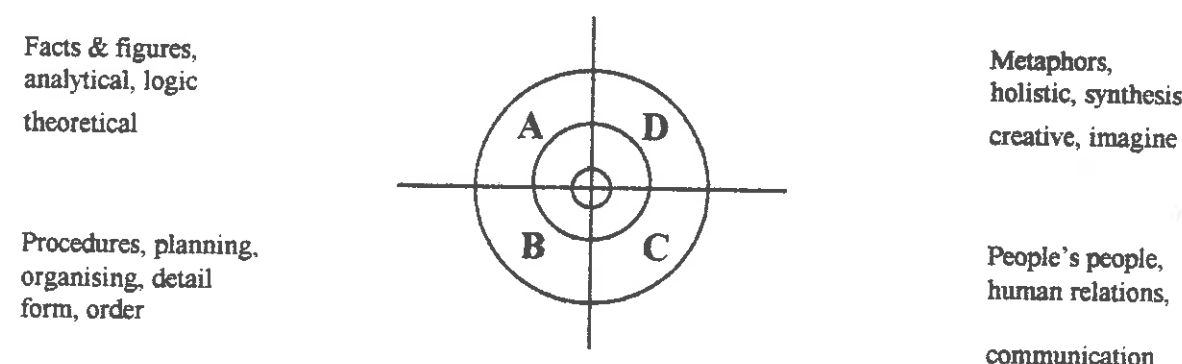


Diagram: Integrated Cognitive Functioning

The four modes as outlined in the above quadrants are as follows: *Mode A* deals with facts and analysis, logical, rational and quantitative thinking. *Mode B* takes in information predominantly through the senses and tells us that something exists, dealing with form and order, organising, administering and procedures. *Mode C* deals with personal values, human relations, communication and emotions, and *Mode D* deals with the more holistic, creative, idealistic, imaginative, synthesising, integrating and innovative functions.

As with multiple intelligence theories [Gardner: 1985] complexes, clusters and sub-modes emerge from the interaction between these modes that concerns unique ways of processing and communicating information [Mitroff: 1981]. While we may exhibit dominance or preferences (whether consistently or randomly) our perception and communication needs to move with some degree of flexibility between the modes to ensure optimum cognitive functioning. According to Jung, the human psyche is a dynamic process that involves a balance of the four functions. If we approach life from predominantly one perspective, the undeveloped functions will begin to exert their subversive power on the personality and behaviour [Jung: 1968].

predominantly one perspective, the undeveloped functions will begin to exert their subversive power on the personality and behaviour [Jung: 1968].

It is not difficult to note that the 'psyche of the education system' has suffered somewhat in this respect. In a broad metaphoric categorisation of the above modes (modern brain research has moved beyond this dualistic perception), a distinction is made between the more rational, verbal, logical, analytical, sequential, reductionist and predominantly 'left-brain' processes [modes A and B] while the other refers to the more holistic, patterned, synthesising, creative and intuitive modes of predominantly 'right-brain' activity [modes C and D]. Education to date has drawn mostly from the former modes even though the identification and solving of complex problems for example, involves stages that alternate between synthesis and analysis. If one restricts the learning process to isolated and fragmentary activities of predominantly factual delineation, the experience will be limited and one-sided: *the more connections made in the brain, the more integrated the learning experience* [Campbell: 1992].

Arts and the Integrated Learning Experience

With arts education we inevitably mean more than art as a means of leisure, pleasure and entertainment, or even specialised artistic skills. Art is referred to here as an enabling agent for lifelong learning and human development. Within an integrated model of learning, different areas of learning can be perceived as different expressions of the same underlying processes in life. With the conceptual shift taking place from a fragmented and structure-oriented mode of inquiry to more experiential, process-based learning activities, we can no longer impose packaged factual information on the recipient alone, since this would deprive him or her of the ability to experience the multi-dimensional expressions of learning. By acknowledging the complexity of multiple processes, we can find threads of information that weave through various subjects or through the same subject in various ways that can bring new insight and understanding into the learning experience. The integrated cognitive approach as outlined above can provide a disciplinary framework (provided it is treated with some degree of flexibility) in an attempt to find endless correspondences or connecting threads in our quest for integrated learning. Music makes use of all these functions in different ways for different purposes.

Music Education and the African Idiom

Clearly, in our cultural setting, we have moved beyond the notion of African music as one of the "global music" representatives. We need to adopt the African ethic into our pedagogical and methodological approaches so that even within the constraints of a formal institution, we may exercise African ways of learning and music-making.

With reference to the above cognitive model, Western music exercises, and is largely dependent on the linear domains, often to the detriment of spontaneity and creativity. African music on the other hand, emphasises the cyclic modes of expression which unfolds

against a complex range of auditory possibilities. For optimum cognitive functioning, we need to find a way of balancing and complementing these functions.

For the practical component of the project, the medium of percussion was chosen for the following reasons: as an original indigenous instrument of Africa, it speaks naturally to the people; it is culture-friendly, comfortably accommodating both African and Western musics; it promotes group music-making, co-operation and social interaction that generates mutual respect for the cultures; it differentiates the elements of music more successfully than any other instrument into rhythm, melody, harmony and tone colour; it is easily taught by ear and by imitation requiring limited theoretical explanation; and it offers opportunities for further instrument specialisation in both African and Western music.

Many of the outcomes being developed for the curriculum through this project concentrate on skills development and techniques, co-ordination exercises that incorporate body percussion, voice and dance, auditory and visual patterns in the form of graphic representations. The majority of the programme draws on universal concepts in music out of which emerge specific African or Western repertoire. The focus is on developing creativity in the music-making experience that often addresses outcomes more aligned with life orientation such as different forms of communication and expression, teamwork and group co-operation.

Within the cognitive framework sketched above, one may for example view the music concepts in different ways: rhythm may be ascribed functions assigned to the features outlined in the respective quadrants by adopting different contextual meanings. In this way many correspondences and links with other aspects of music and the arts or other areas of learning may be facilitated through a process approach rather than first displaying individual attributes of structured subjects before seeking connections.

The alliance between African and Western music teaching and learning methods necessitates a closer working relationship with our ethnomusicology colleagues albeit an advisory capacity in order to adapt material that falls within an acceptable framework of authenticity and which does not intrude on their area of specialisation. On the other hand, I feel that this process could generate a mutually beneficial exchange in that the ways of learning addressed in the classroom makes the practical expression and methodology more accessible to the theorist. In our redress of past imbalances in culture and education, we hope to move beyond the academic constraints of separate specialised study into the experiential and creative mode that in time will restore respect, enthusiasm and understanding for African music in our communities. With minimal modification to the theoretical course components many young aspiring musicians can gain access into this field of study.

Conclusion

This presentation promotes the process nature of the learning experience and proposes a model through which to conceptualise and integrate African ways of music-making into the curriculum. It looks into the contribution of the arts, in particular music, to cognitive functioning and human development within a cross-cultural context and raises some possibilities for the transference of meaning acquired through music to other areas of learning.

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CONFLUENCES

Expressing an Explicitly African Aesthetic in Neo-traditional Dance Expressions

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Expressing an Explicitly African Aesthetic in Neo-Traditional Dance Expressions

A. Introduction: Aesthetics in Dance: Universals and Particularities

The philosophical approach in this paper's view on aesthetics, lies in the interpretation of meaning, perceptions, values, as well as on musical style, the areas which Herndon and McLeod refer to as 'value judgment and value field'.¹ By drawing upon examples of neo-traditional dance genres that flourish in Black populated urban environs, I examine the preferences and choices made by dancers and the concepts behind the choices as performers express themselves in newly-defined dance styles, different from genres in the rural milieu. I draw upon various African philosophies to discover fundamental principles of appreciation and interpretation of music and dance genres, and of performance practice. Attempts are made to establish the basis for recognition and appreciation of specific characteristics. An underlying premise of the paper is that when embracing the issue of aesthetics in neo-traditional genres, one engages in a process of redefining boundaries of aesthetics. In defining African aesthetics there is a need to determine indigenous metaphors and visual images that provide a range of aesthetic criteria.

The basis of music interpretation, evaluation and appreciation is on the experiential level. "For no matter how much one gets to know about a musical culture in terms of its organization and use in culture, or details of its structure, one cannot relate fully to it in its own terms (as opposed to the terms of one's background) until one is thoroughly familiar with its aesthetic principles." (Nketia 1984:24)

Ideas, values, and behavior are broadly accepted as basic aesthetic principles, and these develop in the context of society and the value systems within particular cultures. Many ethnomusicologists have questioned the universal application of fundamental aesthetic concepts about music formulated by European civilization, for the term 'aesthetics' was a creation of European enlightenment thought, and is based on Greek word for perception. Some usage of the term give a feeling a 'culture-boundedness' and it is fundamental to disengage western assumptions that set limits or define scope. Today there is a broader use of the term including related concepts of value and meaning. Nketia advocates that aesthetics should engage all senses involved in perception, that is touch, sight, hearing. Elaborating on the tactile dimension he notes that a performance is felt, and its aesthetic qualities are perceived in terms of levels of energy. (Nketia 1984:10) In human beings there is a strong development of visual communication, thus the importance of gestures, icons and space; and these have analogies in music and dance. One must therefore ask what the universal aesthetic experiences of humankind are in attempts to establish levels of aesthetics and valuation.

Current ethnomusicological studies embrace both a general philosophy of music² as well as empirical studies of aesthetic principles in a variety of music expressions in oral and written traditions around the world.³ These and similar studies provide the local aesthetic principles and establish what a particular society believes to be meaningful or relevant.

¹Music as Culture. Norwood Press, 1979,80

²Note that in African societies the term 'music' is used to refer to song, dance and playing of instruments in a collective sense, and I use it in a similar way in this paper.

³Paul Berliner *The Soul of Mbiru*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978; John Chernoff *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979, Stephen Feld *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*. Philadelphia University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982; 1969; Robert Kaufmann "Aspects of Aesthetics in Shona Music." *Ethnomusicology* 13 pp. 507-11.

Charles Keil *Tiv Song*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Stockman notes that there is a constant shift between the universal and the relative, and proposes three approaches to research on aesthetics: structural, socio-cultural and biological. (1983:27) Aesthetics is the interface of sound structures and social structure, musical meaning and social meaning (Keil & Feld 1994:113). In defining African aesthetics, there is a need to determine indigenous metaphors and visual images that provide the range of aesthetic criteria.

With regards to methodology, the challenge is to verbalize *affect*. For as Blacking observed it is the intrinsic qualities in music and dance as modes of non-verbal communication and symbolic expression that elicit affective response in humankind.⁴ Baumann differentiates between efficacy of music and dance, and the agency of people, and in referring to Blacking's work suggests that the elements of music-making and dance are genre, technique, performance process; and that the sonic, temporal and spatial structures of music and dance genres related to the affective potential.⁵

Kaemmer distinguishes between aesthetic philosophy and aesthetic principles. *Aesthetic philosophy* refers to the concepts by which a social group ascribes value, covert and overt, to human creative activity. *Aesthetic principles* are the processes by which human creativity and human affect interact. (1978:121-22) Kaemmer proposes two important principles in formulating cross-cultural definitions: a) pattern-appreciation principle - affective response to a pattern; b) affect-expression - in which creative activity is used to express human feelings. Studying these cross-culturally can establish whether there is a peculiar African aesthetic and if non-Africans can be socialized to respond aesthetically in similar ways as Blacks.

To get to the core to understand what elements constitute peculiar African aesthetics one must grasp what is intuitively felt and communicated, what Keil and Feld refer to as "groove." The 'groove concept' embraces intuitive sense of style, perception of cycles, revelation of organizing patterns, recurrence of cluster of elements over time.

Getting into the groove is how the socialized listener anticipates patterns in a style and appreciates subtleties and irregularities. It includes the manner of participation, and the physical and emotional attachment. (Keil & Feld 1994:111) Where getting into the groove refers to levels of participation, the metaphors used help us understand the processual, participatory, interpretive, experiential and intellectual dimensions evoked by the whole.

Charles Keil uses the label 'participatory discrepancies' "...to focus on these dimensions of musical experience that are particularly unrecoverable, un-analyzable or unattended in western approaches to style analysis, approaches heavily weighted towards syntactic and hierarchic analysis of melody, harmony, and rhythm." (1982:115) He notes two levels of creative tension in music-making and listening, the *processual* and *textural* (Keil & Feld 120) The processual level includes phenomenon like beat, swing and groove, while textural includes timbre and sound quality.

Baumann observes that modes of communication inherent in music and dance form the basis of affective culture. Active elements surround issues of agency and social construction. *Affective Notion* is the crucial link between the performing arts and social action, in actuality there is common ground between these two elements. (Baumann 1995:32) Affective notion is a dimension inherent in all social action

From the broad literature on aesthetics there are two main lines of inquiry engaging the attention of scholars: aesthetics as 'sensuous perception and cognition' and aesthetics as 'theory of works of art.' The two general levels of aesthetics are not mutually exclusive. 'Sensuous perception and cognition' includes human capacity to perceive and interpret aural data, to discriminate between musics, to discover meaning in music in relation to personal response, (affective, spiritual, intellectual) fundamental principles of interpretation and appreciation of music, socio-cultural determinants of

⁴John Blacking "Ethnomusicology as a Key Subject in the Social Sciences" In *In Memoriam to Antonio Jorge Dias*, Vol. 3 Lisbon, 71-93, 1977.

⁵Gerd Baumann "Music and Dance: The Royal Road to Affective Culture." *The World of Music* Vol. 37(2) pp. 33, 1995.

aesthetic valuation. (Nketia 1984:14-6) On the level of aesthetics as 'works of art,' emphasis is on models of excellence and concepts of musical greatness. This theory is often idealist and normative rather than pragmatic and descriptive. (Nketia 1984:18)

B. The Transformative Powers of Neo-Colonial State

In the convergence of various cultures there emerges what Keil & Feld refer to as a 'bricolage of symbolic linkages.' (1994:131) Indigenous culture assimilates patterns of interaction from the outside and this shifts aesthetic values. What emerges are several versions of doing things and various expressive styles. There are affinities as well as differences of musical principles in different cultures. With transformations in music-making, identity and practices get newly situated. A fundamental issue that this paper attempts to address is how to determine factors that contribute towards expressing an explicitly African aesthetic in neo-traditional dance forms in Black communities, taking into account the confluence that results from culture contact particularly from the West. As studies in social anthropology reveal, with the merger of cultures aspects of cultural life in communities exist as newly defined codified systems of communication and these get extended.

In modern contexts there arises a need to establish broader systems of appreciation as the essence for appreciation of genres in the performing arts is communication. Accepted theories of aesthetics and criticism in African systems of appreciation and behavior shed light on a society's systems of preference. These theories enable us to discover how information is mediated, and how norms and values are transferred.

One of the fundamental concepts to acknowledge in neo-colonial existence is the way in which African and western communication get unified without total assimilation. It is an accepted fact that the dynamic nature of culture results in constant transformations. Some of the factors that contribute toward the conditioning of musical practice in post colonial Africa include exposure to western culture and ideologies, newly defined formats for competitions, religion, values, influence of patrons, the recording industry and entertainment boom; which collectively result in the expansion of musical taste.

The reality of contemporary Africa is that performers constantly reflect on their behaviors and consider cultural alternatives rejecting incompatible elements. An interesting challenge in research is to discover how norms are established. For example in today's society, what gets defined as 'Zulu' or broadly 'South African'? It is too simplistic to view this reality as a unity of culture, for there is never complete synthesis as some distinctive value always remains.

There are some fundamental questions of how one deals with conflicting aesthetics in a culture meager for contemporary notions of aesthetics vary. On the one hand are purist notions and on the other urban/hybrid viewpoints. Contemporary views search for common terrain and fuller understanding of various cultures, and some attempt to establish global vision in universality and essentials. Another question to ponder is the meaning of aesthetics in different contexts. A dance performed at different situations can generate different sensations, and can result in attributing different meanings, because the communicative interaction between groups generates types of aesthetic experience.

According to Stockman, aesthetic valuation occurs on a number of levels. On the one level are formal qualities which relate to gestalt. On another level are functional qualities with reference to duty and utilization, for the function defines the meaning. Thirdly are anthropological and biological roots of aesthetics which precondition human behavior. (1983:28) Stockman questions whether there are universals in aesthetic valuation of auditive or visual precepts? The premise here being that the structure of the nerve system and perception is common in human beings, and this can be seen in common response to lullabies or intimate singing. Stockman claims that some of these factors are attributed to human evolution, relative hearing ability, sensorial preferences

of recognition. In particular cognition and learning processes such as imitation during early stages of building up traditions. (Stockman, 30-1)

In the neo-colonial reality there are several questions that must be addressed. Who mediates these new values? What is authentic and how does this get determined? What are the indigenous features of dance in context and form? What is the intersection between individual creativity and the overall parameters of common social values? What do performers do to ensure that their individual style is aligned with the main wider relevance? What are the norms?

This paper views aesthetic processes and procedures that foster appreciation of neo-traditional dance expressions. There are a number of commonly accepted viewpoints including the fluidity in the development and incorporation of new ideas; adaptation of old dances to illustrate lifestyles of modern types; the constant creation of new works. The parameters to introduce change are controlled by the performer's personality and background experiences, central is the concept of interpretation. There are a range of reasons for change: constraints of social context; creativity of the individual.

C. Aesthetic Criteria in Contemporary Black Communities

One ponders whether there exists what can generally be described as a common range of African aesthetics. In attempts to establish common trends a Pan African identity emerges. The high-point of Afrocentricity in the 1960s was in part a movement in reaction to the historical reality. In attempts to reclaim power, a primary goal on the time was to define oneself rather than be defined. Valuable insight from this historical moment for research is the acknowledgment that it is essential to establish an African-centered philosophy and outlook to life. To determine an African approach toward the organization of information, and to establish new criteria is research to establish an explicitly African aesthetic.

African philosophies shed light on how Africans interpret the world around them. Familiarity with African systems of thought is essential to gain a better understanding of how events are perceived and thought systems organized. In rural contexts much of the early learning concerns itself with recognizing how the environment reacts with man and the spirits of the ancestors to form a continuous set of close relationships among kin. For example a good dancer is appreciated and urged to perform, this talent may be linked to ancestral spirits.

A question we ask is whether African aesthetics are verbalized. In many African languages there is no word to express the concept of beauty or art with reference to music, only to the visual dimension. Nonetheless, the term commonly used to evaluate music is 'to give pleasure'. Common aesthetic descriptors in a number of African languages include descriptions of sweet, pleasant, beautiful; hot or cold; high or low. Kaemmer notes the absence of a formulated philosophy of music or full range of terminology. (1978,122-3) In his attempt to establish a value system he separates two foci, entertainment on the one hand and ritual on the other. He notes that the value given to music is usually revealed in social position accorded to musicians.

One can turn to the transmission and performance contexts in Black communities to understand the context of the learning environment and to see how information is passed on. For instance in specialist genres the apprenticeship context is vital, and it is here where traditional modes of learning are established. There are a number of Pan-African aesthetic values related to performance and transmission such as collectivity of the performance; gender roles in performance - clearly defined female and male space; to a large extent performance skill is measured by the impact on the audience, and a performer's sensitivity to their moods; a lot of power is placed on the audience members who are at liberty to break into the performance, and thus playing a major part in shaping the outcome of the performance.

The competition venue becomes an educational space. New aesthetics get defined as competing groups want to be noted and recognized as winners. A panel of judges set the criteria and this has some impact on the aesthetics, and in turn influences

how training occurs and rehearsals are conducted. In new contexts the judges rather than the audience become the central evaluators of correct aesthetic procedures, as we find in *ingoma* competitions in KwaZulu Natal.

Despite the introduction of the west, African music and dance maintain recognizable indigenous artistic practices and associated attitudes and theories. A basic premise is that our understanding of beliefs is filtered through our own cultural assumptions and language. One way to distinguish value criteria is to mark what distinctions are made between a learner and proficient dancer; what skills are articulated and how progress is determined; how one demonstrates their skills. (Kaemmer, 124) In the competition context a variety of criteria is used to judge performance, and may include factors such as skill, speed and knowledge of a broad repertoire. In these new contexts it is important to note the place for novelty and inventiveness; new ways of dancing old dances or working out new sequences; the ease with which one changes from one dance version to another is an assumed ability for a competent performer. In some neo-traditional idioms cross-rhythmic variation is found to be exciting. For example in the genre *isicathulo* (gumboot dance), rattles are attached to the boots and this accentuates cross rhythms and results in differentiated patterns as the dancers stamp on the ground and slap their boots. Appreciation for the execution of specific patterns called out by the leader is noted. In this genre complexity is an appreciated factor.

The importance of aesthetic education in music and dance as a process of building up knowledge and awareness to relate to different types of music in their own aesthetic terms is fundamental. Ethnomusicology can provide this by providing descriptive analysis of music and cultural background; and also provide insight into aesthetic principles from the viewpoint of music makers and music users including the audience. This can be established by examining internal evidence, including aesthetic descriptions and stylistic preferences, sources of explanation of aesthetic attitudes, aesthetic goals and basis of aesthetic appraisal. This process can lead to formulating general theories of explanation or normative values. (Nketia 1984, 14)

Common structural features of African music and dance include short harmonic and rhythmic segments repeated over in a predictable way. Predictability is paralleled with the possibility for variation; the melody fits within rhythmic/harmonic frame; varieties of texts - fixed, improvised, vocables - are employed; a range of rhythmic patterns may be used so long as they fit within the basic rhythmic frames. They can either conform to predictable framework or there is leeway for variations. Kaemmer notes that such structural features are linked with the affect-expression principle. (1978:126) One must view it within function and social context. For example, the element of repetition if heard out of context can be felt to be redundant.

Focusing on the creators of music and dance Nketia discusses the details in the selection of constituent units and elements of structure. These include selection of particular sounds; emphasis on particular features of sound (pitch, timbre, duration, amplitude, silence); modes of presentation; extra-musical images and references. He notes that the aesthetic principles of Akan music and dance are based to a limited extent on visual modes of perception and to a much greater extent on tactility, motion and energy levels, and above all the intensity factor⁶

Meyer (1965) uses the descriptor 'embodied meaning' and Keil (1994) 'engendered feeling' when referring specifically to jazz, capturing the performative, processual, momentary and improvised. These terms aptly describe formal and expressive properties of African music and dance performance. There are subconsciously accepted parameters for authentic African expressions. Each society has its own criterion to establish a value system, and there is always room for redefinition and creativity and the establishment of new values. The reality is that we do not live in a cultural vacuum, for creative people respond to their environment and continually incorporate new elements. There is fluidity in the development and incorporation of new ideas, and this allows for self-expression, renewal, innovation,

⁶Intensity Factor refers to gradations in the intensity of feeling. Kwabena Nketia "The Aesthetic Dimension in Ethnomusicological Studies." *The World of Music* Vol. 26 (1) pp. 12, 1984

creativity. In each performance, something new is added, changed or removed. Performances are adapted to fit the particular audience, situation or context.

An African draws upon the music of another culture and likes to feel that they do so as Africans, in other words, maintain their identity while sharing in the music of other cultures. There are various levels in new creations, and a question to ask is how does aesthetics affect approaches to music-making? This is evidenced in the appropriation of materials from another musical culture, to thinking in the musical language of another culture. A key differential whether something has an African or western aesthetic is understanding whether it is generated in an African or western framework and what kind of audience the performance is intended for. Those who express themselves in neo-traditional dance genres, consciously attempt to remain true to their own culture in musical terms, and in this way maintain an explicitly Black aesthetic. There is frequently an assertion of one's own cultural identity and this is manifest in a number of ways, for the idea is to creatively assimilate while maintaining one's cultural identity.

Three broad areas of focus in the analysis of neo-traditional dance expressions lie in the production, interpretation and reproduction of dance. Innovators are viewed as norm-breakers for they engage the 'other' side, and are separated from 'norm-guarders.' Norm-guarders may be regarded as purists and have the tendency to get locked in tradition in a quest to retain authenticity, rather than acknowledging the dynamism of culture whether one is situated in rural or urban environments. Norm breakers question the conventional norm system and attempt to extend limits. They are stimulated to change for a number of reasons including: attempts to change societal attitudes; cope with changes endemic to a society in transition; raise consciousness

We are living in the musical 20th century and innovations are reflected in new idioms. In the African context neo-traditional genres are based on an African framework, and western elements are a secondary source or used as a means of characterization. The technique of re-interpretation is a method commonly used for it enables the artist to stay within their own culture while giving contemporary relevance to a musical tradition. This is accomplished by either integrating new elements or incorporating previous materials, or re-ordering present materials.

In contemporary society, musicians consciously attempt to reflect the historical experience and intellectual environment. Innovations are made to define or express a contemporary outlook and this is part of the creative process. There are points of merger, juxtaposition, radical break from tradition. The creative person adjusts to the environment and lives within the framework of innovations and responds to these; in addition to contributing to intercultural communication. (Nketia 1982, 81) Innovations are as a result of hybridization, some sort of syncretism. Nonetheless there must be communication between the generators and receptors of the music. The audience is able to identify with underlying structural features of music and share in the aesthetic values. Melodic and rhythmic elements provide common bonds for shared focus and mutual responsiveness. (Nketia 83)

A challenge posed by tradition is one of authenticity, how the creative person creates while remaining true to norms of musical culture, that is within reasonable margins and remaining authentic. To be able to respond to and express one's creative inclinations and yet remain true to the norms of musical culture. The challenge of tradition is identity. In societies undergoing cultural change the host culture has the initiative to decide which values and principles to incorporate in the process of change. The question of identity is challenged by the need to reconcile two differing views of the world and human functions within it.

In essence this paper discusses how one develops contemporary idioms of out traditional elements, in addition to incorporating new expressions and Africanizing these. What gives an idiom its identity is the degree of development, different combinations and relationships of musical elements. The syncretic approach expands modes of expression in search of new musical experiences - to broaden ones imagination and understanding of inherited concepts. The core to understanding aesthetics lies in close examination of the reception of the genre by the other culture-bearers who listen to the music. A key factor in introducing innovations lies in the

reception, for the essence is to communicate to ensure the capacity to experience music. Dance is a reflection and construction of social reality, and most analysis should focus on the communicative level. When establishing contemporary idioms the importance of communication, and educating the public should be stressed, and one must continue to make all aware of social evolution that conditions new expressions and directions.

However, we should caution against making generalizations and creating stereotypes. Answering questions related to establishing identity and universals can be challenging and there are often conflicting viewpoints. In attempts to establish an African identity one must take into account continental and diasporic issues. However in plural societies on the African continent which has experienced years of settler and immigrant cultures co-existing at varying levels as found in many societies in Southern Africa. There are new definitions of what it means to be 'African' which can cloud notions of Black aesthetics.

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EXPLORING THE WATERFALL

An analysis and application of compositional processes in Venda music

By: David Patrick

"I tried, without success, to find out how the Venda think of the patterns of words and music of which their songs are composed. The concept of 'line' of verse or music obviously cannot exist where there is no tradition of writing, so that they are unlikely to think of it in terms of patterns moving horizontally and vertically in space. The repetition of short patterns, with only minor variations within the total structure, gives to Venda music the character of a waterfall: it is for ever moving, and yet its overall pattern never changes, and from a distance it even appears as solid and immovable as a stone statue." (John Blacking, 1967)

The aim of this presentation is to discuss structures of Venda music-making, and to show how these structures may be applied to composing music in a Western art music context. The underlying assumption is that there are transferrable elements in any music - elements which are musical before being cultural. It is as a result of the conditions of their selection and combination that these elements become representative of the particular context within which they are presented. The following will be discussed:

- structure in Venda music
- problems of transcribing music
- processes of composition

Two compositions will be performed to illustrate possible applications of the ideas presented.

STRUCTURE IN VENDA MUSIC

'Music' in Venda fits under the general category of *Nyimbo dza Vhavenda* - the 'songs of Venda'. This refers to vocal and instrumental music, as well as to patterns of words that are recited to a regular meter. Rhythm, rather than pitch, is seen as the key element which distinguishes songs from other forms of vocalisation.¹ Apart from the voice, many different instruments may be used for music making. Communal instruments include sets of drums, sets of reed-pipes, whistles and horns, and (more recently) guitars. Solo instruments include xylophones and hand pianos, stringed instruments and wind instruments. In this discussion the focus will be on instrumental music. The following aspects of musical structure² will be discussed: rhythm, pitch, form and texture.

1.1. Rhythm: Tempo, in this paper, refers to the smallest subdivision of a rhythm into equal pulses. In many Venda songs a consistent tempo is maintained at between 276 and 336 quavers per minute. Pulses often occur in groups of 12, which may be subdivided into groups of three (dotted crotchets), two (crotchets), one (quavers) or combinations of all three. Metre refers to the grouping of pulses into repeated patterns. In communal music, metrical patterns are maintained

¹Blacking, 1965, 21.

²The descriptions under these headings are a summary of ideas taken from Blacking, SAE; Blacking, 1967; Lecture notes.

by the sets of drums. Usually, the tenor drum announces the basic meter, while the bass drum provides polyrhythmic variation and the alto drum reinforces the time-keeping function of the tenor. New metrical patterns may be created by combining existing patterns in canon or in a ratio of 3:2, or by using both these methods. Combinations of rhythm are also used which have a result greater than the individual efforts of each performer.³ An example of this is the resultant two against three rhythm of two players playing the same steady crotchet rhythm at different tempi. A more complex example can be found in Venda beer songs, where an asymmetrical 9/8 rhythm played against a symmetrical 4/4 rhythm creates an interesting shifting rhythmic texture which plays itself out over 9 bars of 4/4.

1.2. Pitch: Pitch is important primarily in terms of how it is arranged harmonically and in terms of tonality. There is no word for scale in Venda, but the word *mutavha* refers to a set of *tshikona* reed pipes or to the notes of other fixed pitch instruments like the *mbila mutondo*, which are tuned heptatonically. Pentatonic tonality is also common in Venda music. An analysis of *tshikona* will provide an insight into the use of harmony in Venda music. *Tshikona*⁴ is the Venda national dance. It is performed on all important national occasions. In urban areas *tshikona* competitions take place regularly among dance-teams who have their own managers, musical directors and other officials. More recently it has been included as part of the national schooling of Venda children. Traditionally, men move in file anti-clockwise around the women who play the sets of drums, although more recently teams comprising mostly women have been recorded.⁵ Musically, *tshikona* consists of a repeating pattern of harmonies based on the heptatonic scale with a set rhythm. Variation occurs in the form of polyrhythms and in the use of different dance steps, but the harmonic progression remains constant. The notes of the heptatonic scale are each given names. (See example 1.2.1) The two most important notes are *phala* - the key note which is used to tune a set of pipes and is the starting note of the *tshikona* melody; and *thakula* - the "lifter", because its function is to lift the melody back to the key note at the end of a phrase. Each note may be conceptualized as having a companion note in harmony with it, which means that melodic lines may be seen as a progression of chords rather than a set series of pitches. The closest companion note is the octave. The second closest is a fifth below or a fourth above it. The third is a fourth below or a fifth above. This is demonstrated in the short score version of *tshikona* (See example 1.2.2.) Each chord represents a note in the heptatonic scale sounded together with its companion notes. It is possible to derive a number of different melodic lines from this pattern (See example 1.2.3.). Much Venda music is thought to be derived from the harmonic and melodic structures provided by *tshikona*. The transcribed melody used in the composition "Confluences" is an example of this.

1.3. Form: Form in Venda music is to a large extent determined by social factors. In communal music, the choice of instruments, style of dancing, level of involvement of different sections, length of performance, dynamics of performance, and nature of variation are all subject to the particular communal event of which the music is a part. Nevertheless, some particularly musical elements can be identified as being typical of the form of Venda music. Form is related to the

³Blacking, 1995, 59, 60.

⁴Information on *tshikona* is again taken from the aforementioned Blacking sources, unless otherwise stated.

⁵Kruger, 28.

organisation of patterns of rhythm and pitch as described above, and may be described as cyclic, where a cycle may be represented by the overall number of pulses within that cycle. The *tshikona* form number would be written as 12 pulses. Within this structure of cyclic repetition, there is no particular sense of moving towards a cadence as occurs in tonal music. While each cycle might reflect a shift between relative tension and relaxation, the overall form of a performance is not governed by the same principle of resolution. In order to signify the end of a performance, the last note may be lengthened. However, when that last note happens is largely determined by extramusical factors rather than by the music itself.

1.4. Texture: "Music is an integral part of the daily life in Vendaland, and its sounds blend with, and are sympathetically absorbed by the countryside".⁶ This somewhat utopian view of the relationship between Venda music and the countryside provides an insight into the music's aural impact. Most instruments are made from items gathered from the countryside. The other prime source of musical sound is the body itself, as in various forms of vocalisation and in the use of the body for providing and responding to rhythm. Texture is made up of the possible combinations of instruments and use of the body. Different layers of music may be heard in relation to different sets of instruments. Drums, feet, hands provide rhythmic content, voices or reed pipes provide harmonic and melodic content. Signals for a change in physical or musical movement may be provided rhythmically, vocally or by means of a particularly piercing instrument (e.g. a whistle). Texture is also affected by the social context of the music. In *tshikona*, each reed-pipe player plays a single note which has to fit into the overall harmonic structure of a performance. All musicians have an equal contribution to make. In the music of the initiation schools (*domba*), an antiphonal texture is used as is appropriate to the teacher/pupil situation. The texture can be seen to be a predetermined factor which is a product of social factors rather than of set musical conditions.

The first composition to be presented is based on Venda ocarina music. A *tshipotoliyo*⁷ is the Venda word for an ocarina made from the shell of the bush orange or the wild custard apple. These fruit are ball-shaped, and roughly five centimetres in diameter. The ocarina is made by hollowing out the centre, and making one larger hole for embouchure, and two smaller holes for pitch. The four notes used on a single ocarina are derived as follows:

- two notes derived from both pitch holes being stopped, with a change in embouchure
- one note from one pitch hole being stopped
- one note from both pitch holes being open

Ocarina music exists more commonly as duets than as solos. The tuning of the two instruments is determined according to the relationship of pitches to each other on one ocarina; and on the relationship between the tunings of the two ocarinas to each other. Mostly the tunings used will correspond to a minor triad in first inversion in the leading ocarina (*musimi*) and a major triad in root position in the second ocarina (*bvumeli*). The second instrument is usually pitched below the first. Blacking's transcriptions of ocarina music use the tunings: Leading ocarina-g#,c#,e; Second ocarina-f#,a#,c#. Example 1.7. shows a typical ocarina duet. Rhythm is implicitly divided into four crotchet beats, and only small variations occur. Pitch is determined by tuning of the instruments used. Harmony is based on the combination of tunings of the instruments used. The combination

⁶Blacking, 1965, 29.

⁷Information derived from Blacking, 1959.

preferred by Blacking's informants is shown in example 1.7. Video footage⁸ shows musicians choosing ocarinas by sounding them together until an agreeable combination is found. The agreeable combinations could be approximated to Blacking's transcriptions in some performances, but not necessarily exclusively. It is important to recognise that transcriptions into western notation provide an inadequate representation of the actual pitches in ocarina music. For Grainger, who was writing at the beginning of the 20th century, it is this which provides particular vibrancy to "primitive" music, namely the use of pitch relationships such as "out of tune" octaves or unisons.⁹ What Grainger is pointing to is the use of pitches which fall in between the notes of the diatonic scale, and thus present a problem for transcriptions using western notation. While there is a big difference between a minor second and a unison in diatonic tonality, it is important to recognise that if the starting point is not diatonic, then the possibility exists for "agreeable" pitch combinations which lie between these two intervals. Form in ocarina music is always based around the leading ocarina starting its pattern followed by the second ocarina with its pattern. It is based on repetition of basic patterns with minor variations improvised by the performers. The patterns interlock continuously until the players decide to stop. Texture can be best understood by referring to the Venda comparison of the songs of *zwipotoliyo* to the songs of birds. The waterfall image comes to mind in presenting an image of perpetual motion within which things both stay the same and are continually changing. A significant aspect of this piece is to explore the tunings presented by recordings and discussion of Venda ocarina music. For the Venda musician, choice of a particular instrument determines the harmonic result. For the Western art musician pitch and harmony are determined by the limitations of fixed pitch instruments. In the composition, two different pitch combinations are presented alongside each other, as shown in Example 1.8.. This is to illustrate the agreeability of both possibilities. In particular, the minor second is presented as an agreeable interval within context, although producing a harmonic structure which is somewhat strange to Western tonality. [Performance of "Exploring the Waterfall"]

SOME PROBLEMS OF TRANSCRIBING MUSIC

Analysis of the harmonic structure of ocarina music illustrates the potential limitations of using the musical language of the analyser rather than that of the system being analysed. Essentially, when working with different cultural systems, a bridge between cultures needs to be both identified and crossed. A means of identifying this bridge is to reach an understanding of a relationship between music and society which could be common to different socio-cultural systems. Bohlman defines music as:

- a social text, in that it both encodes the culture of a society and can contribute to the shaping of the society itself
- a social commodity, in that it is created by society in its maintenance or reproduction of itself
- a process, in that its meaning results from performance¹⁰

Music can be seen as a phenomenon which has a consistent function in all societies regardless of superficial differences. For Bohlman, the performance of music becomes a means of symbolising and expressing the structures that operate within a particular society. This is a concept which Blacking also refers to, stating that musical structures reflect patterns of human relations in

culture.¹¹ Any attempt to transcribe music from one culture to another is possible only in so far as the function of the music in its original culture can be related to the function of music in the culture to which it is to be transcribed. In this process, it is inevitable that the music which is transcribed becomes a product of the culture within which it is transcribed, and thus dependent on the music system of that culture. Practically speaking, this means that transcription of Venda music in a tonal format turns it into tonal music, when it is not necessarily tonal in its original performance. More contentiously, it could be said that the notation of Venda music in western tonal notation effectively transforms the music into western tonal music. This is even before any compositional process is entered into.

In order to provide a starting point for discussion around the nature of the difference between a Venda music system and a western art music system, the description of folk and art music systems as described by Booth and Kuhn are useful. These definitions are according to the structure of the social conditions within which the music is performed. They can be represented as in Table 2:1.¹² An understanding of the distinction between these two music systems is something Grainger described, thus: "... and we may be sure that the singing of (let us say) an unsophisticated Lincolnshire agriculturist of the old school will, in essentials, approximate more closely to that of the Hottentots or other savages (sic) than it will to the art music of an educated member of his own race living in a neighboring town."¹³ What is interesting to note from this is that different music systems may co-exist within one larger socio-cultural system. The terms folk and art therefore cannot be used as definitions of different cultures but should rather be seen as different processes which can occur within any socio-cultural system. For Blacking, "folk music expresses the actual solidarity of groups when people come together and produce patterns of sound that are signs of their group allegiances. Art music expresses theoretical solidarity when a composer brings together patterns of sound that express aspects of social experience."¹⁴ As with this definition, an essential difference between Venda music and western art music is in the relationship between composer, performer and audience. The very process of transcribing Venda music into a western art context immediately shifts the function of the music from a means of communal expression of group allegiance, to one of individual expression based on theoretical understanding. Transcription is a function of the individual's abilities and cultural bias, whereas performance of the same music in its original context represents the expression of a communal process. The success of any performance based on a transcription will depend on the degree to which the transcription embodies the experience of the society from which the audience is drawn. In other words, music which reflects a particular social text will reflect a different social text when presented in a different social context.

Part of the process of transcription is the process of notation. Indeed notation can be seen as one

¹¹Blacking, 1969ii, 38.

¹²Booth and Kuhn, 416-418 and 420-424. While providing a useful model for discussion, it must be noted that this model is not seen as an entirely accurate or final definition of what it sets out to define. The assertion, for example, that there are "no specialists" within a folk music system is a gross over-generalization.

¹³Grainger, 8.

¹⁴Blacking, 1995, 52.

⁸Videos 1,2. See Bibliography.

⁹Grainger, 15,16.

¹⁰Bohlman, 205,210,214.

of the fundamental differences between Venda music and western art music. This difference creates a problem in transcription which is summed up in Wegelin's claim that as soon as 'folk' music is notated, "it is no longer folk music".¹⁵ It is interesting to look at another example of the effects of notation in order to illustrate the point. Writing about current performance practice of music written between the 12th and 17th centuries, Greig defines notation as, "a codification, a representation in graphical form of acoustic intent" (emphasis added).¹⁶ He states that modern performances of notated medieval music "tell us more about current cultural conditions than about the original performance".¹⁷ Parallels can be seen between the trans-historical process involved here, and the transcultural process of transcribing Venda music. In both cases, notation facilitates the performance of music away from its original context. Further, the intention of the music may be re-interpreted according to its new context. Wegman states that once transplanted, medieval music is subjected to a number of aesthetic assumptions:

- that it is "high art music"
- that it has been stripped of its cultural and historical context
- that it is expected to speak directly to us

Going on to speak of developing a "period ear" in order to more fully understand the music, Wegman suggests that one should listen not only to medieval music as it is performed today, but also to what medieval writers themselves declare about it - not in order to adopt their prejudices, but in order that we might recognise our own.¹⁸ Applying this to the current topic, it could be said that a most valuable aspect of a study of Venda music and discussion with Venda musicians could be what that study reveals not only about the structures of Venda music, but also about the prejudices of western art music.

PROCESSES OF COMPOSITION: EXPLORING THE WATERFALL

If Venda music "becomes" western art music in the process of transcription and notation, what then is left of the waterfall to explore? And what is the point of exploring the waterfall in the first place, if the end result is a return to where one started from? In Reich's "Writings about music", he states that it is possible for western musicians to begin to approach non-western music as they would their own - that is through study and analysis, and through an understanding of how it is put together. Through this, it is understood that western musicians should continue as western musicians, either employing cheap imitations for "exotic" effects, or allowing a structural influence on their music, as in the use of rhythmic patterns. Speaking about dance, Reich states that "what is needed is not exoticism, but rather a return to the roots of dance common to all cultures performed by members of this culture within the context of our own high art tradition."¹⁹ What this raises is the issue of how one approaches the subject matter - either as ethnomusicologist or a composer. As ethnomusicologist, it is possible to collect and record material, and thereafter to analyse and theorise. As composer, one is ultimately seeking for a

source of enrichment for the process whereby one attempts to express ones self, ones culture and ones humanity. In each case the process of transcultural activity raises questions of ownership. Who owns the waterfall? Who is free to use it? For the ethnomusicologist the answer lies more in the fact of acknowledging the existence of the waterfall independent of the concept of ownership, and of affirming its value through the process of recording it. For the composer, it is important to understand that the waterfall is common to all music and all cultures. What one sees in the waterfall of another culture is ultimately a reflection of that within ones own. In this, exploring the waterfall can be seen primarily as a means of reaching a fuller understanding of the place where one is coming from through an understanding of the place one is looking at.

Returning to a more practical discussion of these issues, it is interesting to note Merriam's assertion that "composition seems not to differ radically between literate and non-literate people save in the question of writing".²⁰ He describes techniques of composition common to all cultures. These are shown in List 3.1. Composition then, as a process, can be seen to be somewhat independent from concepts related to notation. What becomes relevant in a process of Western art music composition which is informed by Venda music, is to determine the transferrable elements within Venda music. The use of these elements goes beyond the use of transcribed melodies in order to introduce exoticism as described by Reich. In order to more fully inform the compositional process, it becomes important to take into account a consideration of rhythm, pitch, form and texture in relation to the social context within which they were created.

3.1. Rhythm: One of the primary lessons to be learnt concerning rhythm is something which Grainger recognised long before the western art music system produced the likes of Stockhausen. Grainger stated that as bodily movements and gestures are abandoned, rhythms become more irregular.²¹ Perhaps this statement needs to be qualified as meaning that tempos and relative subdivisions of beats have become more and more irregular in western art music. This has happened as the western art musician has become increasingly alienated from the body as an object in the production of sound. This alienation is related to the increasing use of technology and mechanical devices in the production of western art music. One value of unwritten music for western art music is to act as a reminder of the importance of the body in producing sound. This concept is used in the composition "Exploring the Waterfall". A basic four beat rhythm set in a 12/8 meter becomes difficult for western musicians when the rhythm is broken up and distributed amongst the instrumentalists. The techniques employed are melodic hocketing²², and the concept that the whole effect of the rhythmical parts being greater than the sum of the individual parts²³. In "Confluences", the rhythmic pattern of 9/8 against 4/4 is used as a basis for the structure of the piece. The different instruments follow either rhythmical pattern with changes occurring at the

¹⁵ Wegelin, quoted in Levy, 8.

¹⁶ Greig, 130.

¹⁷ Grieg, 126.

¹⁸ Wegman, 310,311.

¹⁹ Reich, 38,39,42.

²⁰ Merriam, 184.

²¹ Grainger, 12,13.

²² It is interesting to note here that Simha Arom clearly demonstrates that the technique of hocketing in African culture is based primarily on interlocking rhythmic patterns from which melodic material ensues if fixed pitch instruments are used. Arom,307.

²³ In working on this piece one of the musicians asked whether it would be acceptable and useful for them to move their bodies while playing the music. I responded with great excitement that this would indeed be wonderful, and appropriate to the essence of the music!

beginning of each 9 bar cycle.

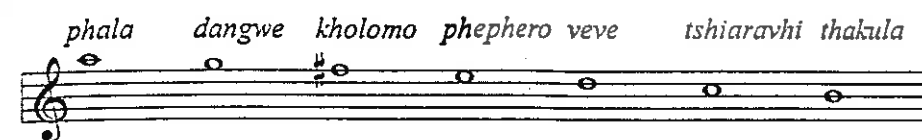
3.2. Pitch: On the level of pitch and harmony, "Exploring the Waterfall", is primarily an exploration of the different tonalities arising from the tunings of ocarinas as determined by the limitations of western notation. "Confluences" is an exploration of the use of both pentatonic and heptatonic scales and their related harmonic possibilities. In the two main sections, the first uses a pentatonic scale. The flutes play in consecutive fourths and fifths as a representation of Venda harmonies using companion notes. They mostly follow the asymmetrical 9/8 rhythm. The strings also play in a pentatonic scale but use harmonies of fourths and thirds more reminiscent of Celtic music. They stick mainly with the 4/4 rhythm. In the second section, the melody line is a direct transcription of a Venda melody originally played on a bowed instrument.. It is based on a heptatonic scale, and relates harmonically to *tshikona* with companion notes an octave, a fifth or a fourth apart. An attempt to represent indefinite tunings is made through the use of F sharp in the first flute and violin, and F natural in the second flute and violin. The two notes never occur concurrently, so the relative discord of the augmented unison is never heard. The effect results in a removal of the augmented fourth which played an important role in relation to *phala* and *thakula* in *tshikona*. This is therefore a departure from the harmonic structure associated with *tshikona*, and is interesting in that it diminishes the differences in harmonic tension and resolution in the music.

2.3. Form: The compositions show a combination of forms associated with both cultural systems. In "Exploring the Waterfall", the music is sectionalised, but is ultimately cyclic. The end point is entirely at the discretion of the performers. The object of the different sections is to create an illusion of hearing the music from different positions, as if the listeners physical relationship to the music was changing - resulting in different aspects of the same basic structure being highlighted at different times. In "Confluences", the rhythmic form of a Venda beer song is used as a framework for the first section, on which the different harmonic structures are superimposed. A-B-A form is used with an introduction and coda.

2.4. Texture: In these compositions an attempt is made to represent the waterfall texture of perpetual motion, without a change in basic musical structures. They employ the use of short repetitive rhythmic patterns which undergo little or no variation. This is at times used in conjunction with the device of hocketing. To lesser or greater extent techniques of dynamics and orchestration are used. In both pieces, the concept of ensemble playing is extremely important. In order for the music to work, the musicians have to understand exactly how their contribution of notes or rhythmical fragments fit into the broader whole. This explores the concept of a sound which is greater than the sum of its parts.

In presenting these compositional processes, the intention is not to provide a definitive means of transcultural appropriation. Rather, the aim is to provide an example of entering into a process of learning about and informing ones own culture, through an exploration of otherness. [Performance of "Confluences"]

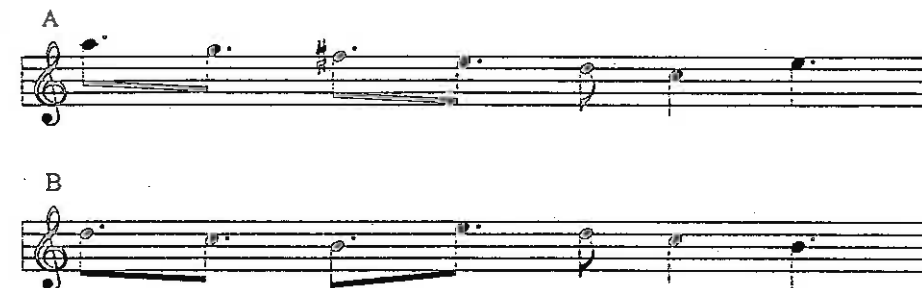
Ex. 1.2.1. Note names of the heptatonic scale



Ex. 1.2.2. Companion notes in Tshikona



Ex. 1.2.3. Harmonically equivalent melodies



Ex. 1.7. Ocarina duet

8va ♩ = 122

Ocarina 1

Ocarina 2

ad lib.

Ex 1.8. Different tonalities in ocarina music

A

ad lib.

B

ad lib.

TABLE 2.1.: Comparison of different music systems (after Booth and Kuhn)

Characteristics:	FOLK MUSIC SYSTEM	ART MUSIC SYSTEM
Social structure	nomadic, hunter-gatherers, collective, co-operative, communal	hierarchical, class based, system of economic support for musicians, class selection of patrons
Performance	group performance, indistinct boundaries between listeners and musicians, no specialists (sic)	formal performance, focus on individual creativity, clear boundaries between performers and audience, musicians are (paid) professionals, complex instruments are created by specialists
Musical form	repetitive forms, ostinato and improvisation, little intentional variability from one performance to the next	structural complexity, variation and elaboration, intentional uniqueness, virtuosity, individuality, purpose is entertainment and edification and not necessarily linked to any socio-cultural event
Training of musicians	oral transmission, most training tied to a specific socio-cultural event, not recorded for future comparisons or analysis, intentional goal to preserve what exists	musicians are products of intense training, personal innovation stretches grammatical boundaries, structural complexity, variation and elaboration.

LIST 3.1.

Techniques of composition common to all cultures (after Merriam)

1. reworking of old materials
2. incorporating old or borrowed materials
3. improvisation
4. communal re-creation
5. creation arising out of intense emotional experience
6. transposition
7. compositions from individual idiosyncrasy

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GETTING IT OFF THE GROUND: THE COMPILATION OF AN ELECTRONIC, MULTILINGUAL, MULTICULTURAL MUSIC ENCYCLOPEDIA FOR SOUTH AFRICAN MUSIC EDUCATION

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It is generally accepted that the traditional craftsmanship and ethnic arts of the indigenous people of South Africa must be documented, preserved and supported. Traditional music, dance and song should, therefore, also be documented and preserved. It is consequently of the utmost importance that projects will be initiated to **codify terminology**¹ dealing with musical phenomena, musical practices or activities and musical entities in the African languages. Especially for future generations that become more and more urbanised, and that do not always have the opportunity to take part in the rituals of their ancestors, this preservation process will be important. In addition, current trends in, for example, township music, should be documented and described for the same reasons.

The educational system in South Africa has recently been restructured to provide for non-racial, integrated education in the post-apartheid era. Children and students from a variety of African, Indian, Cape Malay, Western and other cultures are now educated together, and the idea is that one culture should not be regarded as superior to the others. For music education, this situation presents specific challenges. South Africa has many rich and diverse music cultures, but because people from the different cultural groups have been isolated from each other for so many years, and because many of the musical cultures have been marginalised to a great extent, many people know very little about some of the cultures.

The new *Draft Curriculum Framework*,² which advocates the so-called "Outcomes based education", provides for some specific outcomes in the learning area of "Arts and Culture". Some of these outcomes read as follows:

¹ H.T. Tracey (1969) already pleads for the codification of African music terminology.

² *Draft Curriculum Framework*, March 1997, Department of Education, Pretoria.

Learners will be able to:

1. apply knowledge, skills and techniques to create and be involved in arts/culture processes, products and development;
3. reflect on and evaluate, own arts/culture work and the work of others;
4. demonstrate an understanding of the origins, functions and development of cultural/artistic expression within a range of cultures.

In the new music syllabi, which will be compiled to provide such a type of training of pupils and students in more than one music culture, the different aspects of the various music cultures will, of course, also have to be **communicated verbally**, in addition to practical performance. Also in teacher training, verbal communication about music plays an important role. It will be of crucial importance that teachers and students use the correct **terms** when referring to musical practices, phenomena and experiences. They will also have to fully understand the **meaning** of these terms, and the **contexts** in which the terms are used. This is why a comprehensive music encyclopedia, covering musical terminology from all the different cultures in the country, is urgently needed.

Not only schools and teacher training will benefit from such a reference work, however. Researchers in the field of ethnomusicology, and research libraries of universities and other institutions might also be interested in using an encyclopedia as described below.

The music dictionaries and encyclopedias currently used in South Africa were mainly compiled abroad. They focus almost entirely on Western music. Existing Afrikaans music dictionaries or glossaries also only concentrate on Western music. There exists,

therefore, an urgent need for an up-to-date, multilingual, multicultural music encyclopedia with explanations, which includes terms and concepts from the various music cultures in Southern Africa.

The use of the term *encyclopedia* has to be explicated. The main idea is to make a **multimedia database** available which could also be disseminated by means of **print-outs**, but which will in the first place be available on **CD-ROM** or Internet. Because the compilation will necessarily include video-clippings, notation examples and sound recordings and other illustrative material, one will have to use an adequate computer programme. The advantage of using a hypertext computer programme is that it will be possible to access key terms, and to make hypertext jumps to illustrative texts, illustrations and bibliographic information on the most relevant literature in the particular field, etc. The issue of a suitable computer programme receives attention at the moment. It seems that such a computer programme is available at our university, which means that one would have the needed infra-structure if problems should arise.

One of the advantages of using a computer programme, is that printing and setting costs can be kept to a minimum. Once the revised data is in the computer, considerable time is saved because the data does not have to be typed, proofread, and set, etc., over again. Another advantage of using a suitable computer programme is that all the members of the committee could use a uniform system. More time would then be available for actual research, which would result in a more useful product.

As for the **printed version**, one could disseminate the print-outs, using the same format as the well-known *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie* by H H Eggebrecht. This encyclopedia uses an organising file, to which one can add loose pages with each new edition. Such a printed version will, of course, have to be supplemented by videos and sound cassettes, in order to provide the necessary information to readers.

Users, whether schools, libraries and institutions or private persons, will be able to register for the encyclopedia. From time to time, one could send updated versions of

the database to subscribers. The registration funds generated in this way, could be used to finance the revision and updating of the database. Users will be able to "participate" in the revision of the database, since they will be encouraged to send commentaries, suggestions, newly coined terms, etc. to the editorial committee. Such a process would make South African musical terminology more accurate and accessible, and might, therefore, contribute to standardisation.

At the moment, it seems possible that one could make **two different versions** of this encyclopedia. One version could be a **scholarly, comprehensive version** which contains all possible types of information needed by researchers and post-graduates. The other version could be a more **popular** one, which includes only some types of information needed by the general public and school pupils.

The main idea is that terms from the **different music cultures** (and therefore from different languages) in Southern Africa will be included in the encyclopedia. The meaning explanations and other information, however, will be given in English, which is an academic **lingua franca**, not only in South Africa, but also in the rest of the world.

The **types of information** to be included in the proposed encyclopedia are based³ on the comprehensive research done by the German theoretical lexicographer, Herbert Ernst Wiegand.⁴ He has devised a comprehensive theory about dictionaries and encyclopedias, which includes a **framework for special-field dictionaries or encyclopedias**. This framework also specifies the types of information that should be included in works such as the planned music encyclopedia, based specifically on the **needs of the potential users**. Wiegand also suggests that one should take into account the research done by Kernerding (1993). Kernerding has determined the types of questions that users usually ask when they want to know something about an object, phenomenon or event.

³ Cf. Smit (1997) in this regard.

⁴ Cf., for example, Wiegand (1979; 1983; 1984; 1984a; 1988; and 1993.)

In the case of the planned encyclopedia, the types of information that one might include, especially in the more academic version, are consequently the following:

- (i) The **term** should be given, followed by an indication of the **language of origin**, and the **part of speech**.
- (ii) **One should give the pronunciation and stress pattern**. In the computerised version, this information should be given in sound.
- (iii) A short **meaning explanation** should follow.
- (iv) If there is a **translation equivalent** for the term, this should appear.⁵
- (v) Then other types of **encyclopedic information** should follow. For example, if the term refers to an event, one would need information on the essential phases of the musical event, the conditions which make the event possible, the people participating in the event, the relevant features of the event and of the people partaking in it, the duration of the event, etc. If the term refers to an object such as, for example, a musical instrument, information should be given on the form, colour and measurements of the object, the essential parts of which it consists, its visible and special features, the way in which it is used, its origins, its geographical distribution, and its functions within the particular cultural context.
- (vi) **Other names** used for the object or event should be listed.
- (vii) Other, **similar events or objects** should be referred to, by way of cross-reference. A **classification** of the object or event within a broader hierarchy of objects, phenomena and events will be useful here.

⁵ The translation equivalent in this case will be **in English**. If no English translation is available, this slot will be left open. This will indicate to the user that the term itself should be used as a loan word in English. This is the case, for example, with the term *mbira*.

(viii) Some **etymological information** should be given, to indicate where the term originated, and how it developed throughout the years.

(ix) **Examples to illustrate** the term should be given. These examples could be in the form of illustrations, video clippings, sound recordings, notational examples, etc.

(x) **Citations** may follow, if available.

(xi) **References** to relevant literature should be given.

From the above-mentioned types of information, it is clear that not only encyclopedic information will be given. Some **semantic** and other types of **linguistic information**, for the purpose of being comprehensive, especially with a view to ethnomusicological research, will also have to be presented.

There will be several **steps** within the different **phases** of the project, which will have to be followed:

(i) At the beginning of the first phase, an organising committee, consisting of experts from various music cultures and/or the field of lexicography, will have to be appointed.

This committee should attempt to establish a provisional advisory working group with broader representation. People who have already shown interest and offered their services, will be included, while other experts should be identified and approached. Ethnomusicologists, lexicographers, specialists on intercultural communication, specialists on organisation, representatives from the education department, and computer experts will be needed. Co-operation from various institutions will be necessary. For example, **PROLEX**, (=Programme for Lexicography) of the Department of Afrikaans and Dutch at the University of Stellenbosch, has already shown interest in working

together with this project. This programme facilitates training in lexicographical matters. There is an arrangement with the project leader to provide **post-graduate students** interested in special-field lexicography to assist with practical lexicographical work. Also, the Department of African Languages of the University of Stellenbosch will be approached. At the moment, a M.Phil. course is being devised at the Department of Music at the University of Stellenbosch, in which students may learn how to make CD-ROM multimedia programmes containing ethnomusicological data. The National Terminology Services have expressed their willingness to assist with computer programmes and computer training of co-workers, if necessary.

(ii) The second task of the organising committee will be to draw up a **policy** for the encyclopedia, i.e. to establish the main aims of the encyclopedia to be compiled. Also, some **guidelines** will have to be drawn up for the advisory committee on the following aspects: the organisation of the project, elementary training in terminology work, the occurrence of systems of concepts, the type of explanation which will be given, the harmonisation of information into an adequate encyclopedia entry, etc. These aspects will then be presented to the advisory group at a one-day or two-day seminar before or after a major national congress, which they would normally attend at their own expense.

(iii) The next step will be to determine from which sources terms will be excerpted. This will be decided by the organising committee, with advice from experts in the different music cultures, and will be done in accordance with internationally recognised lexicographical strategies.⁶ The following sources might be considered:

* as primary sources: bibliographies, dissertations, textbooks, the most relevant journal articles and music manuscripts, as well as relevant

⁶ Cf., for example, also the following work: Riggs (1989; 1992) and Riggs and Malkia (1992).

unpublished literature by scholars in the field of the various South African music cultures. There are already many sources available. These sources, however, are not so readily available to school pupils and university students. That is why it is necessary to establish one standard work in which these sources can be reflected in a user-friendly way, such as a multimedia encyclopedia;

* as secondary sources: existing terminology lists, general dictionaries and encyclopedias;

* as tertiary sources: audio-visual examples of oral tradition, interviews with musicians, etc.

(iv) After excerpting the selected literature and sources, the lexicographers and the experts from the different music cultures can then set about identifying the **key concepts of the subject field**, and the **terms** used to denote these concepts. The concepts can then be listed and classified, and each term provided with a provisional explanation in clear and understandable English.⁷

(v) The next step will be to send the documented data to the experts on the advisory committee. Their main function will be to evaluate the lists of terms which fall within their field of speciality, and to correct or supplement the subject information. They will return the data to the lexicographers, who will also document their comments, and record alterations and additions.

(vi) A further step will be to edit the data, according to the recommendations of the advisory committee, to proofread the print-outs, and to disseminate the product in either a print-out format or on CD-ROM. The main idea is to make the data available in several phases. This means that the product which

will become available at the end of the first phase, can be scrutinised by the users, and comments made, such as suggestions for changes, further inclusions, new terms coined, etc. Revisions and refinements will, therefore, be possible in the next edition of the encyclopedia.

Because such a vast amount of literature and audio-visual material will have to be excerpted, and so many personal interviews conducted, in order to provide adequate information, this project might take several years. It is also very difficult to estimate the real costs of such a project to completion. It would therefore be advisable to restrict the project to several phases. For example, the first phase could stretch over a period of **three years**, in order to draw up a representative example of what the completed encyclopedia will look like. Certain concepts will be worked out in detail, while others will only be recorded for later reference. At the end of this first phase, a first edition of the concepts which have been completed will have to be made available, and evaluated.

In the second phase, the encyclopedia will be developed fully, in that adequate information on a great number of concepts and terms will be included. Recommendations received by users after the publication of the first edition will also be incorporated.

The planned encyclopedia might therefore not only fulfil an educational need, but could possibly also serve as an example to local and international special-field lexicography. If any of you, listeners, is interested in joining this project, please do so. This project should be a team effort, and we will need people from as many different fields as possible.

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⁷ According to Moulin (1983:149), it will be necessary to formulate definitions in such a way that they are "clear, complete and accurate".

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The incorporation of 'foreign' concepts into the 'traditional' cosmology of the Xhosa-speaking people and its subsequent effects upon Xhosa ritual music.

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This discussion is based upon the divination techniques and incorporated music of a particular diviner, "Chief" Nicholas Tilana Gcaleka, from Teko Kona in the Eastern Cape (formerly Transkei). The title 'chief' is not a political one, but one adopted by Chief Gcaleka, who, as a diviner, recognises a realm of ancestors of both Xhosa and 'foreign' cultural origin, and perceives himself as a "Chief of all the ancestors."

The particular song under scrutiny here is one which Chief Gcaleka himself classifies as one of his *iingoma*¹ *zomNdawu* (songs of Ndau). I refer to the song as *Mndawane*, this being the most prominent word phrase in the song. This is also a title of convenience, and it is justified since the Xhosa people themselves are not so much concerned with exact song titles as with song types. Furthermore, the music of diviners - *iingoma zamaqgirha* (diviners' songs) - constitutes a particular category of Xhosa music, being classified emically² on the basis of its social function. (Hansen 1981:563, 577)

Chief Gcaleka is a fairly controversial figure who came into the public eye in 1996 after completing a venture to the United Kingdom to retrieve the skull of Hintsa Ka Phalo. Hintsa (1789-1835) was a chief of the Gcaleka chiefdom and Paramount Chief of the Xhosa cluster of chiefdoms (of which the Gcaleka were the main chiefdom), who was shot dead by a British scout, at the site of the Ngqabarha River on 14 May, 1835 whilst fleeing from captivity. Chief Gcaleka's heritage shows that he is of the Royal house of Phalo. The issue of the skull remained highly contentious and, for some parties, unresolved, after it was confiscated by police and kept for DNA testing late last year. The outcome of the tests revealed the identity of the skull to be that of a Caucasian woman. Chief Gcaleka has been attempting to repossess the skull, in order to afford it a burial in the Eastern Province and put the whole issue to rest.

Upon meeting Chief Gcaleka early in 1996, I was fascinated by the cosmological beliefs he held. Anthropological literature supports the fact that central to the worldview of most Xhosa-speaking people, is the religious concept of ancestor veneration. The ancestors are the deceased members of the lineage and clan, as well as the spiritual custodians of their communities of living descendants, in whose lives they take a keen and enduring interest and concern. (Hunter, 1964:231; Krige, 1974:283; Hammond-Tooke, 1974:324)

In southern Nguni existence, an attempt is made to balance and maintain an amicable relationship between the living and the ancestors. Disturbance of this order is recognised through physical indications such as certain illnesses, natural disasters and unnatural death. The source of this misfortune is acknowledged as evil forces (manifested in the powers of witches and sorcerers), or the ancestors, who are punishing the afflicted person for neglecting a customary obligation. Hence, even though they are perceived to be protective and benevolent, the ancestors demand respect and veneration from their descendants, demonstrated in the form of customary religious and kinship rituals. Ancestrally-sent illness as a reprimand for breach of customary duty is always curable, and it is through religious ritual, that the return to equilibrium is effected. (Hunter, 1964:234; Krige, 1974:320; Ngubane, 1977:51; Berglund, 1989:79; Kiernan in Prozesky & de Gruchy, 1995:23)

When the ancestors are appealed to in instances of misfortune, most often a channel is needed to enable communication between the ancestors and their descendants, in which enlightenment, clarification and ultimately wellbeing, may be achieved. The agent qualified for such a task is the diviner, who is "the link between the people and the ancestors" (Chief Gcaleka) and permanently in a state of closeness to them. The vocation of diviner originates with the calling by the ancestors (*ukubiza*)³, followed by a training period as a novice diviner (*ithwasa*)⁴ in which he/she learns the processes of diagnosing and treating. Divination rituals essentially concern communication with the ancestors who speak through the diviner, it being his/her responsibility to interpret the causes of misfortune and to prescribe the means for restoring good interpersonal relationships which have been ruptured. (Thorpe, 1991:107)

Music is an integral part of a diviner's life and the rituals which he/she performs. As Chief Gcaleka says, "The songs and the dancing help to call the ancestors to come near to the diviner. When these spirits possess me, I sing a song, [which] transforms [me] into a different state, a state in which I can communicate with, and understand the spirits. [They] possess [me] in such a way that what I say constitutes what the spirits say." (translation from Xhosa, M.Ntleki)

It is documented in southern Nguni cosmology (incorporating Xhosa cosmology), that the ancestors are commonly classified into two categories, notably those ancestors who are identified as members of the clan, and are therefore 'close' in proximity to their living descendants. They may also be referred to as "home ancestors" or the "living dead". (Prins, 1996:216; Bührmann, 1984:29) There are also more remote ancestors who are identified with 'the forest', or water environments, who are not directly related to the human element, and are known in Xhosa terminology as the "People/Ancestors of the Forest" (*isihlwele ehlahini*)⁵, and the "People/Ancestors of the River" (*isihlwele zasemlanjeni*)⁶. It is documented that of these two categories of ancestors, the second is the more powerful. The River ancestors, who reputedly live in water environments, have an important role in the commencement (bringing on) of the calling in those people destined to become diviners. (Bührmann, 1984:29-30)

Several of my diviner informants, as documented in my dissertation research, have in some way identified with the above two categories of ancestors, but Chief Gcaleka has a more collective description of the ancestors. He classes the ancestors into *several* categories⁷, for which he uses particular labels. Furthermore, he mentions that "(ancestral) spirits of different types come with songs of different types", which makes his hypothesis even more compelling.

The particular category of ancestors with which this paper is concerned, is that which Chief Gcaleka himself describes as the spirits *emlanjeni* ('in the river'), or *amakhos' emanzini*⁸ (spirits in the water). These ancestors presumably could be linked to the above descriptions of River ancestors, as found in Xhosa cosmology. However, Chief Gcaleka names and equates⁹ with this category, *amandawu* ancestors - or the ancestors of the Nda (people), which suggests a degree of foreignness, particularly from original Xhosa conceptual beliefs. The Zulu term, *Ndawu* refers to "a member of the Nda tribe of Southern Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa and people regarded as accomplished in magical practices." (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:537) The use of the *amandawu* spiritual practices is prevalent amongst Zulu- and SiSwati-speaking diviners; but amongst Xhosa-speaking diviners, it is remote.

It can be seen that Chief Gcaleka has adopted a concept that is distinct from that which is found in his own cultural cosmology, and through its embodiment in his divination techniques (and subsequently, his ritual music) - he appears to be a *bricoleur*. (Hurst in Prins, 1995:216) This term was used by Prins in context of diviners who use "whatever is handy and accessible - myths, beliefs, traditions...culture in the widest sense of the term - to communicate ideas and convey understandings to others." (1995:216) The diviner "frequently repositions these elements and, in their new use, they become condensed expressions of necessary relations. The diviner thus builds up structures by fitting together the remains of events." (Levi-Strauss in Prins, 1995:216)

Literary evidence suggests that *amandawu* have become significant in Xhosa cosmology via Zulu thought patterns, in which they are equally significant. Chief Gcaleka justified this assumption by stating that, "The spirit of *amandawu* has entered the Xhosa people, via the Zulus because both cultures are Nguni." Yet whence Chief Gcaleka derived these influences, is debatable. Although a Xhosa by birth and self-acknowledged Xhosa diviner, it is alleged by Xhosa-speaking informants that Chief Gcaleka underwent his training with a Zulu or Swazi diviner. It is therefore plausible to suggest that the incorporation of *amandawu* into his system of beliefs was instilled during his training.

A Xhosa person training under the direction of a cultural 'outsider' is deemed contentious and unethical among many Xhosa, hence Chief Gcaleka is secretive regarding his training, and he was reluctant to elaborate upon it during interviews.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the issue has repercussions in that his status as diviner remains unrecognised by certain Xhosa-speaking people.¹¹ Despite being a controversial figure, Chief Gcaleka continues to enjoy a large following of initiates and clientele alike. Furthermore, a possible reason for the reactions of many who do not follow him, has much to do with how he has manipulated cosmological concepts (as have several diviners I have met). This influences his music structurally and stylistically and subsequently makes it very interesting.

The music under discussion in this paper comes from Chief Gcaleka's Nda song repertoire, as sung and documented upon two separate incidents, notably a ritual cleansing, and preceding an *intlombe*¹² (seance). It is necessary at this point to briefly describe the former. The ritual cleansing involved a man experiencing considerable misfortune with *amandawu* ancestors, who had allegedly possessed his own ancestors¹³. For placation, he sacrificed two fowls under Chief Gcaleka's guidance, and subsequently sang with Chief Gcaleka and several family supporters, a song of supplication for *amandawu* ancestors.

One may enquire as to why there was a plea for mercy: *amandawu* are considered a very relentless and cruel nation of ancestors, and they have been documented as troublesome¹⁴. (Hammond-Tooke, 1989:127) I have much evidence to support this in my research, but a brief description provided by Chief Gcaleka will suffice:

The powerful *amandawu* are constantly searching for strong ancestors of the Xhosa and Zulu, from whom they can 'take out the power'. People possess *amandawu*, and when they die, such a spirit seeks out the other *amandawu* ancestors in the sea, where all the ancestors dwell. Once an Nda spirit has found a powerful ancestor - an ancestor of a person who is financially stable with a successful business and homelife - the spirit will capture the ancestor and weaken it, by taking control of its power. The outcome is devastating, as the living descendant concerned will be dogged by misfortunes, such as bankruptcy, violence and

corruption. The solution for the person concerned is to consult a diviner, who will speak to the angry invading ancestor. (translation from Xhosa, M.Ntleki)

From Chief Gcaleka's description, the concept of possession becomes fairly obvious, and it is questionable as to whether *amandawu*-based rituals involve a possession cult in his view. Spirit possession is commonly associated with mediums who, in certain African societies, are distinct from diviners, yet in others, a medium may also work as a diviner or herbalist. Generally, "mediums function in this role only when 'possessed' by a spirit, otherwise they are normal people without specialized abilities." (Mbiti, 1990:167)

Hammond-Tooke states that possession cults are a recent development in Nguni world view, and they have probably only infiltrated the religious system since the turn of the century. They initially emerged in Zimbabwe, yet now such cults have been recorded amongst the Tsonga, Venda, Nda, Pedi, Lovedu, Kgaga and Zulu people of Southern Africa and Mozambique. This development is a consequence of the ever-changing environment and lifestyle (incorporating industrial development) of Africans, who have subsequently broadened their "cosmological horizons", including their belief in "the power of *alien* spirits." (Hammond-Tooke, 1989:126)

Possession cults are therefore not a 'traditional' concept, nor have they been particularly associated with the Xhosa-speaking people. The reason for this could be attributable to the basic difference between divination practice and possession cults, as stated by Hammond-Tooke, "Nguni divination is an example of *spirit mediumship*, in which the diviner acts as a conduit, as it were, for the ancestors, but in which there is no *possession* by the spirit. In the possession cult, on the other hand, it is believed that the personality of the possessing spirit is not simply being expressed, but rather that the spirit itself has taken over the host's body." (Boersema in Hammond-Tooke, 1989:127) Therefore the question that arises, is whether Chief Gcaleka has indeed incorporated the 'foreign' concept of spirit possession into his practices or not.

Possibly the answer may be found in Chief Gcaleka's Nda song repertoire, which can be compared with certain Tsonga exorcism songs. *Amndawu* are significant in exorcism rituals (*mancomane*) - in which either Zulu or Nda spirits are exorcised with the help of spirit-specific music. In cases of Nda possession, the music is set in the hepta mode (of Nda music) and is accompanied by characteristic drum rhythms. (Johnston, 1971:312) A musical study of Nda spirit songs was done by Thomas Johnston in 1971, who based his analysis on ten songs performed in Shangana-Tsonga exorcism rituals. He identifies three different types of *mancomane* songs used to expel spirits, two of which pertain to *amandawu* possession 1) *mandhlozi* pentatonic songs in 'foursquare' drum rhythms to expel Zulu spirits; and 2) *xidzimba* hepta songs with triple rhythm drumming to expel Nda spirits. 3) In stubborn cases of the latter, quadruple rhythm is employed in the songs, known as *xiNda*. (1972:324)

Indirectly through the study of the Tsonga music, a similarity became evident in my own musical analysis of Chief Gcaleka's song, and indeed other music associated with *amandawu*, as recorded amongst my SiSwati informants. This was further confirmed by a comparative analysis of two *-hlehla* songs of Swazi diviners, associated with the Nda ancestors, which are documented in Coppenhall's study of divination music in the Cape Town townships. Coppenhall's two songs are in triple and quadruple rhythm respectively. (1990:274-275)

Arguably, these twelve songs present relatively little data for comparative studies with Xhosa divination music, which has been well documented, but they are the only examples of Nda spirit songs and musical transcriptions available to me. With one exception (in Coppenhall, 1990:273), the songs are designed with drumming and vocal patterns in which groupings of two pulses (in the vocal phrases) are aligned with groupings of three pulses (in the drumming).

eg 

Although this type of rhythmic alignment is found in certain styles of Xhosa music (eg Bow songs between the vocal and bow note patterns), and in walking songs (between vocal and metrical patterns generated by physical actions) and Sounds (between vocal and clapped patterns) - it has not been reported for Xhosa divination music. (Hansen, 1981:656-8) Furthermore, in Chief Gcaleka's Nda-related song, *Mndawane*, this 2:3 type of alignment is *inherent*. It is not articulated audibly, however, because the vocal-melodic patterns, set within the two-pulse groupings, are accompanied by clapping, which occurs systematically in the sequences of triple beats:

ie 

Since Chief Gcaleka's Nda song demonstrates certain structural and stylistic features of both Xhosa divination music, and Nda ritual music (as identified by Johnston and Coppenhall), I feel that a discussion of these features is justified, even though the amount of Nda musical evidence in comparatively small.

ex 2 The song: *Mndawane, wangen' uMndawane* ("Nda ancestor, enter Nda ancestor")

The song was not accompanied by dancing; the main officiant (Chief Gcaleka) and the other participants remained seated throughout the performance. Chief Gcaleka gave the following explanation of the song:

This is the song of uMndawu, the spirit of this man. uMndawu should come to this man's spirit and through his acceptance, everything will be fine. *uMndawane* is the spirit we are trying to win over, which lives in the river. We are entreating uMndawu so he can set everything right - that's why we make you [the man] eat blood. (translated from Xhosa by M.Ntleki and N.Mtshabe)

Form number: (48)

Cyclic length: 16 X 

Like so much African music, Xhosa divination songs are cyclic in form. They consist of repetitions of total patterns of fixed length, which in performance are repeated ad infinitum. A song's metrical framework is explicitly "defined by a specific number of body movements and beats," which include clapping, dancing and drumming. (Hansen, 1981:616) In divination songs, the metrical patterning is commonly divisive, comprising regular pulse groupings into duple or triple beats; which are audibly defined by drumming, and supplemented by hand clapping. In the first performance of *Mndawane*, the cyclic length of 16 triple beats is defined by hand claps.

Tonality:

The tonality is the hexa-based penta tonality of Xhosa music, the mode being represented in a convenient transposition as the descending sequence A - G - E - D - C. (see ex. 1)

Tempo: ♩. = 132 MM.

Transposition: Present C is equal to original D.

Structure:

The basic antiphonal structure of a Xhosa divination music is defined by the presence of at least one pair of complementary phrases (known as the Solo and Chorus)¹⁵, which carry non-identical texts. (Rycroft, 1967:101, Hansen, 1981:616) This principle is obscured in the song, in that Chief Gcaleka himself establishes and maintains the total vocal-melodic pattern, which is subsequently taken up by the other participants. There are no discernible Call and Response phrases with different starting points and with consecutive or overlapping phrases, which is so characteristic of Xhosa (and Nguni) polyphonic music. (Rycroft, 1967:92)

Chief Gcaleka's vocal-melodic pattern is based on a Xhosa melodic 'formula' that is evident in both archaic and contemporary styles of Xhosa music: the repetition of a phrase on different degrees of the hexa-(based) mode. In this particular Ndau-related song, melodic repetition concludes with a short vocal phrase (*wo Mndawane*), sung by Chief Gcaleka. Chief Gcaleka's procedure here is reminiscent of a common procedure followed by an individual singer:- when asked to demonstrate a song, he/she attempts to present the essentials of the two basic phrases which underlie Nguni multipart music. (Rycroft, 1967:88)

Although there is no antiphonal exchange (between Solo and Chorus) in this particular song, the *balance* of phrases, and the concluding character of the short after-phrase, suggests *antiphony* in effect.

After Chief Gcaleka initiated the song and established the song pattern, the participants (five in number) entered softly and hesitantly, within the first beat of the fourth cycle. It was as if they did not know the song. They sang fragments of the main vocal melody (carrying the text, *Mndawane*), whilst Chief Gcaleka maintained it, with minor rhythmic variations (accompanying textual modifications), for example, *Mndawanango, Mndawanango, Mndawandwem Mndawane/ Mndawane, Mndawane, Wangen' uMndawane*.

ie  changing to 
and 

Divination songs are accompanied by clapping¹⁶ and Chief Gcaleka introduced clapping only after the song was underway, this also being taken up by the chorus of participants. The performance was a short one (nine cycles in all), and throughout it, the chorus never sang with confidence. Most of the time, their singing was subdued, and even inaudible at times. This type of response is highly unusual in such a ritual context, and may have been due to 1) the singers' unfamiliarity with the song, or 2) their reluctance to sing a song that belongs to Ndau ancestors, who are 'foreign' to Xhosa cosmology - or both. As Chief Gcaleka himself said, "*Amandawu* are a different race from the Zulus and the Xhosas."

Noticeably absent in this song is the polyrhythmic harmony which is characteristic of Xhosa divination music and other musical categories. This is achieved through the additional improvisations of individual singers, whose interpolated vocal phrases are dependent - harmonically and rhythmically - on one of the two main (Solo and Chorus) phrases. These interpolations follow in parallel movement, either using the same notes, or 'harmonically-equivalent' notes (called *izihlobo* by Xhosa informants). (Hansen, 1981:619-620)

Furthermore, a characteristic of Xhosa divination music (and some other categories), is that all the vocal phrases occur in such a way that their inherent accents 'off-beat' (see below) part of the time with the beats of the basic metre. Regardless of the number of extra variations, which contribute to the complexity of the musical texture, a basic two-fold temporal contrast is retained within the basic vocal organisation. This principle has been recorded and documented by Hansen, as being distinct from other styles of Xhosa music in which the temporal relationship between the vocal parts is greater, resulting in a more polyrhythmic musical structure. (Hansen, 1981:632) However, this does not feature in the performance of this song, and indeed I did not encounter this type of complex polyphonic music during my research. Most of the songs which I recorded, suggest antiphony, with minimal overlapping between parts, and texture enrichment achieved through tonal parallelism.

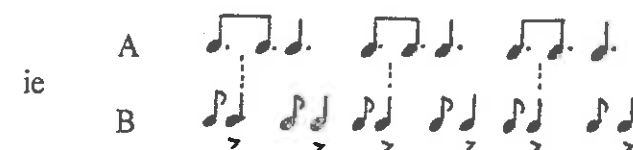
The performance of *Mndawane* at the ritual cleansing did not have an accompanying drum pattern, which is a common feature in Xhosa divination music. Drum patterns are specifically aligned to the vocal patterns and they supplement the clapping. There is no rhythmic contrast between the clapping and drum patterns, and in drumming, the drummer will subdivide the main beats equally or unequally, employing a beater grasped in each hand. (Hansen, 1981:581)

Iambic drum patterning occurs in Xhosa divination music, and the accentuation is either  or . Whichever is used, it is usual to have what has been termed as 'off-beat' phrasing between the beats of the basic metre (expressed in the drumming and handclaps) and the main accents in the vocal-melodic pattern. This is illustrated by certain vocal-melodic notes which fall inbetween the handclaps part of the time, but not all of the time, so that the percussive and vocal patterns are staggered. (Hansen, 1981:625, 628, 644)

Another performance of this song, *Mndawane*, occurred at the preparations for an *intlombe* (seance) to be held at Chief Gcaleka's home in New Crossroads. On this occasion, there was a drummer and drum at hand. However, it was interesting to note that the drummer was unable to synchronise her iambic drumming pattern with the vocal-melodic pattern. At the same time, I noticed that the majority of participants did not seem to be familiar with the song, or if they were, they still sang with distraction, almost as if ill-at-ease with it.

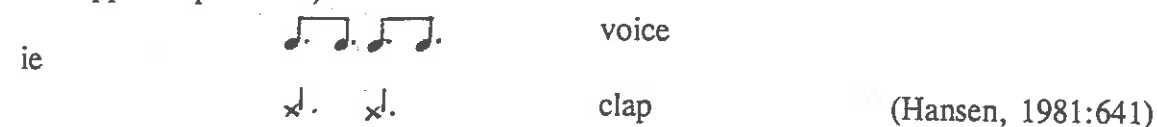
I have already mentioned that the incorporation of *amandawu* as ancestral spirits into Nguni ritual practices is a recent development and Chief Gcaleka's adoption of these spirits into Xhosa rituals is a source of contention among some Xhosa. Yet with this adoption I believe, a special style of *music* has developed, and *this* could be the real reason behind my informants' uncertain performance. This conclusion was validated with the help of my supervisor, when we uncovered a particular principle operating in the rhythmic organisation of the song, that has not been observed in 'traditional' Xhosa music before.

As stated earlier, in Xhosa divination songs, 'off-beat' phrasing is a common feature, as is iambic patterning. (Hansen, 1981:644) In the second performance of *Mndawane*, the drummer attempted to combine an iambic drum pattern with the triple rhythm of the vocal phrases:

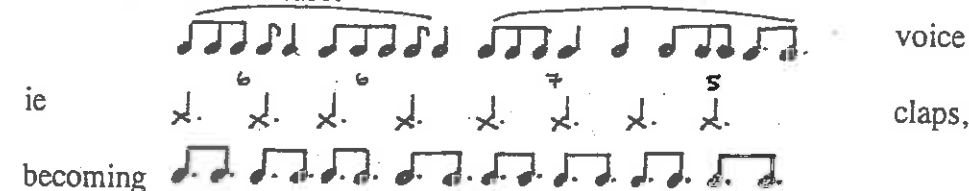


Theoretically, this alignment is possible, since the aspects of staggering vocal and drum beats and the near-miss relationship between the two patterns, do exist in Xhosa voice and drum combinations. Furthermore, viewed in isolation, pattern A and B above occur in certain styles of Xhosa music. However, the *combination* of the two patterns is foreign to Xhosa musical practice, because this kind of rhythmic alignment does not conform with principles of timing and cross-rhythms in Xhosa music. In fact it does not exist therein - there is no documentary evidence of its occurrence. Evidently, the drummer was unable to perform satisfactorily, although she tried several times to adjust to the tempo and rhythm of the music. I believe that her failure to do so was because such a rhythm is totally alien to Xhosa musical practice.

Then too, in *Mndawane*, the rhythm of the vocal pattern (type A) conforms with the patterning traits of known Ndaub song melodies. (Johnston, 1971:312-322) In Xhosa music, this patterning has been identified in the vocal parts of - 1) *indlamu* dance songs, in relation to clapped triple beats)



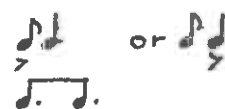
2) in Sounds, for example, *Ziphi zinkomo*, in which a basic metre of 16 X ♩ is varied to 16 X ♩, but the sequence of triple pulse groupings is aligned with a vocal-melodic pattern that is additive in structure.



(Hansen, 1981:656-7)

According to Hansen, duple metres are far more common than triple metres in Xhosa music. (1981:654) When the latter occur, they may be expressed in terms of qualitative grouping as ♩ or ♩, or ♩. When such patterns are accompanied by clapping, the beat is subdivided iambically:-

or equally:-



However, to reiterate, there is no evidence of the *alignment* of iambic patterning with the triple rhythm patterning, as was attempted by Chief Gcaleka's drummer. This alignment is not part of the established Xhosa divination song repertoire, let alone Xhosa music generally. Furthermore, iambic drumming does not seem to be a characteristic feature of Ndaub ritual music. Consequently the alignment of the drumming pattern with the vocal pattern of *Mndawane*, is also out of place.

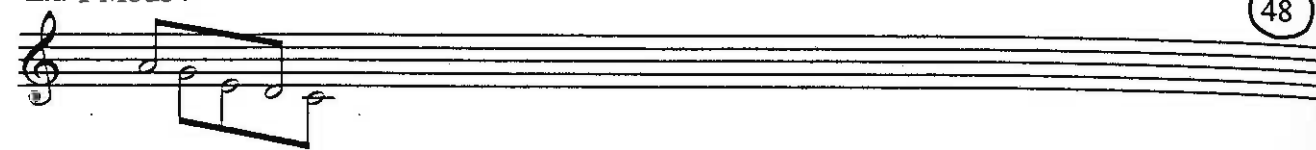
With respect to my findings concerning this song, John Blacking's observations concerning 'foreign' influences on Venda possession cult music, are particularly relevant. He notes that it is in the *rhythm* and the *tempo* of the *drumming*, rather than in the context of the words and singing style, that there is evidence of foreign origins in the dance. (1995:182, italics mine). Stylistically, Ndaub spirit songs represent a deviation from the traditional style of Xhosa ritual music, and the 'foreign' influence is most obvious in the vocal-melodic rhythm and the song's fast tempo.

In conclusion, the incorporation of *amandawu* spirits into Nguni worldview is a recent development and with such adaptation, its associated music - classified by Chief Gcaleka as *iingoma zomNdaub* - will also undergo change. Also, it has been stated that "musical change...is not 'caused' by 'contact among people and cultures' or the 'movement of populations': it is brought about by decisions made by individuals about music making and music on the basis of their experiences of music and attitudes to it in different social contexts." (Nettl and Blacking in Blacking, 1995:160) This is further postulated by Bascom and elaborated by Kubik, that ultimately, stability and change in musical style rests in the hands of the individual. In the light of innovation in cross-cultural exchange; "without invention, neither acculturation nor diffusion could take place. Every idea has its origin, ultimately, with some individual living at some time in some society, even though we may never know who, when or where." (Bascom in Kubik, 1986:57)

In divination music, the idea and composition of a song will be the responsibility of an individual diviner. The diviner will then convey the musical idea and its text to people in the community. "Like a political leader...he needs the response of others...he invites friends, relations to hear his idea, and to teach them what they should do and how they should respond." (Kubik, 1986:57) Diviners as chief officiants of ritual action, are powerful instigators of musical variation (within musical continuity) and innovation, implying musical change. Chief Gcaleka is no exception, and what he has achieved, has demonstrated his adoption and adaption of elements foreign to cultural concepts of the Xhosa. This idea is verified by Blacking, who states that, "music is the best equipped of the performing arts to express both the ever-changing realities of biological and social life and the continuity of the concepts on which human societies depend for their existence." (1995:153)

Mndawane, Wangen' uMndawane.

Ex. 1 Mode :



48

Ex. 2 SOLO (INTRODUCTORY PHRASE) :



12. The term seance is used to explain the word *intlombe* by Hammond-Tooke (1989:108), Hansen, (1981:563,586) and subsequently Coppenhall (1990). It seems to be more succinct and therefore appropriate than the literal Xhosa dictionary translation of *intlombe* as "a meeting for singing and dancing, held especially on moonlight (sic) nights." or "a party for singing and dancing." (McLaren, 1994:161, 60)

13. Chief Gcaleka described the 'spiritual takeover' as follows: (translation M.Ntleki, with interpretation, N.Faxi)

The [man's] spirit is *esilatshiweyo* (wounded or destroyed). When it harms you, it is because it is sick; when it is sick, it steals money, makes people sick, whores, insane etc, because it is fighting. It is sick because it is possessed by the spirit of Nda. It does not know what to do at this stage. It wants to be saved.

14. The cruelty of *amandawu* comes to light in Chief Gcaleka's personal interpretation regarding the myth of Mandawu, the man of Nda. (translation from Xhosa, N. Faxi and M. Ntleki):-

Mandawu was a man who became involved in an adulterous affair with a Zulu woman. The Zulus caught this man and decided to kill him, despite the fact that he wanted to pay the damages. But the Zulu's are fools and they killed him. What they failed to realize was that Mandawu was a very strong man (as all *amandawu* are said to be), hence by killing him, they made the spirit of Mandawu (and subsequently *amandawu* ancestors) more powerful and cruel. The spirit of Mandawu fights a lot when dead, and *amandawu* become more cruel when they are dead.

15. The solo phrase is executed by a song leader, known as the *umhlabeli*, who starts a song and leads off the Chorus, known as the *abavumi* (Hansen, 1981:616) or *abalandeli* - From the term *-landa* (Xhosa - to pursue, follow up). (Dargie, 1988:63; McLaren, 1994:81)

16. Hand claps are an important structural device, as indeed stated by Hansen that, "a basic principle of Xhosa music is that *all* music is accompanied by some form of physical activity, whereby the basic metre and tempo of the music is expressed or at least indicated...The presence of the hand claps permits a continuous creation of melodic/rhythmic vocal patterns within the prescribed limits of the basic metrical pattern." (1981:617, 649)

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TRANSCRIBING AFRICAN MUSIC IN PULSE NOTATION

Andrew Tracey

International Library of African Music

Rhodes University, Grahamstown

1997



TRANSCRIBING AFRICAN MUSIC IN PULSE NOTATION



WHAT IS TRANSCRIPTION FOR?

Before talking about a method for transcription we should consider what we want to transcribe for, as this will affect our approach. What is the use of transcription? There are several:

- A **reminder**, or a means of preservation, which combined with other forms of record, like recordings, notes, sketches, photos or film, can be used to reconstruct a piece of music.
- An **aid to teaching**, for those pupils who need visual reinforcement to learn an aural/motional skill. Practically all pupils of African music will learn better by example than by eye. Nevertheless there are always some who can learn better when the material is also processed intellectually via the eye.
- A means to help you, the transcriber, to **understand the structure of the music** better. The exercise of getting a transcription down on paper forces you to consider every aspect of the sound and its inter-relationships in a more rigorous way than say if you only wanted to learn to perform it by ear. This is something like the lecturer who only discovers what he really means when he finds himself saying it.
- A means of **isolating musical factors for study** or comparison. Connected with this is the use of transcriptions to accompany articles, theses or books. A certain aspect of the music often has to be stressed. At the least it has to be decided whether it is going to be used for study or for actual performance (called resp. 'descriptive' and 'prescriptive' transcription).

Having decided what the transcription is going to be used for, and always remembering that millions of musical man-hours are spent daily in Africa without any need for paper (oral 'notation' is however another matter), we can proceed to think about what we are going to write down.

Whatever we write down has first to be perceived, understood, crystallised. So experience in *perceiving* the structures of African music is essential. There is only one good way to gain this perception — intimate experience of the music you are working with, the language, the movement and the people, preferably along with performing the music yourself. And all this in relation to the theoretical concepts which have been deduced from African music by musicologists in Africa, concepts like pulse, cycle, pitch etc. which you will need in order to convert your perceptions into marks on paper.

Avoid the armchair!

'Armchair' musicology, as was normal early this century, resulted in some famous examples of transcribed rubbish and theories to account for it. In order not to emulate these examples there are precautions you can take, and they all involve getting out of the armchair and conferring with the people who know the music. The best of course is the original

performers, the next best a speaker of the language in question.

You should be able to test your transcription by putting it back into sound, checking how correct it is from your knowledge of the music and its feel. In music for complex instruments like mbira or xylophone, you will be very lucky to get down something even half-right if you do not know the instrument in question. Where armchair work can go seriously wrong includes: not knowing which hand plays which notes; hearing the overtone of a lower note as the note itself; inability to perceive the motional pattern behind the sound; to relate the sound to a controlling reference beat, if this is not audible; to separate the parts of different players; language problems, placing of syllables, elision and so on.

These are major difficulties are always there when transcribing from recordings, and must be borne in mind. They are alleviated somewhat when working from film/video, and even more in life, where you can *see* what the movements are, and what finger, hand, foot, person, does what. I recommend transcription from live performance as far as possible, particularly when starting on an unfamiliar music or instrumental style. Some other obvious advantages are that you can check tricky points on the spot, get names, explanations, translations, and in the course of all this very likely gain important insights into the music, and make good friends.

RECORDING

Being on the spot means too that you can make your own recordings for later transcription. A recording for transcription sometimes differs from one for other purposes, in that you *must be able to hear* what each individual part or person is doing. You do NOT want an overall general impression. This means that

- (1) You should get in close, sometimes really close, to parts or individuals, to be sure that what gets onto the tape will be clearly distinguishable as a certain part and not the neighbour's;
- (2) You have to keep one hand on the recording level control and watch the metre like a hawk, because when you are that close it can over-modulate in an instant;
- (3) You should hand-hold the microphone/s so you can move around and get exactly what you need — a fixed microphone nearly always gives a boring, unfocussed, and worse, untranscribable sound;
- (4) While getting in close to individuals you should never lose sight, i.e. hearing, of some other reference part, like for instance a clap, a rattle, a foot beat or some other part, so that later while transcribing you will have something constant to refer to. It may be possible to do this by holding a single mono microphone just right, but I strongly recommend using *two* microphones in stereo. One of them will always point towards the reference part you have chosen (you'll notice by now you need at least three hands). A stereo mike combined in one unit will not give the instant flexibility you need in a live situation.
- (5) Where there is a lead singer, and plenty of words, it is always important to the people themselves that he/she should be audible, and not drowned perhaps by a loud instrument.

If it comes to the point where you only have time to do one kind of recording, I usually go for this kind of 'analytical' recording. At least you will have something practical to show. Performers too like to be able to pick themselves out on playback.

As for the many recording mediums available, cassette is really the only practical and

economic one these days, but transcribing from cassette is not easy, I find, because of the difficulty of winding back by a precise amount, say a few seconds, so you can catch a particular sound again. Video is good, if you plan to transcribe more by eye than by ear, but also hard to rewind precisely. On CD the 'Search Forward/Backward' control also works well. Although open-reel machines are hardly used these days, copy your field recording onto ¼ inch tape for transcribing if at all possible, with a machine where you can turn the reels back by hand just as far as you want; you can also slow down fast music by playing back at half speed. There is of course more to be said about recording, but let us get back to transcription.

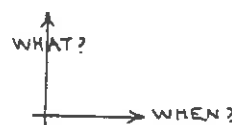


TRANSCRIPTION BASICS

There are three questions which have to be asked by someone who is trying to reconstruct the sound of your transcription: What do I do? — When do I do it? — How do I do it? (You will gather that my idea of a transcription tends towards the *pre*-scriptive, i.e. how to reproduce the music). In African musical terms perhaps the first two questions are not really different; the 'when' could even precede the 'what'. But for getting it down on paper we have to use the analytical approach and take things apart.

Largely we are going to leave out the 'How' not because it is unimportant, but for several reasons: it may be best learned from the people in actual practice, or from recordings; it may clutter up the clarity of a transcription; it may be inherent in a musical style, so that once you know the style there is no further need to mention it.

Which leaves the 'What' and the 'When'. We are going to create a simple graph, with time (the 'When') on the horizontal axis across the page, plotted against the actions or sounds required (the 'What') on the vertical axis up and down the page.



Writing time

Let us look at the time first. The approach to this depends as far as possible on actual African concepts of time in music, as has been perceived and described by a number of African musicologists over the last thirty years. As I explain it myself it goes briefly like this: Rhythm in most African musics is built up on a basis of small, equal-spaced, unstressed units of time, often fast-moving. These have been given several longer names, but I call them simply **PULSES**. All the parts in a piece of music share one system of pulses, but very often draw on it in different ways. For instance one part may use three of the pulses as a basis for its metre, and another, in the same piece of music and at the same time, two or four. If comparison with staff notation is needed, I usually consider them as quavers (eighth notes). The pulses are all theoretically available to any part, but in practice any one part does not always use them all. Those which it does use, i.e. the audible notes or rhythms actually played by a part, I term **BEATS**. A beat is what is actually played, done, heard, seen, and may consist of varying numbers of pulses. (If a player should beat on every pulse, his beat and the pulse-system would be the same at that moment.) Typical African beats tend to be built up in combinations of one, two, three, four and sometimes more pulses.

So in principle we have the pulses, the small equal units, and the beats, which consist of a number of pulses. The third level to be taken into account is the **CYCLE**, which not surprisingly consists of a number of beats. The cycle can of course be perceived in other ways than merely as a number of beats, but this is the important one for our present purpose. Nearly all African music is 'cyclical' which means that its form is a repeating one. The music starts at a certain point, goes through a circular series of ideas, whose length may vary according to the composition, and keeps returning to the same starting point again and again until the end of the piece. This is not the place to discuss the significance of this sort of form in African music, but we just accept that this form exists, and it therefore has to be shown in our transcription.

We have to find a way of writing down pulses, beats and cycles. An important principle now comes in, which is that **EQUAL TIME HAS EQUAL SPACE** on paper. So, starting with the smallest unit, the pulse, we have to divide up the page left to right into equal spaces. One easy way to do this is to use an ordinary lined school book, turning it sideways so the lines run up and down, instead of left to right. Another way, which we shall be using here, is to use paper pre-drawn with equal-spaced vertical lines, such as the ILAM music transcription paper. This has blue vertical pulse lines and black horizontal five-line staves.

Some Afro-musicologists prefer to use the spaces *between* the pulse lines, i.e. the 'boxes', in which to write their musical symbols. But I for one prefer to write *on* the lines. To me it feels and looks more accurate. So if you have say twenty four lines across your paper, you have twenty four potential pulses available for transcription.

How many pulse lines should there be on your page? Here it is useful to know that although African musical cycles come in many different lengths, by far the commonest are 12 and 16 pulses, with their multiples, especially 24, 32 and 48. The ILAM paper has 24 lines across, which gives a reasonable spacing on this average-sized sheet of music manuscript paper. But it would be just as useful to have 32 across, especially if you are working with a musical style that uses 16s a lot. Some regions of Africa do have a preference for 16s, i.e. broadly 'duple' metre, e.g. Western Zambia. Others prefer 12s, broadly 'triple', e.g. Zimbabwe.

Armed with pulse-lined paper we are ready to start the procedure of recognising rhythmic structures and putting them down. At this point we are not considering pitch or the vertical 'What' axis, which will be dealt with below. In actual transcription, though, you will reach a stage of perceiving and writing down both together. Let us try writing down a single-line pattern, say a person clapping or playing a drum. The procedure I offer here is one that I find works and is comprehensible to all. One reason for this may be that it resembles in some way the split-second process of recognition which an African musician goes through when exposed to a piece of music. Another is that it is based as far as possible on principles that arise from African music itself, and not from extraneous musical systems, staff notation in particular. Here is it first in note form:

THE PROCEDURE — IN NOTE FORM

1. Find a *regular guide-beat*, and stick with it throughout.
2. *How many pulses* in each beat?

3. Hear the *length of the cycle*.
4. Count the *number of beats* in the cycle.
5. Work out the *number of pulses* in the cycle.
6. Draw *the frame* for a cycle of this length.
7. Write in the guide-beats you have chosen under **1**, to act as reference points.
8. Decide at which point in the cycle to start.

..... From here on the points do not really go in order

9. Fill in the frame gradually, referring to the guide-beats, and focussing on one small area at a time.
 10. Check you have chosen the correct guide-beat, and that the transcription is in the right relationship with it.
 11. Check coincidences and non-coincidences.
 12. Check the inter-relationship of all parts.
- And finally
13. Redraw it so it looks like it sounds.
 14. Fill in any description and documentation needed.
 15. Learn to perform it yourself. Does it feel and sound right? Check with the original performer.

To go through this properly of course needs sound, so we cannot actually practise it here on the page as one can in life.

Let us go through the procedure again in detail:

Point 1. FIND A REGULAR GUIDE-BEAT, AND STICK WITH IT THROUGHOUT.

The guide or reference beat you choose *must be regular* (in almost all cases). Sometimes it is easy to find one, sometimes not. If not, your ability to force your ears to group pulses into common groupings like 2, 3 and 4 will come into play. Try each of these until some sense comes into it and you end up right, and on the beat, at the end of each cycle. Bear in mind that some of your guide-beats will probably NOT be sounded by anybody; by mentally grouping the pulses and keeping moving with them you will make yourself put a guide-beat into an empty space if necessary. Sometimes an obvious beat which you chose at first will get you so far, until you find it was wrong, or maybe not the best one after all. A loud or deep

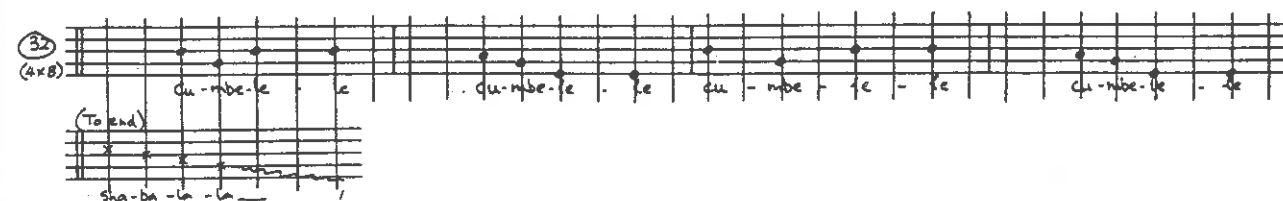
sound is not necessarily a good guide-beat. Similarly be careful with small rhythmic patterns like a) — or is it b)? Or c), which might be d) etc. It all depends on the music or dance style.



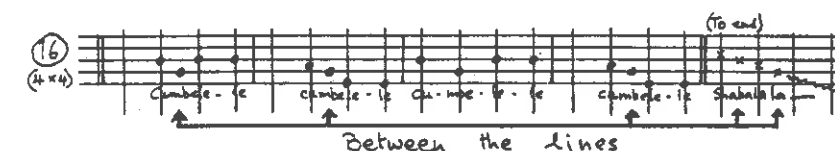
Whatever beat you choose, *stick to it* while doing your transcription, because if that is the one that is easiest for you to hear, it is also the one that will best help you to transcribe. It does not matter if it turns out later to be wrong. If it is what *you* hear, *use it*. Providing you get the transcription down accurately in terms of *your* reference beat, it will be easy to redraw it later in terms of another beat that may turn out to be preferable.

Point 2. HOW MANY PULSES IN EACH BEAT?

The answer here is practically always four, three or two. Each feels quite different, and you should be totally at home with each. Remember that pulses often go very fast in instrumental music. Typically in some South African vocal music the pulse may appear to move fairly slowly, but it has occasional faster units. Here you have to decide *which speed* you will take as the pulse for the purpose of writing. It may be a practical issue; if you choose the faster one, you may find your transcription spreadeagled right across the page, with a lot of white space included.



If, however, there are not too many of the faster pulses, you can save space and make it a more manageable and legible size by choosing the slower pulse and writing the faster ones, when they occur, *between* the pulse lines.



In other South African singing styles there may seem to be *two* different pulse systems going along together. In this case you either redraw your pulse lines for the parts that need it, or else find a faster pulse that is the lowest common multiple of the two pulse systems.¹

Point 3. HEAR THE LENGTH OF THE CYCLE.

This is just a matter of being aware when and where the repeat of the cycle starts again. Sometimes there are cycles within cycles, e.g. a repeating instrumental backing to a longer song. Choose the longest cycle which you want to transcribe. Be careful not to pick something which is in fact a half-cycle or a double cycle.

Point 4. COUNT THE NUMBER OF BEATS IN THE CYCLE.

¹ See for instance the careful transcriptions of Xhosa music by Dave Dargie in his book *Xhosa Music*, David Philip, Cape Town 1988.

This speaks for itself, counting the beats which you have chosen in **1**. You will find that there are certain numbers more common than others. If you come up with a prime number like 7, 11, 13, check you have counted right.

Point 5. WORK OUT THE NUMBER OF PULSES IN THE CYCLE.

Find the number of pulses in the cycle by multiplying your beat-count, as in **4** above, by the number of pulses in each beat, as in **2**. Again certain numbers keep cropping up, such as 12, 16, 18, 24, 32, 48, etc.

Point 6. DRAW THE FRAME FOR A CYCLE OF THIS LENGTH.

Now you start writing! Steps 1 to 5, apart from preparing your ear, have been leading up to this point. I find that when you have a definite *frame*, a blocked out space on the page, a fixed number of pulses which you know you have to account for, things somehow seem more under control.

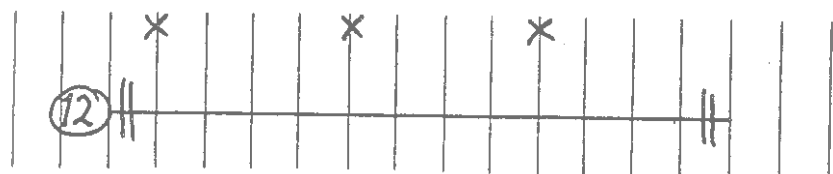
How are you going to write the frame? The various symbols used here are the ones I use. However, we do not yet have any official 'Federation for the Riting of African Music Easily' (FRAME), so you are free to invent better ones of your own. There is only one condition, that you let me know so I can use them too!

Seeing that I started out from staff notation, and that this is the most widely known system, I take certain of its symbols, adapt others, and ignore a lot more. The bar line, for instance, can be useful where it marks off rhythmically similar units, and so is the DOUBLE BAR, which we use to show the beginning and ending of the frame, i.e. of the cycle. Repeat signs are not necessary in most cases; we already know that African music repeats. (However they can be useful if there is an integral repeat *inside* a cycle, if space can be saved that way, and of course in through-composed pieces.)

Count off the number of pulse-lines you need, and write a double bar at each end, in the space *outside* the first and last pulse-line.

Point 7. WRITE IN THE GUIDE-BEATS YOU HAVE CHOSEN UNDER **1**, TO ACT AS REFERENCE POINTS.

Say you have discovered that a certain irregular clap pattern has, for you, three 'guide-beats', each of four pulses. Here is how you could write the frame:



The three 'guide-beats' are not yet necessarily part of the transcription; they are there to help you find where the actual claps fall. The circled 12 tells you how long your frame is, and is called the '*form number*'. The horizontal line simply gives you a place to put the claps on.

Point 8. DECIDE AT WHICH POINT IN THE CYCLE TO START.

Although cycles are by definition circular, you have to start *somewhere*. You have already 'heard' the shape of the cycle, so you will have an idea of where it 'starts' for you. Firm that moment in your mind, and hang onto it. This starting point will be another reference point, like the 'beats', to relate to while you swim around in a sea of sound, wondering what goes where. Again, it does not matter at this stage if the starting point you choose is in some way 'wrong'. This can be corrected later. Use *the one you hear*, get the whole thing down right, with the right internal relationships, then straighten it out when you know the music better, or when you can check with the performers.

Points that I tend to choose for the written 'start' of a cycle would be — fairly obviously in vocal music — where the lead singer starts. Instrumental music may be trickier. You can relate to accompanying vocal parts; to a high entry; to a section of the cycle that has more variation, followed by a relatively fixed chorus-like part; sometimes the end of a cycle has a build-up of tension leading into the beginning again, as can happen in the 'Blues'; some music traditions fortunately make it obvious where the cycle-starts and ends, like the that of the Chopi. (Unfortunately that's the only easy part in transcribing their music!) Other players choose a certain point to start at each time which you can take as a clue. Finally I just do it by feel. The music is circular after all; if you choose a 'wrong' place in the circle, this merely adds another minor element to the unavoidable distortion of writing a circular sound on straight-lined paper at all.

One more clue, though: if it is a choice between writing sound or movement on the first beat, I usually choose movement. Why? Because sound tends to wrap itself around movement, rather than the other way, i.e. *movement is usually primary*. For example in the complex mbira music of Zimbabwe there is a triple reference beat, usually played by the rattles, so I make certain that the mbira transcription starts on a rattle beat.

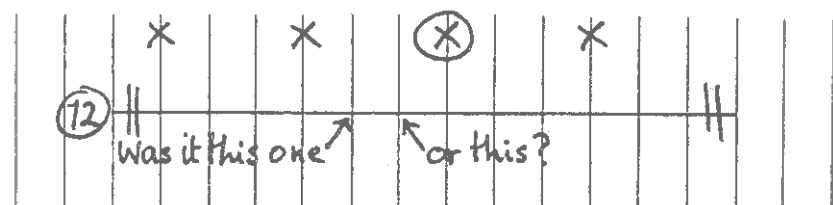
Point 9. FILL IN THE FRAME GRADUALLY, REFERRING TO THE GUIDE-BEATS, AND FOCUSING ON ONE SMALL AREA AT A TIME.

To go back to the clap pattern we are transcribing, let us say we have chosen a certain double clap as the start of the cycle. We now start filling in the other claps as they occur. There are two approaches, which are in some ways complementary, to finding their positions.

One, which has its uses, but which I am not considering here, follows beats and rhythms through in a consecutive way, observing note values as they occur, and ascribing durations like crotchet/quarter note (2 pulses) or quaver/eighth note (1 pulse) etc, without paying constant attention to a guide-beat. This describes what is probably a typical approach towards transcribing Western music, where the reference beat, whatever it may be, two, three, four, etc to the bar, is normally sounded constantly and reassuringly, whatever the subdivisions are. In African music, however, the reference beat is frequently *not* sounded, or at the least not stressed. This is the one factor that gives most trouble to those raised with Western music. The moment a reference beat is missing Westerners often lose all track of time *immediately*.

The second approach is one where you *FOCUS ON ONE SMALL AREA AT A TIME* of the frame to be filled, relating every sound to one particular guide-beat and the pulses surrounding it. Now perhaps the importance can be seen of writing down the guide-beat as we have done. Beats of two, three or four pulses sound and feel quite different from each other and, as I said before, you must be intimately at home with each, familiar with every

pulse of a 4-beat, a 3-beat and a 2-beat. That is not very much to ask, only nine different pulses to recognise and not even all at one time! If you are, say, in a triple-pulse time and you have observed that a sound occurs *before* a certain guide-beat, there is very little choice available, only two positions in fact: it is either the pulse directly before the guide-beat or two before. If it is two before, then it is also the pulse immediately *after* the previous guide-beat, which you can check for yourself the next time round.

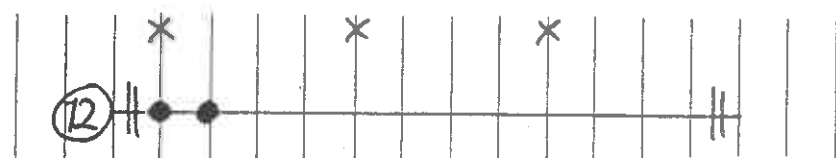


Never assume, until you are absolutely sure, that *any* sung or played beat falls on a guide-beat, as you might think it should do if the piece was a Western one. Shun the tyranny of the on-beat! Watch out particularly for entries which avoid, or straddle, the guide-beat; these cause plenty of trouble to transcribers, both in perceiving and writing them. It is easy, if you are too relaxed, to mishear them and put one of them on the beat.

African music was built for transcription — it repeats itself for you without your having to keep winding the tape back. You just have to hold on hard to the guide-beat, focussing your attention closely on one tiny area at a time, and then instantly closing your ear to all the sound that follows while you write, until that point comes round again in the next cycle.

Remember that *you have already made decisions* earlier, such as how many pulses there are in each beat. Some transcribers at this point, when faced with deciding just how far a certain sound is from a guide-beat, start inventing all sorts of new subdivisions. Relax! It is easier than you think. Having first established and accepted that there are only a certain number of pulses available, it is surprising how narrow the choice is.

Back to our clapping pattern.... The first clap of the double seems to be on the first guide-beat. Easy. The second one? In 4-pulse beats you have two pulses which are right up against a beat, i.e. N^o. 2 and 4, and one which is exactly half way between beats, N^o. 3. Which is it? Close to a beat, or half way between?



Use a black dot, or a cross, or maybe a 'C' meaning 'clap', it's up to you.

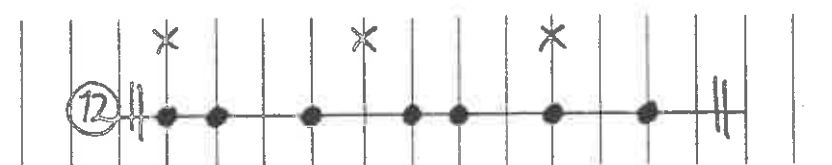
Now here is a difficulty (psst.... it's because the next guide-beat is not sounded, but you don't know that yet). Somewhere around the 2nd guide-beat things don't seem too clear. Don't get hung up on it; if you find you cannot go on consecutively, merely move to another part of the frame which is easier.

Next discovery: there is a clap exactly on the 3rd guide-beat, and another exactly half way

from there to the first:



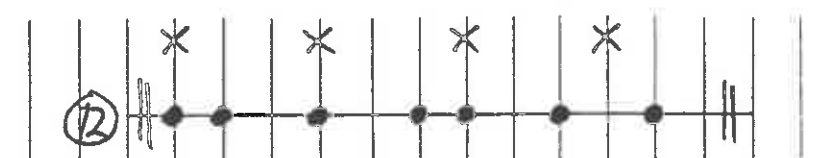
Going back to that tricky 2nd beat, let's try counting how many claps have to be fitted into the space around it. Right, it is three. With careful, focussed listening around the 2nd beat, you will soon hear that one clap falls immediately before it, another immediately after it, and the third clap must be directly after that, because if it was any later it would be right next to the *third* beat, which it is not.



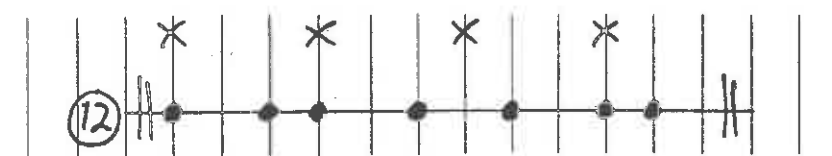
Point 10. CHECK YOU HAVE CHOSEN THE CORRECT GUIDE-BEAT, AND THAT THE TRANSCRIPTION IS IN THE RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH IT.

The clap is now down correctly. But wait.... suddenly you hear something like a rattle or a footstamp in your recording, or better, you look round at the people present, and you notice some small children jogging happily along on one side. But they are not on the beat you had! They seem to be going faster. Don't guess, count their pulses. It's probably three to the beat. How do they know what beat to move to? Believe me, they do.

Now you have to rethink the transcription. As you clap along with the performance — you should know the clap by now — or as you follow each clap on the paper with your pencil, check which claps the steps coincide with. Yes, it *is* three to the beat, four of them to the cycle, and luckily for you one of the steps comes on the first guide-beat as you wrote it.



What else can go wrong? As the clappers watch the dancers, why is it that whenever they start and stop clapping it is always the 2nd beat that they start and stop on? Perhaps you have got the starting point wrong? Move it one over so the 2nd beat is now the first.



Point 11. CHECK COINCIDENCES AND NON-COINCIDENCES.

Now it starts to fall into place and feel right. One last check: According to the transcription, three of the dance or reference beats have claps with them, and one does not. Which one? Is that really what they are doing? If you are transcribing a multi-part music you may have written each part down independently. Now check and re-check the co-ordination.



WRITING PITCH

The above procedure with a short clap pattern (in fact a common African time-line pattern) embodies most of the steps for the rhythmic aspect of music on a larger scale. However we cannot do much more about it on this dry paper, so we move on to look at the vertical axis, the 'What'. This is where we consider how to write the different notes of a song, of a musical instrument, or the different pitches of an ensemble. In fact you would normally work this out first, *before* starting to transcribe or think about beats and pulses, but I put it second here because of the difficulty of time in African music.

We have to find a way of writing musical pitch. Many ways have been developed, some graphic, some using numbers, words or tablature which can be typewritten, some designed for specific musics. Some of them are perfectly adapted to the music they were invented for, but work for that music only. I am not going into these here but want to show how the international five-line stave of staff notation can be used to show African pitches.

The five-line stave

A big advantage of the 5-line stave is its universality. Another is that, in spite of its complications, it does remain a graphic representation of pitch. Which is exactly what we need in the vertical 'What' axis. Hard-baked Western musicians sometimes insist that the five lines of the stave, as developed in Europe by the 17th century, can only show the original pitches they were designed to show. The five lines, however, are neutral; we can use these five lines, enjoying our familiarity with their pictorial impression of pitch and their internal pitch relations — line to line is a third, line to next space a fourth, etc — and ascribe what values we like to them.

Personally I find the 5-line stave works well for *any* heptatonic (7-note scale) music, and also for tetra-(4), penta-(5) and hexatonic (6) musics provided their tuning is based more or less on the harmonic series, with little tendencies towards equal-spacing.²

So for practical purposes we use the 5-line stave, oh joy, as you were taught in music school, but with some provisos:

- We choose a pitch level or 'key' which **AVOIDS ALL USE OF ACCIDENTALS** and which fits comfortably inside the stave, minimising ledger lines;

This means that the music would be transposed, written at a different pitch from the original sound. For unaccompanied song this is not of great importance. It might be a bit

² Some problem areas in southern Africa in regard to equal spacing and its representation would be (penta) Northern Sotho (possibly all Sotho), and (hexa) Nda, possibly Tsonga too.

higher one day, lower the next. Many African songs rise in pitch during performance. What is important is not the original pitch, but the song itself. Use a pitch that is near the original, if there is one, otherwise use one where all the parts fit comfortably onto the stave for ease of reading. A song, for instance, in a major mode with flattened seventh would naturally go into G, one with a sharpened fourth into F, 'normal' pentatonic into C, F or G. At the top include "At original pitch", or "Original pitch c. mi 3rd lower", "Original pitch c. 1 semitone higher", etc. Arranged 4-part songs should stay at or near their original pitch because of the singers' voice ranges.

As to accidentals, they are there, in Western music, to show that a note has been changed from something else. But that 'something else' does not necessarily exist in the African tone-system in question. The accidental belongs to an irrelevant foreign system. Better define what each of the lines and spaces mean in the African tone-system and leave it at that.

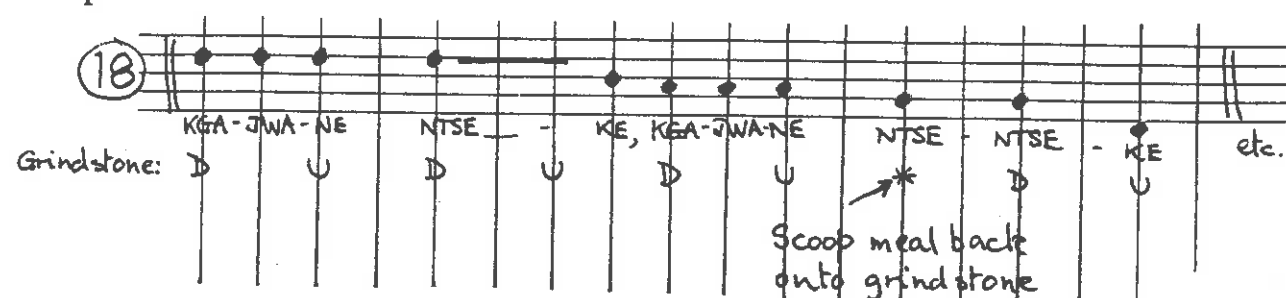
- If certain pitches sound consistently and significantly different from what would be expected, you describe this beforehand, and *a new meaning* is therefore given to certain lines or spaces.
- We are free to invent *a new clef symbol* if we think a certain music needs it, e.g. this is the clef I use for Chopi xylophone music, with its equal-spaced, 7-note scale. I continue to name the notes as in the treble clef, although they all sound at Chopi pitch, not as on the piano.



Note-store

Now we have a song to transcribe. To avoid puzzlement during the actual transcribing, looking for pitches when all your attention should be on the rhythm, the very first step is to listen to the song carefully, and write down a **NOTE-STORE** of all the pitches which you can hear being used. For a Sotho woman's solo grinding song the note-store and transcription might look like this.

To complete this song, and bring in another important principle, the grinding movement should be written down, as it is an audible part of the whole movement of the song. Now we shall have two parts going simultaneously, the song and the grinding. To show events that happen simultaneously, they must be **DIRECTLY BENEATH EACH OTHER**, on the same pulse-line.



D means down, U means up. (This song is rather nice, because it makes special allowance for the fact that every so often you have to scoop more meal back under the stone. There is an extra beat just for this)

Duration

What is that line extending from the note D, on the syllable 'ntse-? In pulse notation as we are using, there are only two types of rhythmic symbol: one which means play, sing, do something — a dot as in this transcription, or any other convenient symbol — and the other an empty space, which means do nothing. This reflects the high importance given in African music to the exact moment when a musical event must happen, when a note must be played or sung.

The corollary is that it also reflects something else: that it is largely unimportant how long a note is held.³ But there may be times when we want to show that a note, especially in vocal music, is held on longer than usual. That is what this line does.

Note the convention of writing African song syllables, so that each ends in a vowel. Further you will find the normal rule is: one syllable, one note. A syllable is not often stretched over more than one note, although of course it does happen now and then.

Point 13. REDRAW IT SO IT LOOKS LIKE IT SOUNDS.

African songs have well-defined shapes. A transcription should reveal this shape, so it *looks* on the page as much as possible like the song *sounds*. Transcribers, whether by habit or parsimony, often dutifully accept the standard shape of the standard page of manuscript which we all use, and write the song to fit the page. But this is backwards! We should **MAKE THE PAGE FIT THE SONG**. This needs a little forethought before you do your fair copy.

First you need a mental picture of the shape of the whole song, including integral repeats. If the song has the shape: CALL - RESPONSE - CALL - LONG RESPONSE, for instance, plan your page so it will show this shape visibly. A basic principle is that equivalent sections should be

³ Compare staff notation's relative emphasis on duration, with its mass of symbols for notes and rests of different lengths. Pulse notation simplifies notation of African rhythm to an extraordinary extent, representing it far more neutrally than staff, which forces notes into groupings, phrasings, metres simply by the way it is written.

written exactly below each other on the page. The purpose of this is both musical and visual, so that you can look up and down at any point and see what happened before, or will happen next, at equivalent points in the cycle.

Why should you want to know this? It relates to the performance of the music, where it is very important in African music to know, in detail, exactly where you are at every moment in time, where you are in the cycle, where you stand in relation to the other parts. That it *IS* important in African music to know where you are at all moments is shown by the many special parts in African musics which exist for this kind of self-alignment, e.g. the 'time-lines', the clapping and body-movement patterns.

Another point for this alignment is that the written notes themselves form a pattern on the page which helps to confirm the overall sound pattern of the song. Correspondences and regularities which are inherent in the song will become visible, sometimes even more than you were aware of. They will become visible only *IF* you first had a clear idea of the shape of the song, and managed to recreate it on paper.

In the case of songs with very short cycles, this may mean that you get a long narrow transcription extending down the page. Or an irregular-shaped song will give an irregular-shaped transcription. This is how it should be; it helps to give character to the transcription and fix it in the reader's mind.

Don't be bound by the paper size!

You do not have to use the whole length of the printed stave. You may think, with several lines half-empty.... "All that space wasted! I haven't used up the full width of the line". No matter; are you using the paper to demonstrate the song, or forcing the song into the Procrustean mould of the paper? If necessary you can write your comments along the side of the transcription. In the case of a very long cycle, split it at a natural dividing point, or cut and glue the paper. After all, the printer who printed the manuscript paper knew nothing about African music, much less about the song you are transcribing.

Condensation is generally a good thing. The eye can take in a smaller pattern better than a big one. There is no point in writing out most African pieces *in extenso*, where they consist of repetitions of a pattern with slight variations. Rather indicate what the variations are, and leave it to the performer to do them as he feels. Of course if there are larger shapes in the development of a piece they must be shown.

Linked with the above.... when the transcription is finished cut off all pieces of unused stave all round. This focuses attention on the shape of the transcription itself. Remembering that space = time, it also removes any doubt that extra space might be a *tacet* part of the song.

Tempo marking

The tempo should be given at the top. If you have no metronome, then time part of the song with a watch, say four complete bars, or a complete cycle. (Must be *complete* bars, i.e. you stop timing exactly at the start of the fifth bar or on the first beat of the second cycle.) Choose a pulse grouping, normally your guide-beat, to use as the beat for tempo marking, and find how many of these there are in your four bars or cycle. Divide this figure by the measured time in seconds, and multiply by 60. This tells you how many guide-beats there are per minute, which is the same thing as an 'MM' or metronome figure.

14. FILL IN ANY DESCRIPTION AND DOCUMENTATION NEEDED

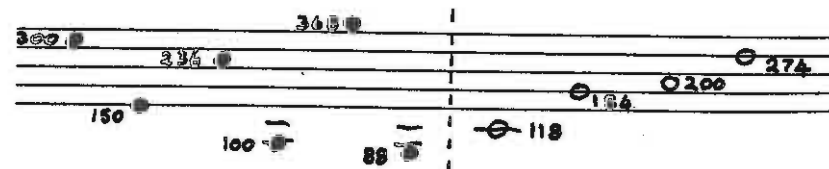
Look at the suggested layout for song headings below for examples of the kind of documentation that should be included to make a transcription complete, not forgetting personal comments too, that can make it come alive.

"SONG TITLE"		
Type of music	Translation of title	Language
Performers' details: name, age, place, date....		
Instruments used, names		
Details of recording: by whom, institution, item/record no....		
Original pitch		
Tempo	Transcribed by	
(MUSIC TRANSCRIPTION)		
Vernacular words	Literal translation	
Explanation, contextualisation of words		
Description of the type of music, occasion, context		
Other details, comments, tunings/layouts of instruments, suggestions for performance, etc.		

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Having thus disposed of song in this abridged fashion, let us consider instrumental music. Just like making a 'note-store', you have to plan in advance how you are going to write down every note which an instrument makes. There are many instruments in Africa; every different one needs a different diagram. Basically we draw a 'picture', a musical *NOTE PLAN* of the instrument before starting. This has to be done live, one of the serious drawbacks of working blind from a recording. Here are some examples of instrumental note plans, plus a transcription of each instrument's music.

1. NDINGO mbira of Kanjundu Kamburu; Gciriku; Kavango, Namibia



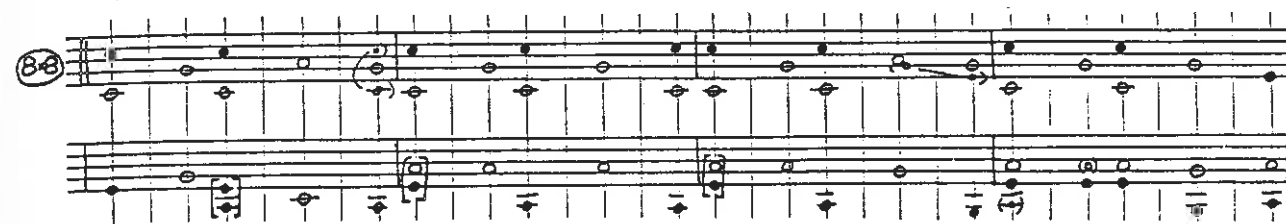
Measuring tuning

The tunings are given in Herz (vibrations per second) in this case. This is the most accurate and useful way of describing a tuning. It is interesting but not very scientific to say "It's something like a major scale", or "The G is a little bit sharp", or even "The G is a quarter-tone sharp". Unless you are an Indian music specialist I defy you to know exactly what a quarter-tone sounds like.

How to measure tunings accurately?.... that can be a problem, as it needs special equipment.⁴ If you don't have the equipment don't let it faze you, but make your comments as to how it sounds to you and write down for example "Ndingo tuning", upon which you and all other ndingo experts will know what you mean.

⁴ E.g. the sets of 54 tuning forks covering one octave used by ILAM for many years or, more available in general, access to a strobe tuning machine such as the Peterson or a frequency counter in a physics lab.

(A personal lament) 2 pulses = MM152



No guide-beat is shown because there was no apparent beat in the performance, and what I used for a guide-beat is irrelevant. '2 pulses = MM152' is a tempo marking, and means that a 2-pulse beat corresponds with a metronome setting of 152, i.e. 152 beats per minute.

Variations

In cyclical music it is surprising what an effect a single variation may have on one's perception of the piece. The brackets show variations, e.g. in the last bar the L thumb occasionally plays low A, or the R thumb high A, at the points shown. In Bar 1, the two variation notes are linked, meaning play both together. In Bar 3, the variation forms a sequence, replacing the usual notes. In Bar 5, the square brackets mean that only one of the two notes, left hand E or A, is always played, without apparent preference for either.

These are the kind of symbols for variations which you can use without having to write out the whole transcription for every variation. But if your transcription becomes too clogged with extra notes, use another line, always keeping the cycle aligned with the one above.

- (•) a note used occasionally, normally replacing the other note for that finger/hand on that pulse
- (•—•) a variation forming a sequence of notes
- (•) variation used less often
- [] square bracket encloses 2 notes used equally often
- () round bracket shows notes that are played together
- arrow shows a note moved to another place

In some instrumental playing, one hand plays a more fixed part while the other varies against it. Therefore you *START WITH THE FIXED PART*, the easiest part, like chipping away at a block piece by piece. Many good players, of course, vary continually in both hands, so it is best to come to an agreement with the player that he will not vary at all until you are ready for it. This is tedious for him, and you both need an occasional break from the tension.

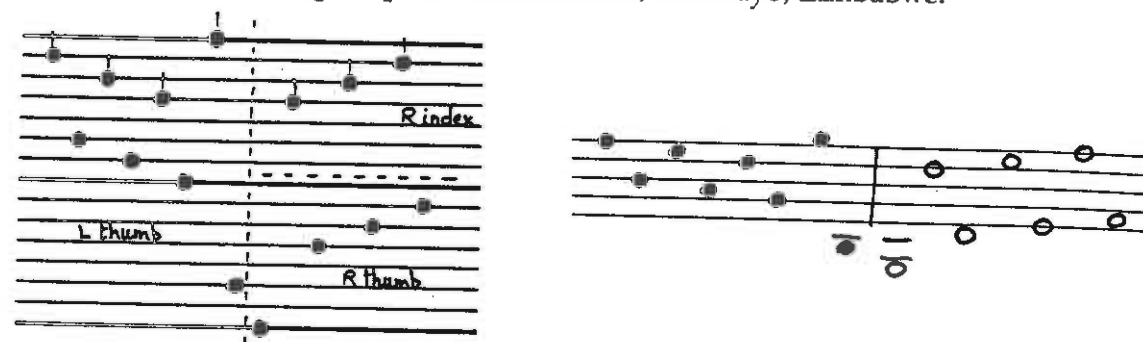
Check continually against your note plan, as much for the physical position of notes on the instrument as for their pitch. For example, you see the third note from the left being played.... you don't necessarily worry about what pitch that is in relation to the music, but you just look at your note plan and write down what it says, which is *what you have already decided* beforehand.

In some instruments such as bows, guitar, pipes etc, it may not be necessary to make a distinction between left and right hands. But it *is* necessary for most others. One way is to write the two hands on separate staves, one beneath the other. Another is to write on one staff using black notes for one, white for the other. Decide this before starting to write. Here for example is how I once published a piece of karimba mbira music:

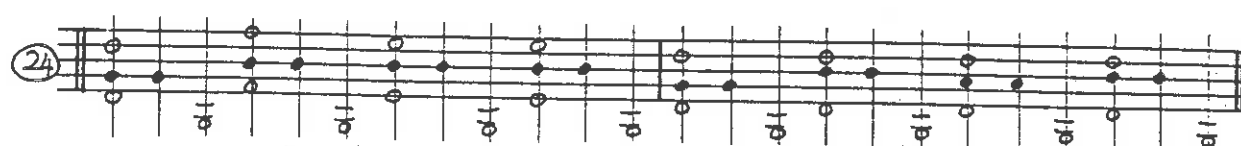


What a mess! And as I might do it now. Black is for left hand, white for right, as in the previous example.

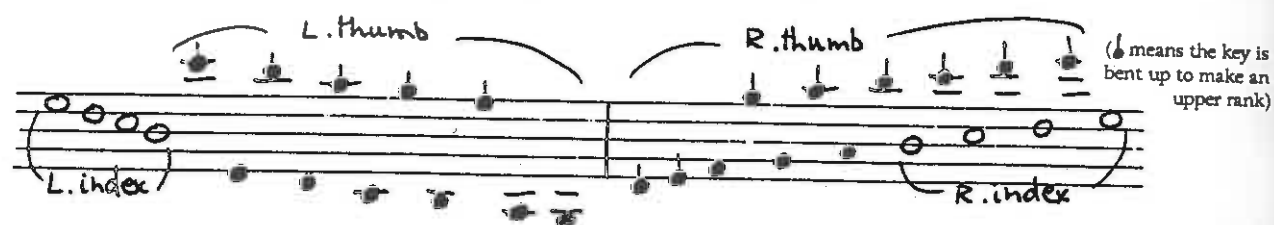
2. KARIMBA mbira of Jege Tapera; Shona/Zezuru; Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.



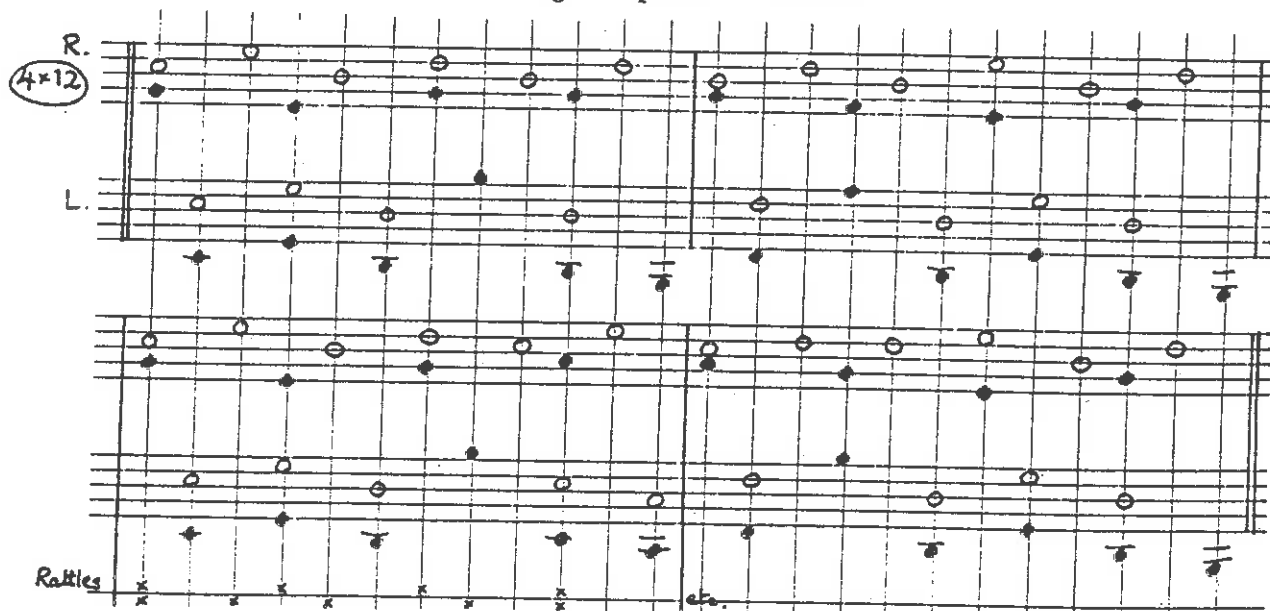
"Chemutengure"



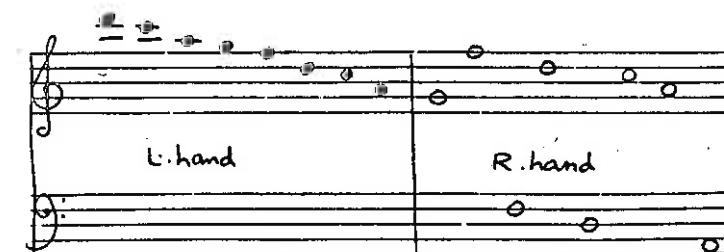
3. NJARI mbira of Lazaro Vinyu; Nyungwe; Tete, Mozambique



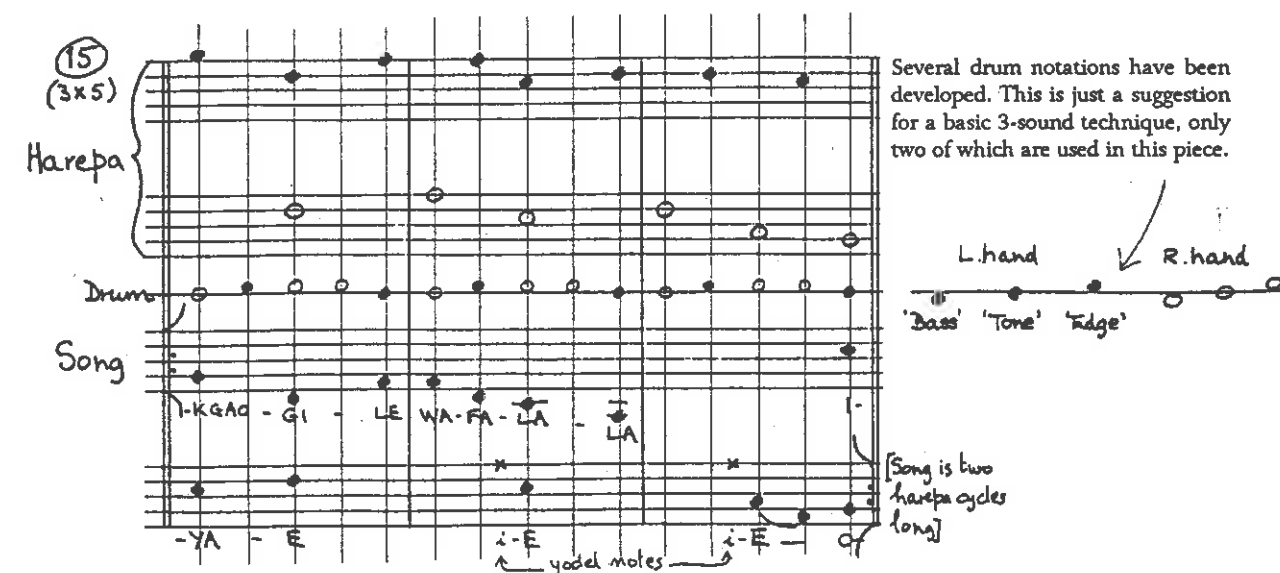
"Ndalamba mulandu kumui kwangu". 3 pulses = MM126



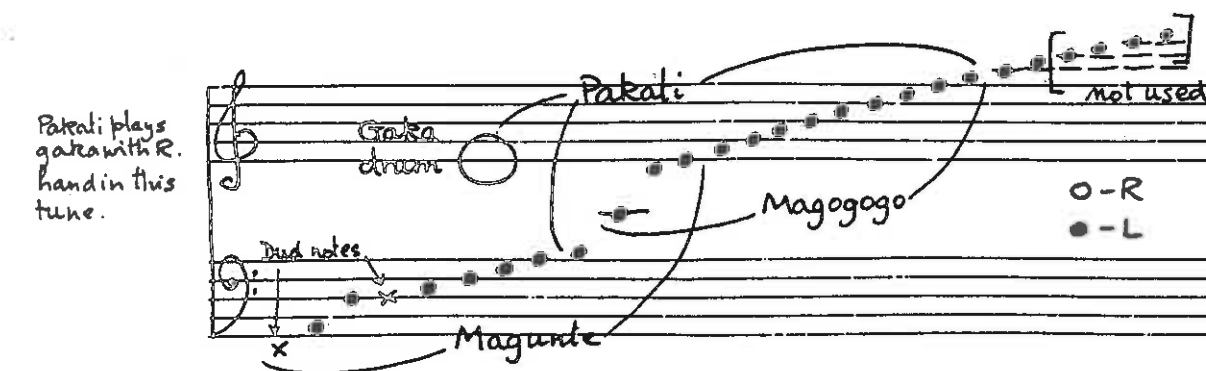
4. HAREPA zither of Simon Maholo; N. Sotho; N. Prov, S. Africa



"Moroka omolele" 1 pulse = MM264



5. VALIMBA xylophone of Mtove; Sena; Mutarara, Mozambique



"Wagwanterere" 3 pulses = MM192

4x12

Magogogo

Pakati
(Gaka)

Magunle

6. UMRHUBHE bowed mouth bow of Madosini; Xhosa; Transkei, S. Africa
 "Imotakali" 2 pulses = MM118

9

Vars

1.

2.

3.

Bowing of fundamentals

Open Fingered

Harmonics

Bow fundamentals

Much more can be said about transcription, but this is about as far as we can go 'dry'. To conclude here are two transcriptions of a Mpondo song. They are both musically accurate, but the first I have written with the kind of mistakes that beginners often make. See if you can pick out eight or more.

Leader

Chorus

Ee nanlakungo - Ru - we we ma Gobongela sa-bo-hi-hi ti-na

Hau hau

ku-nga - ku - we we ma Gobongela sa-bo

hi-hi ti-na

If you still find this is easier to read than the one below, or would be with some neatening up, that's fine. Everyone to his own style. The main thing is that any transcription, in whatever style, must be accurate. The method described in this article — whether or not you eventually use this form of pulse notation (and I don't pretend this is the ultimate) — should help you to perceive the music more accurately, because it arises as far as possible out of principles inherent in the music itself. Once you have it down accurately in any system, it is easy to convert to any other you may prefer. And once you have become accustomed to the uncluttered clarity of pulse notation, you may never want to use anything else!

7. "Umaqobongela", fighting song, Chief Madlanya Tantsi; Mpondo; Transkei, S. Africa; GALP 1033.A.6. Pulse = MM126. Orig. pitch c. 5th lower.

30
(5x6)

Leader

Leader var.

Chorus

E - ku-nga ku - we we ma Go-bo-nge-la sa-bo-hi-hi ti-na

{E ku-he Su-ku-ma} ku-nga ku - we we ma Go-bo-nge-la {E ku-he Su-ku-ma}

ha-wu ha-wu! Na - mha ku-nga ku - we we ma Go-bo-nge-la sa-bo-hi-hi ti-na

A few references

A.M.Jones, *Studies in African music*, Oxford 1959 ♦ Anthony King, *Yoruba sacred music from Ekiti*, Ibadan Univ Press 1961 ♦ James Koetting, "Analysis and notation of West African drum ensemble music", *Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology*, 1/3, 1970 ♦ Several articles in *African Music* by R. Knight, G. Kubik, P.C.Ngumu, H. Pantaleoni, A. Tracey, etc.

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OVERTONES IN CENTRAL ASIA AND IN SOUTH AFRICA
(Xhosa Vocal Style)

TRAN QUANG HAI (CNRS- Paris-FRANCE)

GENERAL VIEW

The most well-known area for overtone singing is found in Central Asia, more specifically Western Tuva and Northwestern Mongolia. A great number of singers practice overtone singing, a tradition going back to the time of the Silk Road trade, according to some references in Tuvan songs. There is a rich culture of overtone singing, as demonstrated by many different styles, the great regional and even personal differences and the number of singers. In Tuva four basic styles exist: called *kargyraa*, *borbannadyr*, *sygyt*, and *ezengileer*. *Borbannadyr* was called in some regions, but the latter indicated in other regions the general term for overtone singing. Nowadays, it still has this function, but *xoomej* can at the same time be the name for a separate style, apart from *borbannadyr*. In addition to these styles some sub styles exist, such as folk and middle *sygyt*, steppe and mountain *kargyraa*, and the "*stil Oidupa*". The latter is a substyle of *kargyraa* named after the singer who invented it, and it is considered as the first city style. The parametres for this *emic* - or folk classification, seem to be the melody of the fundamental, the melody of the overtones and the sound colour or over all sound.

The Mongolians did not have a traditional, general classification of their styles of overtone singing. The late folklore specialist Badraa and the singer Tserendavaa attempted to make such a classification of Mongolian xoomij. Their results seem to be based on two criteria: the places of origin and the place of resonance in the body when singing xoomii. they came up with six different styles: *uruulyn (labial) xoomii*, *tagnain (palatal) xoomii*, *xamryn (nasal) xoomii*, *bagalzuurn (glottal or throat) xoomii*, *tseejiin xondiin or xevliin (chest cavity or stomach) xoomii* and *xarxiraa*. The latter style is somewhat controversial, since different singers have different opinions about what constitutes it, and whether or not it is xoomii.

In addition to Tuvan and Mongolian styles Khakassian "xaj" and Gorno-Altai "kaj" overtone singing, usually accompanying epic songs, should be mentioned. While Tuvan and to a lesser extent Mongolian musicians travel around the world performing their xoomej, little is known about other Central Asian styles.

A special case is the "uzliau" or "tamak kurai" of Bashkirs, who live in the European part of Russia, some few thousand kilometers from Tuva. It is the name for their overtone singing, with melodies similar to those of ordinary folksongs. The Bashkirs are a Turkic people, who moved from Central Asia or Saian Altai in the first millennium. Wainshtein advanced the opinion that they could have taken with them this peculiar singing style when moving westward from Central Asia. If this is so, he writes, then xoomej existed before their migration, i.e. in the second half of the first millennium.

The Tuvan vocal phenomenon *Khöömei* (literally Throat) since the last ten years has thrilled *World music* audiences around the world from the USA to Holland, from Canada to Germany, Sweden, from France, Spain to Japan, Australia.

In 1969, I started my overtone research with Mongolian *xöömij* style which was very close to Tuvan *Sygyt* style. Then, I wrote an article on my "discovery of this split-tone singing style" on the acoustical point of view, in cooperation with Denis Guillou in a book published by Japan Foundation in 1980. Another important article with Hugo Zemp on my experimental research on overtones was published in Geneva in 1991. The film *the Song of Harmonics*, made by Hugo Zemp in 1989 with me as co-author was released in 1989 in Paris.

Only in 1977 I heard the Tuvan overtones for the first time from the LP edited by Melodia GOCT 5289-68 "*Pesni i Instrumental Nye Melodii Tuvy*" (Songs and Instrumental Melodies of Tuva) with the cover notes by G. Tchourov.

Lebedinskij, in 1948, wrote: "*It is unnatural for a person to be able sing two notes at the same time. The timbre is already unnatural, not to mention the principal notes and the harmonics, or overtones, and what is downright unnatural is the length of time the breath is sustained*".

Aksenov, the first Russian researcher, wrote an important article on Tuvan Folk music in 1964 (an English version was published in *Asian Music Journal* - New York, USA, in 1973).

Since the years of *Perestroika* and with the disintegration of the USSR at

the end of the '80s, Tuva has rebuilt the traditional music and Tibetan Buddhism. The "cultural rebirth" has started since. Competitions, *Khöömei* Song Contests were organized in 1992 and 1995 in Kyzyl, capital of Republic of Tuva. By chance I was invited to Tuva in 1995 and was nominated as President of the 2nd International Symposium and Festival of Throat-Singers from 19 to 21 June 1995.

The Tuvan singers generally use overtones from 6th to 13th. Renowned singers can reach overtone 18. During the Russian domination, throat singing was not encouraged by the Soviet authorities, but it survived. In the ancient time, overtone singers specialized in a single style or two related styles. Nowadays, it is frequent to see singers perform several styles arranged in short segments. If an overtone singer cannot master the five basic styles (*khoomai*, *sygyt*, *borbannadyr*, *ezengileer*, *kargyraa*), he is not considered a good singer. Young singers like combining throat singing with rock, pop, punk and disco music.

National *Khoomai* competitions have been taking place for several years, in which often more than thirty to forty singers take part. Young talent is discovered like the 11-year-old Schaktar Schulban has taught himself throat singing by listening to *Khoomai* singers on radio and Television since he was five. He can sing *kargyraa* style with 70Hz as fundamental pitch and changes to *sygyt* style ($H_1=240\text{Hz}$) during the same song and raises his overtones to $H_{12}=2880\text{Hz}$ (it is very difficult for an adult throat singer to reach that overtone pitch). Onda Mongun-Ool (17 years old) is a virtuoso of *sygyt* style, and Bujan Dondak (20 years old) is a specialist of *kargyraa* style.

FIVE STYLES OF OVERTONES IN TUVA

It is necessary to have a clear idea about the five basic vocal styles of Tuvan overtone singing.

Khoomai is a vocal style which enables the singer to produce two sometimes three simultaneous voices: one fundamental with low sound considered as a drone, and the other(s) with overtones giving one or two formantic melody (ies).

In acoustics, harmonics are sounds the frequencies of which are integral multiples. If the singer sings the fundamental pitch of 200Hz (written $H_1=200\text{Hz}$), harmonics 2 (written H_2) will be 400Hz, $H_3=600\text{Hz}$, etc... In this paper, whenever I mention H_2 , H_3 , that means overtone 2,

overtone 3.

Khoomei is the common term for overtone singing, the origin of all styles. It means literally "throat, pharynx". It is considered as the oldest style by many Tuvan singers. It sounds like the *sygyt* style with high pitch fundamental, but less tension, softer overtones in the mouth. The use of rhythmic ornamentation accentuates the beat of the song. Nowadays *khoomei* is often faster and louder. Grace notes become tremolos as in *borbannadyr* style (after Mark Van Tongeren).

Sygyt (also written *Sigit*) is a high overtone singing sounding like a flute, a whistle, mostly combined with text. The term *sygyt* means "whistle". Songs in *sygyt* style start without overtones. At the end of a line, the melody ends with a sustained fundamental on which the singer surimposes a second melody with overtones (generally H9, H10 and H12, sometimes with H8, H9, H10, H12, H13). The best singers in *Sygyt* are Mongush Mergen, Tumat Kara-ool, Chuldum-ool Andrej.

Borbannadyr is sung from a fundamental in bass or baritone range. It is characterized by a pulsating asymmetrical rhythm and is not normally sung with text. The term is derived from the verb *borbanna* (to roll over). The singer employs the tremolo of overtones, and can create the triphonic effect with the fundamental, the first overtone level in fifth parallel (harmonic 3 : one octave + a fifth higher), and the second overtone level which gives the melody. This style is sung in a higher register than the one used in *kargyraa* with more nasal resonance. Mikhail Dopchun, Tumat Kara-ool, Anatolii Kuular are the best exponents of this style.

Ezengileer is produced by rapid vibrations of the lips, and is sung over a low fundamental. It creates soft shimmering overtone melodies. Both the high (nasal) and low (throat) sounds are important. The alternation of the two different sounds seem to define the style. It is characterized by a pulsating galloping asymmetrical rhythm which suggests riding on horseback. *Ezengi* means stirrup the metal parts of a bridle. Songs in *ezengileer* style were usually sung when riding on horseback. To-day the *ezengileer* style is rarely performed and is considered rather difficult. Mongush Mergen and Ondar Marzhymal are the best singers of this style.

Kargyraa is a very low overtone, singing with long breath and open vowels (u, o, ö, a) used in songs in which texts are sung. The term *kargyraa* is a homonym of the onomatopoeic verb *kargyraa* which

means "to expectorate". The pitch of the fundamental varies from 55 Hz to 65 Hz.

Apart from the five main styles, we can find other sub-categories:

Opei-khoomei is a lullaby *khoomei*, similar to the rhythm of rocking a baby to sleep. It is sometimes called *tönmes khoomei* (never ending *khoomei*).

Khovu-kargyraa is a steppe *kargyraa* practised when riding a horse on the steppe with the wind blowing at the right angle into the mouth with lips curled. The wind amplifies overtones. (this style can be heard in the compact disc *Tuva - Voices from the Center of Asia* - Smithsonian Folkways CD SF 40017, track 1)

Dag-kargyraa is a mountain *kargyraa*, practised in the mountains, producing an echo and singing with it. Tempo and timbre have a different rhythm than *khovu-kargyraa*.

Chelbig-kargyraa is a fan *kargyraa*, sung while continuously moving a fan in front of the mouth. The air circulation produced by the fan generates different *kargyraa* effects.

Sygytting borbannadyr is *sygyt* singing in *borbannadyr* style, also known as the Gennadi Tumat style because he has developed it.

Chilandyk is a combination of *sygyt* and *kargyraa* alternating between high and low registers. It is named after the *chilandyk* (cricket) which produces the same sound.

Dumchuktaar (from the nose) means *khoomei* singing through the nose, with mouth almost or completely closed. It can be combined with other styles such as *kargyraa*, *sygyt*, *khoomei* with nasal character.

Kangzyp is a special kind of overtone singing for someone who is depressed or sad. The word *kangzyp* is probably derived from the verb *kangzyyr* which means "to wail" (like a dog) or figuratively "to annoy".

Xörekteer (*xörek* means breast). It refers to singing with the breast of the melody before or in between actual overtone singing style. It is sung with words. If it is sung in the lower register, it is called *xörekteer*. Gennadi Tumat has sung it.

OVERTONES IN TIBET

Also famous for its mysterious harmonic sounds are some Tibetan monasteries, namely those of Gyuto and Gyume, where "tantras" (Buddhist scriptures) are intoned in such a way that two or more harmonics are audible. Probably this technique was introduced by Je

Tzong-khapa in the 15th century A.D. The words of these tantras cannot be logically understood, since they do not contain ordinary Tibetan language. Rather, they carry symbolic meanings, and the multiplicity of their words gives them a magical character. This magical character is reinforced by the overtones by means of this special singing technique. Here, overtones can in a very real way be seen as an extension of language, since they are uttered only when the tantras are sung, and thus they become associated with the magical meaning of the words.

The style these monks sing to some extent resembles Tuvan "borbanndyr" on account of its sound and mouth position. The use and function of their singing is yet so different from that of the Central Asian nomads, that it is unclear to this moment whether or not they shared a common tradition.

OVERTONES IN SOUTH AFRICA: UMNGQOKOLO NGOMQANGI.

The South African case demands special attention, since it stands alone in the African continent, and at the same time shows a highly evolved and unique culture of overtone music. The peoples in question are the Xhosa, living in the South-Eastern part of the Republic of South Africa, where the musicologist Dave Dargie undertook intensive research. All material concerning the Xhosa can be found in his book "Xhosa Music" (1988).

Listening to instrumental music of South Africa and adjacent countries the number and diversity of instruments producing strong overtones are striking. Of course there is the Jew's harp, among the Xhosa called "isitolotolo" using the same principles as the Tuvan "xomus", but played in a very rhythmical fashion. An equivalent of the Tuvan "igil" or Mongolian "morin xuur" can be found in Namibia and Botswana. A wealth of other chordophones exist, using harmonics as basic melodic material, such as a gut pluriarc from Botswana and the friction bow "chizmabi" from Zimbabwe. A more universal instrument is the Xhosa mouth bow *umrubhe*, bowed with a stick while being held against the mouth. By changing the shape of the mouth cavity, overtones are resonated, and the performer may whistle at the same time. Until the beginning of this century such an instrument, called "ca" (bow) could be found in Tuva as well.

Besides some similarities in instrumental music, Xhosa and Tuvan

music have overtone singing in common. In 1980 Dave Dargie discovered this remarkable way of singing by Xhosa women, with a sound quality somewhat similar to the Tuvan "kargiraa". It is called "umngqokolo" (the q standing for a typical African clicksound made with the tongue) and the overtones are purposely produced with any of four different fundamentals (F,G,D,F). This general style does not resonate the harmonics very clear, but one Xhosa woman, Mrs. NoWayilethi Mbizweni, has a very clear personal style, that she claims to have found all by herself. Her singing, called "umngqokolo ngomqangi" strongly reminds one of the sounds of the *umrubhe* mouthbow. she claims to have been inspired by the playing of an "umqangi" beetle, though. Boys pin this beetle down on a thorn, hold the buzzing insect in front of their mouth, and resonate the overtones with their mouth cavity.

As far as is known now, this technique is not widespread in Africa. there is at least one other area in South Africa where overtone singing is performed, but it has not yet been sufficiently investigated.

Last but not least, overtone singing may occur while singers do not really know that they produce harmonics. The scientists "etic" or analytical evaluation may speak of overtone singing, while the singers themselves are not conscious of this feature of their singing. Hopefully fieldwork will give us a deeper insight in the conceptions and psychoacoustical experiences of these singers.

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CHAOS - A PARADIGM IN ART AND EDUCATION

THE 'CHAOS' PHENOMENON

Since the seventies and eighties, 'chaos' has been adopted by some world societies as a new concept, as a metaphor of our time, and more recently even as a vogue word. Chaos theory is booming. Whereas chaos used to be regarded as an enigmatic term with partly negative associations, it is today attributed with creative and innovative dimensions in a most diverse range of scientific - and non-scientific - disciplines.

Chaos theory conveys an integrative way of understanding the world. Instead of applying the dualistic structures which have been used in Western societies for centuries, chaos theory now (or once again) draws our attention to the unity which underlies the diversity. It teaches us to build bridges, not only between the sciences, but also between the different cultures of the world. Our world is basically lost as soon as we bisect it into nature and intellect, into science and art, into intelligence and emotion, into North and South, into black and white, in order to label and possibly establish it with appropriate dualistic characteristics.

One possibility for avoiding this loss is instigated at that moment when chaos and order are no longer regarded as a pair of strict opposites, but as *the* integrative phenomenon of socio-political, socio-cultural, and personal life. In the course of his or her life, the individual passes through alternating phases of order and disorder, of accident and design, of discipline and uncontrollable indiscipline. Societies and individuals who have not learned how to estimate and deal with the complexity and unpredictability of chaotic events - and here the wide-reaching effects of the chaos phenomenon are particularly in evidence - often have extreme difficulty in coping with an unexpected, unclear, turbulent situation, or even in developing perspectives in which to think or to act. It is rarely possible to reduce a complex problem situation to a clear basis for thought or action. Although innumerable interrelated explanatory approaches are usually possible and the majority of these contain an element of the truth, it is rare for any single one to encompass the entire network of problems. But precisely these gaps in the interrelated network structures are elements with a role to play in chaos theory. In the light of this, it would appear to be advantageous for human co-existence to permit chance events to take place. Rather than attempting to prevent conditions of disorder, instability and disturbance at any price, it would be far more

important to learn how to develop a differentiated receptiveness for the complexity of chance events, to recognise and reflect critically upon the multiplicity, diversity and changeability of the phenomena, and finally to sound out their powers in order to use them in a constructive way.

In his *"Gesammelten Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre"* ["Collected essays on epistemology"] (Tuebingen, 1922, 88), the sociologist Max Weber (1864 - 1920) speaks symbolically of the history of man as a "chaos", and of reality as a "tremendously chaotic stream of events" which "is rolling forward through time". In fact, "nothing seems to be more disordered or governed by chance as the general progression of world history", in correspondence with the lives of individual persons. It is small wonder that at times the observer evaluates the overall view as a "chaos", when one considers the complexity of the interconnections and the fact that both world and cultural history - and the life story of every person living in the world - appear as an indecipherable network of decision processes.

There have always been contacts between the cultures and there always will be. This by no means indicates that we are on the way to a multicultural society (cf. for example the frequent use within Europe of such Eurocentric expressions as "Non-European music" or "Non-European dance"). The more important question is whether intercultural and personal meetings, which are characterised by constant change, lead to new identities. As one approach to this question, chaos can offer us the possibility of overcoming the gap between the different cultures and a chance to recognise features common to the different world cultures, instead of reciprocal ignorance and mutual impoverishment. Recognising this will certainly not be an insurmountable problem for artists, used as they are to working with open structures and concepts.

CHAOS IN ART

Chaos and its related dimension, chance, are permanent - though unintentional - factors in the creation and production of art. Chaos is an unavoidable side effect for a process of artistic design and may even be a necessary requirement. Chaos has been an intentional component of western art forms since the beginning of the 20th century. As long ago as 1913, Marcel Duchamp integrated the unexpected, the unplanned, the unpredictable in his first "Erratum musical". He incorporated chance within his artistic performance and opened art for everyday life with wide-ranging consequences for the 20th century. He refused to state a sense and meaning for this performance in which he pulled musical notes written on

scraps of paper out of a hat, blindfold, and assembled these in order into a musical score for three voices. "Your chance is different from mine", was his comment.

Chaos as a phenomenon associated with the creation of works of art is as old as art itself. It is almost impossible to predict the outcome of an artistic process. Leonardo da Vinci claimed that artistic creation has frequently been inspired by the power of human imagination to transform chance shapes in nature - such as cloud formations, ashes or weathered walls - into landscapes or monsters. However what distinguishes the Western art of our century from that of past centuries, is the conscious and occasionally provocative involvement of chance in the artistic process, a programmed involvement which extends beyond the earlier stimulation through chance appearances. Lautréamont (1847 - 1870) had already anticipated the aesthetics of conscious lack of intent in his definition of "beauty" as "the chance meeting of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a dissecting table". On being asked during a 1978 interview (Heinz Josef Herbart: *Das gekürzte Nichts* ["The shortened nothing"], *Die Zeit*, No. 16, 14.4.1978) what the actual difference was between normally opening a door and opening a door as an artistic act, John Cage answered: "If you celebrate it, it's art: if you don't, it isn't". Art is deprived here of all objective value criteria. Sounds, movements, colours, events etc become an artistic experience - or not - in the process of individual watching, observing, listening, experiencing. "Your chance is different from mine".

The motto "chance versus causality" was at the centre-point of the DADA movement, was later modified through the surrealistically oriented arts and changed again in the sixties and seventies as a result of the forms of appearance and experience of Fluxus, "Happenings" and Nouveaux Réalistes. In contrast, the theme of Timm Ulrichs's anagrammatic text object "CASUAL: CAUSAL" 1982, is not the opposition but the exchangeability of chance and causality (slide projection).

Can causal events be regarded as happening by chance? Can causal necessity be discovered within a chance event? Or is life a game between chance and necessity? Further questions or answers are left to the observer.

Varieties of chaos in compositional and educational processes

Many pieces of contemporary art are - in the words of Henri Pousseur - "not so much a piece as a range of possibilities, an invitation to choose ..." (cited from Eco, S. 27). 'Pieces' based on indeterminate compositions and materials often leave the process of becoming audible and visible to the open laws of game and chance, and allow themselves to be

driven forward by that *which is*, ... a special opportunity for an educational method which wishes to explore "The Beauty of Fractals" (György Ligety) in artistic and socio-philosophical contexts.

Chaos in the compositional process can mean a conscious rejection of any compositional organization, as in John Cage's "Concerto for piano and orchestra". Cage's political idea of anarchy extends into every possibility for notational differentiation. This rigorous denial of all the principles of organised ensemble playing probably represents just as great a challenge during an artistic instrumental performance as would an educational program based on the same principle of disorder. It would certainly be worthwhile to grasp the latter opportunity and undertake a (lifelong) attempt to find personal possibilities for orientation and action within the prevailing confusion, and thus to initiate the organisation of oneself among the surrounding chaos.

The question of meaning must be put differently in the absence of rules than it would be if existing rules are being infringed. In the "Chaos" section of his oratorio "The Creation", Joseph Haydn drastically ignores the normal rules of harmony to the extent that he alters the accepted harmonic theory "falsely" and confuses harmonic progressions or causes them to grate sharply against one another. In this case the transgression against the rules acquires its meaning with reference to a recognised paradigm system.

In neither of these two examples is chaos the same as lack of meaning. On the contrary. Rather, it is a challenge to seek a new meaning. Chaos interpreted in this way can become an unsuspected requirement for a "*Freiheit des Möglichen*" ["Freedom of the Possible"] (Vilém Flusser).

Chance and unpredictability

In 1991 in connection with the exhibition "John Cage and the Modern Age", John Cage acquired inventories of 17 Munich museum collections and, through a process of random selection, chose a small number of items for an exhibition of his own. The selected objects generated mutual confrontation between worlds, times and styles. "The result was an extremely interesting situation. One enters a museum without knowing what one will be shown ... The objects have been detached from their normal surroundings and are thus capable of being experienced anew" (Cage during an interview by Christoph Wiedmann. *Leben heisst, alles auszuprobieren* ["Life means try everything out"], *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 17.7.1991).

Cage himself provides the answer to questions from possibly inquisitive, astonished, confused, angered or amused visitors. ...One arrives somewhere or other without knowing what one will see or hear ... In Cage's view that is the essential point - the ability to endure not knowing, to experience new things, and the associated ability to pose questions and be inquisitive and open towards what is strange and unknown. The game of paradigm shift through improvisation, spontaneous actions, etc., generates a new kind of "knowing" in the sense of perceiving the subconscious through the conscious. Those who do not restrict chance to the museum but allow it to enter the classroom will enjoy the opportunity to make new discoveries. Those who permit unpredictability to enter a teaching-learning situation will be able to have surprising encounters and will learn something at the same time. Giving chance more room expands the imaginative scope of perception and thought and ultimately means changing the way in which we look at art and life.

Complexity and simultaneity

James Joyce's complex and ambiguous novel, "Finnegan's Wake", includes a wide variety of events related at different levels. In "Roaratorio", John Cage has produced an analogously layered structure from 64 sound tracks recorded over one another. A difficult to identify combination of human voice, natural sounds, noises and existing music forms a polyphonous excerpt of acoustic life from past and present. Past and present times not only exist simultaneously but also move towards one another and over one another at their own speed.

It is not easy to cope with the heterogeneity and density of the sound experiences in "Roaratorio". Perhaps that is why the piece has been the cause of so many misunderstandings. Our efforts towards differentiated perception are often hampered by that which we find difficult to recognise. It is nonetheless true that listeners can be made especially aware of the paradoxical way in which we regard time, through being confronted with sound material which is very different and in part diffuse. In my experience the sense of shock is much lower among youngsters than among older people who have got used to their many favourite listening memories. Perhaps being immersed in Roaratorio is a way of sharpening the consciousness so that the past can be understood only in connection with and within the present, and it is (once more) a question of our attitude and personal organisation as to how we move between the poles of liberated, and controlled, administered time. In addition to the temporal layers, the discovery of the intellectual dynamism of juxtaposition within the framework of an educational process can lead teacher and student to new inspirations which, once again, possess a dynamism of their own.

From a didactic point of view, the procedures for teaching and learning cannot be neatly and cleanly arranged like a string of pearls. The constantly changing course of events with its unpredictable outer and inner movements make it impossible to plan in accordance with theoretical didactic models. What is it then, which holds the process together? On the one hand it is paying attention to *what is*, to that *which happens* in all its originality, in its uniqueness, in its time and in its dynamism. On the other, it is the struggle to find ways which help to prevent uncertainties and turbulences, and to convey joy at the constant stream of new ways of forming parts of the world.

To avoid any misunderstandings: Product-oriented learning and working is without doubt an important aspect of the years we spend on this globe. It cannot be denied that part of our life - but only a part - consists of necessities which must be learned, practised and repeated. The other part is often the cause of annoying confusion which can sometimes lead us into serious trouble. And this exactly where the task begins: Who can help and become involved on such chaotic ground? Who should and can produce imaginable, thinkable, liveable associations from chaotic circumstances? Who can derive possible interactions from the confusion of every kind of meeting - if it is not man himself? Are not such thinkable and liveable associations, characterised through constant movement, exactly that which we call art? Is the confusion provoked by chaos not the most important reason for artistic activity? To put the question another way: Doesn't art cease to be art without the chaotic thorn in the complex confusion of our thinking, acting and feeling?

The future will be characterised by a style of thinking which assumes that we are a part of a chaotic world, that we live in chaos and that we cannot observe events of a chaotic nature from the outside. For art education, this means that we should not only guide our students towards that which is recognisable, but should also help them to relate to complex, chaotic reality and to develop structures for an open association of perception and thought. In respect of the method used in a teaching-learning situation, this means that chaos must be admitted in the sensuousness and openness of a state of improvisation. This also means admitting the meaningless, until an approach to form emerges from the fermentation process. The initial disorder of a chaotic event attracts the forces of order. The outcome should take shape slowly during the effort to organise the unfinished structures in a norm-free manner without at the same time destroying the sensuousness of the material, the sounds, the movements and the pictures.

The period of open art works, open processes, forms, structures and materials, needs an open system of education. One of the principles of all creative ability is to live among

changing nuances of certainty and uncertainty. Openness is based on admitting and discarding; and even without our being aware of the fact, CHANCE will catch up with us again. Becoming involved in this is the beginning of the educational task.

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"DANCING ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF TRADITION, MEDIA
AND MARKETING IN THE CARNIVAL OF
SALVADOR, BAHIA BRAZIL"

A keynote address presented by Linda Yudin (LAUSD) at
the 1997 Confluences: cross-cultural fusions in dance and music
Conference, July 17, UCT Ballet School, Cape Town, South Africa.

In 1987, I was interviewing Humberto Café, a second generation member of one of Bahia's most famous Black carnival groups, *afoxé* Filhos de Gandhi, or Sons of Gandhi, about their participation in Carnival and he said, "the intention of the group's participation in the late 1940s was to demonstrate through the chants and dances of Candomblé, like the *afoxés* before us- the Revelers of Africa and the African Embassy, the Sons of the Congo and the Sons of Oba, the beauty and richness of our Afro-Brazilian culture, to the authorities, who looted our Candomblé temples and arrested our priestesses and priests. We wanted to demonstrate through the playing out of ritual in the streets of carnival, by dancing, chanting and drumming to our *orixas*, our gods, that Black culture was a source of pride for us and for them, too." ¹

Brazilian carnival is a five day pre-Lenten celebration famed for its spectacular display of non-stop dance and music, and elaborate costumes. In Bahia, carnival also confronts race. Bahia's carnival has become the metaphorical "stage" upon which the issues of race, social values, and aesthetics are performed and asserted. Since the 1970s, this carnival has become an event in which increasing numbers of Black and mixed race youth feel at liberty to state their political agendas of race affirmation through the performance of contemporary Afro-Brazilian dance and music in groups called *blocos afro*.

The Yoruba based religion of Candomblé is very important in Bahia. It was repressed by the government. Therefore, when Filhos de Gandhi brought *orixa* movement and music to the street, it was political. In recent years, politics mixes with media, marketing and economics to add another dimension to dance in Bahia's carnival. In these last two decades, it is the Black Bahians identifying themselves and manipulating the media and gaining ownership from the marketing of contemporary Afro-Brazilian dance and music in carnival. It is against this background that I will examine this event in Salvador, Bahia, the

¹Café, Humberto, Interview in Salvador, Bahia, 11 January 1987.

capital city of this northeastern state and a pivotal center for both the creation of traditional and contemporary Afro-Brazilian dance and music expression.

Blocos afro articulate their concerns most prominently through the performance of an urban dance expression called *afro* and an urban music form called samba-reggae. *Afro* dance mixes Candomblé ritual movements from the various nations of Ketu, Angola, and Jeje, Brazilian folkloric dance, samba, modern and jazz dance, and the latest Bahian fad dances. Samba reggae fuses the percussive rhythms of samba, Candomblé styles, and Jamaican reggae. The potency of these expressions found in the *blocos afro* has set thousands of Bahian youth in motion and into the streets to mark their collective presence, assisting in establishing their Black Brazilian identity in Carnival, and presenting a body of dance knowledge that honors its African inheritance, yet swings to a groove that is rhythmically rooted in Bahia, Brazil.

Since the 1930s, the white Brazilian elite has attempted to define all of Brazil's citizen's identity in order to promote a unitary national identity, based upon European aesthetics and values called *brasilidade*, or brazilianness. The African and indigenous contribution was ignored almost completely. Through the late 1960s, groups which attempted to challenge the fact that racial inequality existed were deemed racists themselves. Public discussion in Brazil describes its society as possessing a racial democracy; social inequalities are often understood to be the result of class, rather than class related issues. Race relations in Brazil, are, however, more contradictory, more complex, and more oppressive than the notion of racial democracy admits.

The complexity of race becomes a central issue in Bahia's carnival. In this context, performing these dances has a political meaning for Black Bahians. In an interview with Augusto Omolu, a contemporary choreographer and dancer with *bloco afro* Muzenza, he expresses many of the same concerns that Humberto Café articulated, "When we began our dance presentations in the 1980s, there was still such misconception about Afro-Brazilian culture, especially *afro* dance. It was looked at as a folk form, yet when government agencies sell our culture to tourists, traditional and contemporary Afro-Brazilian dance is always contracted, like a show piece as opposed to a legitimate form of dance expression that includes a specific technique, etc. We wanted to demonstrate that dance was an integral part of our culture and that we are an integral part of Brazilian culture.

Carnival has provided many of us the opportunity to spread our "swingue" - "our swing" onto the streets."²

A look at Bahia's carnival history will help to explain the ascendance of this Black Bahian presence. Bahia's Carnival has been dominated for many years by samba clubs and *trios elétrico*, which are large moving stages for Bahian pop electric bands that are mounted on top of custom designed semi-trucks. Scores of Bahians can be seen dancing the latest dance trends, freely, following behind these massive sound machines. The *trio elétrico* clubs were supposedly open to all, however by the 1970s, the trios began to cordon off the area around the semi-truck for their paying members to ensure a safe area in which to dance. In Bahia, many of these groups denied entry to Blacks, even those who could afford to pay the often extravagant entrance fees. This exclusionary practice encouraged the creation of alternative groups. The *trio elétrico* clubs subliminally sent out a message that it was the Black population instigating the violence and should therefore, be denied participation to dance in the trio festivities. The frenetic nature of the trio's music combined with these trucks traveling on very narrow and crowded streets should actually be credited with the growing violent behavior.

The *trios* have also been very successful at attracting financial support from the business and private sector. Carnival as a business opportunity begins to overshadow the spontaneous nature previously inherent in the Bahian carnival. State and local agencies look to Bahia's Carnival as one of its main attractions for the sprouting tourist industry in northeastern Brazil.

The large majority of Black Bahians who were excluded from the *trios* joined groups called *blocos indios*, Indian groups. A common practice was to depict North American Indians as seen in the Wild West Hollywood films on Brazilian television aired in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These young Black Bahians were often harassed by the police for their perceived unruly participation and attracted negative media attention. The *blocos indios* were portraying through a presentation of *samba de caboclo* dancing and samba music, Hollywood's version of America's Wild West's negative portrayal of indigenous peoples where violence has consistently played a great role. *Blocos indio* participation has waned considerably and have not shaken the negative stereotyping of the "wild Indian" dancing groups. Their decline can be

²Omolu, Augusto, Interview in Salvador, Bahia, 3 February 1995.

attributed to a general lack of emphasis on Brazilian indigenous traditions and shifts in these members loyalty to the emerging *blocos afro* who were beginning to form with a Black Bahian social and political agenda.³

In 1974, the first *bloco afro*, Ilê Aiyê was born and sought to infuse pan-African consciousness into carnival, using Candomblé and Africa as a model, but breaking away from the *afoxé* model which encourages staying within the tradition of only performing *orixa* dances to the *ijexa* musical rhythm. The newly forming *blocos afro* gave a kind of assurance to the carnival organizers that new traditions could recharacterize this carnival, and with its emerging dance and music expressions, also create a profitable venture. Black Bahian activists who were forming these new groups, looked to Bahia's carnival as a platform to affirm their Black identity and to take part in the business venture contained in Bahia's carnival, too. Provocative activists like João Jorge of *bloco afro* Olodum stated "our collective mission was to create new cultural forms and cultural formulas that expressed our Black culture in Brazil and that could sustain us."⁴ By "that could sustain us", Jorge is referring to cultural and economic stability. In other words, we, too, will take part in obtaining a piece of this financial pie.

Bahia's Carnival begins to experience what Antonio Riserio in his book *Carnaval Ijexa* calls a "reafricanization".⁵ The *blocos afro* are one of the most seminal groups to contribute to this phenomenon. They draw from their pan-African and Brazilian histories for inspiration and content. Their carnival presentations reflect a preference for celebrations of history, African and Brazilian cultural awareness and the collective aspirations of many Black Brazilians and resoundingly dance, sing and drum to affirm their racial and ethnic identities. Antonio Carlos dos Santos, better known as Vovo, is the director of *bloco afro* Ilê Aiyê, mentioned that the growing number of *bloco afro* leaders were influenced with what was going on with Black international movements- the independence of Portugal's former colonies in Africa: Angola, Guinea Bissau, and Mozambique and Black Brazilian regional consciousness movements, but that Africa and Candomblé always had a greater impact on

³Dunn, Christopher, "Afro-Bahian Carnival: A Stage for Protest", Afro-Hispanic Review 11, nos.1-3 (1992), p.14

⁴Jorge, João, Lecture at the University of California, Los Angeles, 15 October 1996.

⁵Riserio, Antonio, *Carnaval Ijexa*, Salvador: Corrupio, 1981.

them.⁶ The group also instituted in those early years a Blacks only policy in protest to the exclusionary practices of the pre-dominantly white *trios elétricos*. Part of Ilê Aiyê's strategy was to affirm a set of African aesthetics, challenging Brazil's elite's notion of beauty and equality held by the dominant white society. The greatest importance of Ilê Aiyê in their formative years was not that "we were the first *bloco afro*, but that we had the courage to make an all Black parading group during the repressive years of the military dictatorship and to go out into the streets and affirm our *negritude*, our Blackness."⁷ This courageous step could have cost these groups their very existence, members could have been jailed for speaking a discourse, one outside the political parameters of the military regime. Instead this radical strategy attracted media attention by carnival organizers, recording companies and thousands of interested Black Bahians.

By the early 1980s, a new Black aesthetic had been established and was largely accepted, marking the beginning of a break with the tradition of separatism and more fundamental transformation from within Black Bahians in relation to the dominant society. Black Bahians see themselves as part of the mix - a kind of "in your face" analogy. Dancers exhibited beautifully, athleticized versions of *orixa* inspired choreographies aboard truck platforms and on the ground the dance wing members were forging new steps that extended the movement boundaries of the *orixas*, mixing secular, foreign and homegrown moves⁸, exalting this new urban dance style called, *afro*. Luiz Badaró, Bahian choreographer and musician, who is also in attendance today once said when describing the movement and its quality - "we danced big!"⁹ (demonstration of Oxum movement as example by LY) This creative political presence is about taking up space in society as well as in the street.

The public acceptance of Candomblé was one of its bases, but the *blocos afro* wanted to expand beyond the pure tradition to include many other artistic forms. This whole creative process which Ilê Aiyê instituted became the

⁶ Dunn, Christopher, "Afro-Bahian Carnival: A Stage for Protest", Afro-Hispanic Review 11, nos.1-3 (1992), p.14

⁷ Dunn, Christopher, "Afro-Bahian Carnival: A Stage for Protest", Afro-Hispanic Review 11, nos.1-3 (1992), p.15

⁸Browning, Barbara, *Samba: resistance in motion*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995, p.131.

⁹Badaró, Luiz, Interview in Los Angeles, 12 October 1996.

standard for other *blocos afro* emerging at the time, each presenting a unique *afro* dance presentation and their own style of samba-reggae music.

This fundamental fusion of dance forms inspired many black choreographers who began to shape this new dance style. Augusto Omolu told me, "I decided that I wanted to work with this form and create an *afro* style for the dance wing in the *blocos afro*. My generation discovered that we identify with this style that is from Bahia. Our carnival dance presentation is about discovering our identity, our Black culture. Our dance is purely Afro-Brazilian-it is from our land -it is us!! Through dance we are speaking our dialect of Afro-Bahian/Brazilianness. We are battling to create a specific technique that is identifiably Brazilian. We looked inward in order to create this form that identifies our generation."¹⁰

In Daniel Crowley's book, *African Myth and Black Reality in Bahian Carnival*, he suggests that the *afoxés* and *blocos afro* reflect a "naive pan africanism" amongst Black Bahians. He feels that these young Bahians lacked knowledge of their ancestors African past and that at best the information was "hazy and fragmentary."¹¹ Christopher Dunn has challenged Crowley's critique with these comments: "The *afoxés* and the *blocos afro* are not so much misinforming the public about Africa, but rather building a grass roots discourse which challenges traditional notions and myths of Africans and their descendants in Brazil".¹² The *blocos afro* are reinforcing notions of affirmation and self as well as creating an alternate ethnocentrism against a culture that has consistently interpreted the presence of the Black in Brazil as a humiliation to its history. Choreographers and songwriters were aware of the inadequacy in their African interpretations. I always find it curious why "black" forms are held to some sort of genetic purity test. Writer Barbara Browning adds, "The Bahian Carnival rewrites African history in terms which are meaningful to its participants. Beyond retelling history, the *blocos afro* are educating the Bahian public about contemporary issues, at home and abroad. Their interest in the political struggles of African states is again, not a naive pan africanism, but a

¹⁰Omolu, Augusto, Interview in Salvador, Bahia, 3 February 1995.

¹¹Daniel Crowley, *African Myth and Black Reality in Bahian Carnival* (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History, UCLA, Monograph Series 25, 1984), p.25 - 26.

¹²Dunn, Christopher, "Afro-Bahian Carnival: A Stage for Protest", *Afro-Hispanic Review* 11, nos.1 -3 (1992), p.12.

reasoned recognition that as largely underclass Brazilians, the members share difficulties with their African brothers and sisters."¹³

A similar trajectory exists with *afro* dance content. When I interviewed Luiz Badaró regarding the African inspired dance presentations by the *blocos afro* he stated that there were very limited African dance resources in Bahia[in the late 1970s]. Our African dance reference has always been the dances of the Candomblé *orixás*. "If a *bloco afro* chose Senegal as its theme, our dancing, for example did not reflect any particular Senegalese dance. We choreographers took this opportunity to create a style and communicate our identity by working with the principles inherent in contemporary dance that allowed us to create our own Afro-Brazilian language that contained African dance characteristics mostly from the Candomblé and with our own personal movement vocabulary."¹⁴ Twenty five years later, access to African dance forms are available, however the *afro* style continues to best articulate the collective concern for many Bahian choreographers who are shaping the current statement of Afro-Brazilian dance.

The success of Ilê Aiyê triggered the formation of approximately twenty-five *blocos afro* in the 1980s. None of the other *blocos* imitated Ilê's black skin tone policy, but they did follow Ilê's example in tying their carnival presentations to Africa and Afro-Brazilian themes.

In the early 1990s, the situation changed. In addition to dancing the politics of race and identification, the *blocos afro* are facing the challenges found in media and marketing themselves as a sustainable commodity in carnival as they compete with the *trios* for the same support and space. *Bloco afro* Olodum, famous for its participation in Paul Simon's *Rhythm of the Saints* CD advanced onto the world music market at a rapid rate due in part to this recording. Olodum has developed itself into a community organization whose activities extend beyond the carnival period and have begun to educate its members and the Bahian community that racial equality, literacy, the development of an active artistic community, the creation of new artistic form and economic independence are indispensable components to Olodum's existence and to Bahian society. It is one of the most popular *blocos afro* to date and is often referred to as the most political of the Afro-Bahian carnival organizations. In

¹³Browning, Barbara, *Samba: resistance in motion*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995, p.139.

¹⁴Badaró, Luiz, Interview in Los Angeles, 15 October 1996.

1990, Olodum chose not to celebrate an African nation, but rather chose the northeastern region of Brazil whose predominant component is indigenous, not African. Folk figures and escaped slaves were all lumped together in Olodum's celebration of dance and music not because of race in particular, but because these figures signify a history of oppositional politics in Brazil.

Olodum's headquarters are located in the Pelourinho, Salvador's historic center and the sight where until abolition, Africans and their descendants were exhibited, sold and tortured. The Pelourinho has been described by one songwriter to be the stage of life and black truths, where the ongoing Afro-Brazilian drama has been played out.¹⁵ This songwriter is speaking of the Black Bahian trajectory- from slavery to freedom to ownership and for Olodum and Carnival, this means the right to make one's own decisions, to dance one's own dances, to play one's own music and yes to play the game of economic profitability. This continuing discourse is now led by the Black Bahian who will decide what exactly is exhibited and sold at this important city venue.

Olodum is a business, too and which has theoretically put them in charge. Olodum has purchased property to house its administrative headquarters, and also includes a carnival costume factory, a boutique which sells Olodum clothing and souvenirs, and an Afro-Brazilian arts based school where music and dance classes are conducted and a theater company is housed as well as classes in literacy and visual art are offered. The group even has its own Visa credit card with an automatic teller machine advertising Olodum near its rehearsal site.

The former musical director of Olodum, Neguinho de Samba, developed and popularized the most influential musical rhythm of the *blocos afro*, samba-reggae. The *blocos afro* understand the beat of reggae as significant of black consciousness, even though there are only a small minority of Bahians well versed in Rastafarian doctrine and probably a fewer still who are aware of their own and the Jamaican's syncretic, resistant beliefs. This cross-fertilization of these rhythms has produced a new music of undeniable force and profit for the *blocos afro* who are currently recording at a prolific rate. Olodum emphasizes dance less. Music sells on the international market, but dance, with the possible exception of the lambada, dance does not fare as well.

¹⁵ Dunn, Christopher, "Afro-Bahian Carnival: A Stage for Protest", Afro-Hispanic Review nos.1-3 (1992), p.16.

The next decade poses an array of challenges for Olodum as they struggle with developing both as a community cultural institution and as a business, which are sometimes in opposition. With a political history that has often been dependent on government support, Olodum took financial risks this year by maintaining its oppositional political stand in local elections. Taking this kind of stand translates into little or no government agency support for Olodum's carnival and year round activities. Olodum has begun to connect with international funding sources and for the past five years has been touring the world with three of its dance bands. Touring has proven to be a successful business venture, capturing media attention in a competitive world music market. Olodum attempts to hold steadfast to its founding principles which include the creation of contemporary Black Bahian expressions, creating an economic base that gives the *bloco* the power to articulate its politics through samba-reggae and *afro* dance. They are commodifying themselves in a manner so different from the way Black Brazilians were commodified under slavery. (Remember, they now have a Visa card and advertise at an ATM machine).

Blocos afros traditionally begin their *ensaio*s, or public rehearsals in September on a weekly basis and up to Carnival in February. Members and interested onlookers transform the public plazas and local *blocos afro* headquarters' into a democratic stage where dance and music become the discourse. The dancing space in addition to the thunderous drum rhythms became a place to look within "our Afro-Brazilian selves".

In 1989 and through 1996, Augusto Omolu conducted free public dance classes for members of Bloco Afro Muzenza. This *bloco afro* made dance its trademark and fuses themes about Bob Marley, reggae and Africa into its presentations. Omolu's classes provide an outdoor dance studio experience for the hundreds of prospective members who choose to perform in Muzenza's famous dance wing. "Most of the kids that take my class, don't have the opportunity to take a formal dance class where dance technique and discipline are taught. And not everyone wants to be a trained dancer, but these classes give them the opportunity to have the chance to rehearse before their Carnival moment."¹⁶ The participants burning desire to learn *afro*, and their passionate respect for Omolu, permeates throughout the Liberdade neighborhood square. Approximately 150 students attend these free classes four times per week

¹⁶Omolu, Augusto, Interview in Salvador, Bahia, 3 February 1995.

dancing *afro* "across the plaza floor" to the accompaniment of ten Muzenza drummers for approximately one month prior to Carnival. Augusto Omolu and other professional dancers alternate teaching movements throughout these two hour evenings, that will be danced repetitively during carnival. Competition is fierce, to say the least, and each dancer's body expressively states the desire to be chosen to dance in Muzenza's famed dance wing.

Unfortunately, in 1997, Omolu did not conduct these classes which had become such a tradition. When I asked Omolu about why he wasn't able to conduct these classes he stated the following, "internal politics and administrative difficulties have affected Muzenza's carnival activities. We were out on those streets, that was for sure, but the kind of support that I need to do the classes is lacking greatly. Muzenza has not managed to evolve on an organizational level and this creates certain difficulties which must be overcome."¹⁷ This is quite a contrast from Olodum's successful manipulation of the media and marketing.

Bloco afro ensaios have now evolved into year round events taking place in the Pelourinho district of Salvador. (mastering the art of capitalism) *Blocos afro* market their rehearsals to both Bahians and tourists as a public show with an entrance fee of \$US10. and often attract media attention by inviting popular Bahian musicians such as Daniela Mercury or Caetano Veloso to participate to attract a larger public. The *blocos* do also hold free rehearsals in their respective neighborhoods. The rehearsals have developed into a two-tier system for groups like Ilê Aiyê and Araketu- tourist oriented money making rehearsals and free rehearsals. *Afro* dance and samba reggae rhythms remain to be operative wherever the rehearsals are located continuing to create a cauldron of creative energy that is Black and Bahian. The *blocos afro* lay the terms of the aesthetic debate which is to say, join us on our terms and those are about blackness, about *afro* dance and about samba-reggae, about affirming cultural expressions of the Black Bahian. This is very profound given the fact that twenty five years ago this discussion was considered to be engaging in subversive activity- that forty years before, Candomblé was repressed and the *afoxé* groups protested the repression and violence by displaying the very African based traditions of dance and music that were thought to be an embarrassment to Brazilian society.

¹⁷Omolu, Augusto, Interview in Salvador, Bahia, 1 March 1997.

Bloco afro Ara Ketu, founded in 1980 in the poor suburb of Periperi in Salvador has succeeded in developing a strategy which furnishes its members and tourists a variety of ways in which to participate and one where dance is important. One can choose to participate as a dancer in the traditional choreographed *afro* dance wing or in the dance section performing the latest Bahian fad dances. The music component also includes samba-reggae drumming on the street with a large drum ensemble and Ara Ketu's pop electric band who performs on the group's *trio elétrico* styled truck. For the past five years, Ara Ketu's band has appeared internationally at events such as the Montreux Jazz Festival, New York's Central Park's Outdoor Summer Concerts and other world music festivals. Each presentation is complete with an *afro* dance piece integrated into the concert. World touring with the Ara Ketu Band has proven to be lucrative, acquired media attention and has allowed Ara Ketu to continually record and thereby reinvest in its organization. Ara Ketu's strategy is an interesting success story for the *blocos afro* by honoring its own traditions and developing new strategies. Ara Ketu moves and performs through the maze of economic independence utilizing creative marketing techniques and gaining media attention without losing the operative statement of who is laying down the aesthetic debate in Bahia. And making dance an integral component. Bahians still want to dance and Ara Ketu keeps this option open.

In 1997, Bahia's Carnival entered into a critical period of transition. By the mid 1990s, participation has shifted and the total number of *blocos afro* has dropped significantly. The trends are: the organizations are getting bigger, tour the international market aggressively and make lots of money. These issues have put the *blocos afro* in a precarious position of transition as I mentioned. With more connections throughout Brazil and abroad, groups like Olodum and Ara Ketu have a much better chance of remaining financially and politically independent.

There is, however an unfortunate sentiment in Bahia today that the *bloco afro* movement has run its course. Afro-Brazilian historian Moraes Ribeiro states, "quite frankly, private agencies and national companies don't support Black culture- that is the sad truth. Bahia's carnival has become so commercialized, that many organizations that evolved in the late 1970s, early 1980s, out of sheer will and desire to be a part of this exciting and formative part of our Black history have suffered administrative difficulties, and simply cannot

compete with the *trios* and their enormous resources. The larger black organizations have learned, to some extent, how to organize effectively. These organizations have not instituted philanthropic policies outside of their own organization. Black organizations have not learned to support each other yet. Bahia's carnival organizers have concentrated their efforts on promoting tourism with the *trio* concept and have lost the essence of this carnival which is an event where everyone can participate and where black culture has a space to develop its concerns. Energies are almost solely devoted to the media and marketing and attracting tourists from Brazil and abroad. Some of the *blocos afro* and *afoxés* have been quite successful in developing themselves in those areas. But, the Black carnival is in jeopardy of losing its presence."¹⁸

In Bahia's Carnival, black Bahians have created a space for members of the *blocos afro* to assert the politics of race and identity, of Black Bahian/Brazilian aesthetics and values, "rhythmic sophistication, elegant choreographies, and the *orixas*."¹⁹ And as Augusto Omolu concludes, "our energy, our Black origins are with us, they are in our body- I don't have to look outside for my African heritage, it is with us, it is in our dance, *afro* and Candomblé, too. Our dance is Afro-Brazilian- it is from our land - it is us, the street is our biggest stage to dance, to proclaim our strength and consciousness."²⁰ What did develop in Bahia's carnival by a whole sector of creative Black artists and activists was a political consciousness articulated in an urban dance form that expresses tradition and innovation, is challenged by the commercial world of media and marketing, and dances a dance which honors Africa, yet rhythmically moves to a concept called swingue, rooted in Bahia, Brazil.

"We made it out there, as you saw, not like the years before, but we managed and we were beautiful - who knows what will happen next year," said Augusto Omolu. Muzenza gave support to the Margalhaes political party which generally translates into carnival assistance for the coming year. The political costs are high and will seem to make them highly dependent on government assistance to support their fine dance and music. "*Afro* is very in fashion today- what we developed and worked hard creating, a dance form that was created in

¹⁸Ribeiro, Moraes, Interview in Salvador, Bahia 5 March 1997.

¹⁹Browning, Barbara, *Samba: resistance in motion*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995, p.139.

²⁰ Omolu, Augusto, Interview in Salvador, Bahia, 3 February 1995.

the studio, performed in the closed theater is now popular in the streets. "You see- said Omolu, the carnival space created, or shall I say we created within the carnival a place for us to discover our identity - our Afro-Brazilian identity. And this discovery is very important for us - This discovery of values, aesthetics in our Black culture. It is very significant for us, it is gratifying. The *blocos afro* and the *afoxés* have worked hard for this recognition. It's great to see everyone dancing *afro*. It is a public show, our public show, what was fashionable has now become a tradition. How we continue is a question we have not entertained - and that must be our next step."²¹

The following Carnival video clips were viewed during this presentation

1. Afoxé Filhos de Gandhi
2. Bloco afro Ilê Aiyê
3. Bloco afro Malê de Balê
4. Bloco afro Olodum
5. Bloco afro Muzenza

²¹ Omolu, Augusto, Interview in Salvador, Bahia, 3 February 1995 and 1 March 1997.

APPENDICES

- A. CONFERENCE PROGRAMME
- B. CONCERT PROGRAMME
- C. SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

CONFLUENCES

WED 16/7 - 17H30 - COCKTAIL PARTY to welcome ALL DELEGATES - EDUCATION QUAD

THU 17/7	LECTURE TH 1 (DANCE)	LECTURE TH 2 (MUSIC)	5.11 (MUSIC)	BALLET SCHL (DANCE)
08h00	REGISTRATION			
09h00-10h15	OPENING address DEPUTY-MAYOR of CAPE TOWN Clr Arthur Jacobs KEYNOTE speaker Kealiinohomoku- Three Indigenous Peoples of the USA Chair: Triegaardt			
10h15-11h15	KEYNOTE speaker Yudin- Carnival in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil Chair: Honore			
11h15	TEA			
11h45-13h00	Spurgeon- A Delicate Balance Chair: Van Papendorp	Lec-dem (keynote) Hai- Jew's Harps Chair: Hansen		
13h00	LUNCH - performance by 'UMNGQUNGQO' - XHOSA song and dance group, in the EDUCATION QUAD			
14h00-15h30	Maree- Dance & Political Correctness Van Papendorp & Waterman- Towards a New Model for Dance Hubbard & Sofras- Strategies for including Dance in a Eurocentric Curriculum Chair: Friedman	Muller- An African & Western Percussion- based approach to Music Education Desai- Sama': its nature, purpose & function Chair: Botha	Lec-dem Patrick- Exploring the Waterfall Chair: Raizenberg	Workshop (keynote) Kealiinohomoku- Holistic Methodology Chair: Honore
15h30	TEA			
16h00-17h30	PANEL discussion (Van Papendorp) Dance - Education or Training	Khumalo & Xulu- Defining the Concept of Music in Zulu Musical Thought Stinson- The Incorporation of Foreign Concepts into the "Traditional" Cosmology of the Xhosa-speaking People Chair: Hansen	Workshop Tracey- Notation/ Transcription of African Music Chair: Fourie	Workshop Taylor- Indigenous Caribbean, Modern & Ballet Dance Forms Chair: Raizenberg
19h00	Optional Excursion to the WATERFRONT			

PLEASE REFER TO LIST OF PRESENTATIONS FOR FULL TITLES

FRI 18/7	LECTURE TH 1(DANCE)	LECTURE TH 2(MUSIC)	5.11(MUSIC)	BALLET SCHL(DANCE)
08H30	REGISTRATION			
09H00-10H30	Gordon- <i>Lessons & Mirrors: steps to consider in the education of the dance maker</i> Hurwitz- <i>Crimes & Misdemeanours: an assessment of the past & a vision of the future of classical ballet in SA</i> Sichel- <i>Destination: Rhythm Nation (a SA dance writer's perspective)</i> Chair:Botha	Dargie- <i>Xhosa Rhythm: links between voice & body rhythms in Thembu dance songs</i> Kruger- <i>Mitambo: Venda Traditional Dance Theatre</i> Chair:Fourie	Workshop Tracey- <i>Notation/Transcription of African Music(Pt 2)</i>	Lec-dem Hamilton- <i>Displacing "normal" theatrical boundaries to involve audience & performer in social occasion</i> Chair:Cheesman
10h30	TEA			
11h00-12h00	KEYNOTE speaker Copeland- <i>Between Description & Deconstruction</i> Chair:Honore			
12h00-13H00	KEYNOTE speaker Foster- <i>Confluences of Race, Gender & Sexuality in American Modern Dance (Part 1)</i> Chair:Honore	KEYNOTE speaker Arom- <i>On Banda Polyphony: the Hocket Technique</i> Chair:Katz' enbogen		
13h00	LUNCH - performance by the MPUMALANGA CHOIR in the EDUCATION QUAD			
14h00-15h30	Glasser- <i>Appropriation & Appreciation</i> Briginshaw- <i>Hybridity & Nomadic Subjectivity in Shobana Jeyasingh's Choreography</i> Fiske- <i>Marion Chase comes Full Circle</i> Chair:Johnson Jones	Mans- <i>Discovering some of the Characteristics of Namibian Dance/Music</i> Mokwunyei- <i>Traditional Music Theatre in Contemporary Contexts: Perspectives from Aniocha Igbo of Nigeria</i> Chair:Jordan	Lec-dem Hansen- <i>The Kirby Collection of African Instruments</i>	14h00 - 15h30 Workshop Gordon- <i>Without Wings...; a little flying, catching, falling & touching</i> 14h00 - 15h00 Lec-dem Naidoo & Hasal- <i>Classical Form in Indian Dance</i> Chair:Cheesman
15h30	TEA			
16h00-17h30	PANEL Discussion (Copeland) <i>The State of Dance Scholarship as we approach the 21st Century</i>	PANEL discussion (Hansen) <i>Strategies for the Research, Documentation & Continuity of Musical Traditions</i>		
19h30	PERFORMANCE in the BAXTER CONCERT HALL			

SAT 19/7	LECTURE TH 1(DANCE)	LECTURE TH 2(MUSIC)	5.11(MUSIC)	BALLET SCHL(DANCE)
08h30	REGISTRATION			
09h00-10h30	Martin- <i>Changes in Cape Town New Year Festivals</i> Dembovsky- <i>Jazzart Dance Theatre</i> Jordan- <i>Palimpsest as Creative Practice & Analytical Technique</i> Chair:Fourie	Vent- <i>Chaos: a Paradigm in Art & Education</i> Opondo- <i>Expressing an Explicitly African Aesthetic in Neo-traditional Dance Expressions</i> Maree- <i>John Blacking's Contribution to Dance Research</i> Chair:Botha	Workshop Tracey- <i>The Nyanga Panpipes</i> Chair:Tomlinson	WORKSHOP (keynote) Yudin & Badaro- <i>Afro-Brazilian Traditional & Contemporary Dance, with live accompaniment by Luiz Badaro</i> Chair:Raizenberg
10h30	TEA			
11h00-12h00	KEYNOTE speaker Copeland- <i>From Graham to Cunningham</i> Chair:Waterman	KEYNOTE speaker Hail- <i>Overtones in Central Asia & in Xhosa Vocal Style</i> Chair:Hansen		Workshop Garth/Wolff- <i>Lively Dance of the High Renaissance</i> Chair:Honore
12h00-13h00	KEYNOTE speaker Foster- <i>Confluences of Race, Gender, etc (Part 2)</i> Chair:Botha	KEYNOTE speaker Arom- <i>On Pygmy Polyphony</i> Chair:Fourie		Lec-dem Smith- <i>Teaching African Dance at the College & University Level</i> Chair:Honore
13h00	LUNCH			
14h00-15h30	Johnson Jones- <i>The Choreographic Notebook</i> Layiwola- <i>The Problem of Literal Documentation in African Dance Studies</i> Chair:Gordon	Smit- <i>Getting It off the Ground</i> Muso- <i>Confluent Dances of Lipitla Ramapepe</i> Chair:Tracey	Lec-dem Stasi- <i>Scraper Music & its Songs</i> Chair:Tomlinson	Workshop Hubbard- <i>Vintage Jazz Dance Jam</i> Chair:Triegaardt
15h30	TEA			
16h00-17h00	PANEL discussion (Fiske) <i>The Healing Power of Music & Dance</i>	Lec-dem Singer- <i>Under Nigundl: "Our Song"</i> Chair: Reiner	Lec-dem - Labi- <i>African Pianism- a Composer's Perspective</i> Chair:Patrick	Workshop Oguri- <i>Body Weather Laboratory</i> Chair:Cohen
17h00-17h30	CLOSING PLENARY Bongani Ndodana- <i>Confluences: Arts and Culture in the new South Africa</i> Chair:Triegaardt			
17h30	FINAL CONFLUENCE of DELEGATES in the EDUCATION QUAD			

The University of Cape Town Ballet School

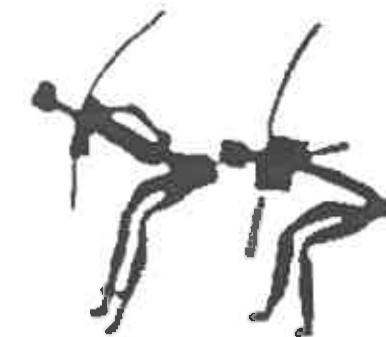
and the South African College of Music

welcome you to

CONFLUENCES

IN

CONCERT



FRIDAY 18 JULY 1997 @ 19H30

MOVING LIFE ART-EXHIBITION (in the Baxter Foyer)

Directed by: Geli Schubert
Performed by: Gabriella Chidgey, Debbie Goodman, Denise Powling,
Geli Schubert, Kim Thacker

The Jagged Dance Company perform extracts from "Framed", a few images from a full-length Moving Life Art-Exhibition.

Using the media: wood, fabric and
dance theatre
to be framed...
in body, mind and society
* * *

THE MAP MARIMBA GIRLS PLUS

Director: Alport Mhalanga
Performed by: The Map Marimba Girls

The name "Map Marimba" is used by the Maru A Pula School marimba band. The band has been in existence for more than seven years. It is known as one of the topmost marimba bands in Botswana.

RESTING IN THE TREES

Presented by: The First Physical Theatre Company
Choreographers: Clare Baker & Gary Gordon
Lighting design: Michael Mannion
Music composed by: David Dorfman
Performed by: Clare Baker & Gary Gordon

The collaborative partnership between Clare Baker and Gary Gordon began at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance in London during the late 1980's. They have presented their work in London, Copenhagen, Johannesburg and Grahamstown. Their work is characterised by an emphasis on developed content, intriguing physicality and ambiguous relationships. *Resting in the Trees*, the result of a creative research process focusing on the abstract, the literal and the theatrical, integrates text and movement. This work was made possible thanks to a grant from the Choreographic Development Project of the Chisenhale Dance Space, London.

XAVIER GUELLO

Performed by: Carlos Stasi

A solo piece for a Brazilian metal reco-reco with springs. The piece presents several new techniques of playing and creates a diversity of timbres and melodic phrases played on three springs with different pitches. Carlos Stasi has performed contemporary music for percussion in Brazil and the USA since 1982, participating in symphonic orchestral work as well as playing traditional music with Arabic, Medieval and West-African groups. He is a composer, teacher, conductor and researcher affiliated to Sao Paulo University. His work is based on research done in Brazil, Mexico, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and America.

GANESHA ANJALI

Performed by: Dr V Hasal & Kamaki Darshana

This is a fusion of two Indian classical styles. Kathak from North India and Bharata Natyam from South India. The dancers pay homage to God and ask for the removal of all obstacles. He is praised and glorified. The dance ends in a foot work display (Raga nattai talam adhi)

GARBA & BANGRA DANCES

Performed by: Vadhini Academy of Arts dancers
Director: Savitri Naidoo

The Garba is a traditional dance from the state of Gujarat. The rhythmic beat pattern is kept by the clapping of hands, while gracefully moving in various patterns. The Bangra is a vibrant dance from the state of Punjab.

VE'ULAI, ROZHINKES MIT MANDLEN AND MY YIDDISHE MAMMA

Performed by: Beverley Chiat
Accompanied by: Fay Singer

ASEDA (Thangksiving)

Composer & :
Performed by: Gyimah Labi

INTERVAL
15 minutes

CHINESE SONGS

Performed by: Sunny Chu
Accompanied by: Louis Zurnamer

'A Little Path' - a folk song of Suiyaan, China
'Memories' composed by You-shi Huang
'Chance' composed by Wening Lee
'When will we meet again?' Composed by Sheng-i Ling

VASANTA

Choreography & Music: Traditional
Performed by: Rakini

A traditional classical dance in the Odissi style from the Indian state of Orissa. Rakini, born of Indian and Burmese parents, emigrated to Australia in 1971, but returned to Calcutta to continue her studies first at the Amala Shankar Academy and then in Perth with Jayalaksmi Raman. She has lectured at the Perth Academy of Performing Arts, the Graduate College of Dance and the Aboriginal Performance Training Programme in Perth. Ms Rakini's work embraces the Bharata Natyam and Odissi styles as well as cross-cultural explorations, creating collaborative works with musicians, artists and dancers from various cultural backgrounds.

CONFLUENCES - Music for String, Quartet, 2 Flutes and 2 Drums

Composed by: David Patrick
Performed by: Westerford Confluences Ensemble
Nicole Erasmus, Simone Bergoff, Elinor Speirs,
Christina Jongens, Lisa Thom, Lisa Kropman, Cathy Kok,
Claire Glago

The music is based on rhythms and melodies of Venda music, and incorporates an harmonic confluence between the pentatonic scale which is a feature of much un-notated music from all over the world and the heptatonic scale found in Venda music. The instrumentation looks at the question of whether a confluence in the use of Western classical instruments and African instruments can work or not.

TALAS IN CONVERSATION

Director: Jayesperi Moopen
Performed by: Thabo Komape, Thabiso Lekuba, Bashni Muthanya, Hanita
Muthnay, Tanusha Naidoo, Francis Ramoba
Musicians: Richard Carter, Indran Goorsamy, Panji Govindsamy,
Jayesperi Moopen

A blend of the Bharata Natyam dance form and elements of traditional African dance showing imaginative fusion which is totally sensitive to both dance cultures. It epitomises an inter-cultural journey for both performers and audiences alike.

JEWS HARPS

Performed by: Dr Trần Quang Hai

Dr Hai plays both metal (heteroglottic) and bamboo (idioglottic) harps. He shows how the Vietnamese are able to create rhythms with two stainless steel kitchen spoons.

"....WILLST ZU MEINEN LIEDERN DEINE LEIER DREHN...?"
("...Want to play your hurdy-gurdy to my songs...?")

Concept, Staging
& Direction: Helmi Vent
The Players: Chris Amrhein (Voice)
Sigrid Gerlach (Accordeon)
Jaro Vent (Trombone)

How do we find the key for negotiating with and understanding "the other", who in the context of one's own ethnic culture and socialization appears so strange, so foreign to us? Franz Schubert In his "Leiermann" (The Hurdy-gurdy Man) from the song-cycle "Die Winterreise" confronts us with this question that the deserted one bitterly asks the one who is outcast. And now, can this question be modified to fit into our living history, our own cultural and socio-political context?

INTERVAL
15 minutes

YANTRA

Choreography &
Performed by: Rakini
Music: Original music composed for Yantra

PUSH ON THROUGH

Choreographed &
by Performed by: Ronald Taylor

An eclectic blend of Calypso, Pique (Trinidad and Tobago), Graham, Horton and neo-classical techniques. Ronald Taylor's appearance at Confluences is undertaken and supported by the Government of Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the International Trade of Canada, along with the York University office of Research administration.

TARI PIRING

Performed by: Cut Aja Rizka

A dance from West Sumatra incorporating movements used during rice picking.

INTENTION

Performed by: Oguri
Music: Iannis Xenakis

Oguri's career as a solo artist began in Japan in 1984 with "happening" performance. He then met Tatsumi Hijikata, the founder of Butoh. In 1985 he joined famed dancer Min Tanaka's company Mai-Juku. His harsh and stunning dance signifies the marriage of the primordial body/self with the modern industrial/technological world. With this intrinsic motive, Oguri began to create dance. Since moving to the United States in 1991, he has performed extensively, touring both nationally and internationally. In 1993 he formed Renzoku (continuum) Dance Company. At once powerful and on the edge of vulnerability, Renzoku evokes primal emotion as the country's most unique blend of experimental dance and Butoh. In theatres and diverse sites, Oguri pushes the limits of space, body, and mind, creating visually stunning images and haunting journeys to the unknown. With special thanks to Miss Vivien Cohen

CELEBRATIONS IN THE VILLAGE

Arranged by: Thandi Swa artbooi
Performed by: Thandi Dance Moves Company

Traditional African dance

BOLERO

Music: Maurice Ravel
Choreographed by: Alfred Hinkel
Performed by: Jazzart Dance Company:
Ashley Abrahams, Ondine Bello, Ananda Fuchs, Sifiso
Kweyama, Sandile Mbili, Sbonakaliso Ndaba, Heinrich
Rossenheifer

PRESENTERS' BIOGRAPHIES

PROFESSOR SIMHA AROM, Israeli-born, is currently Director of the National Research Centre in Paris (CNRS), and heads the Department of Ethnomusicology of the Laboratory of Languages and Cultures of Oral Tradition. After working extensively in the Central African Republic, he has written books and papers and published discs concerned with oral polyphonies, revealing their underlying structure. He recently carried out field work in Indonesia, and travels extensively giving lectures and seminars. On his first visit to UCT Professor Arom and the Gamako Central African Music Ensemble were enthusiastically received.

VALERIE BRIGINSHAW is Head of Dance at the Chichester Institute of Higher Education, a college of the University of Southampton, England. Her research interests concern post-modern dance and feminism. Recent publications include *Metaphors of Travel and Mapping in Post-Modern Dance and Discourse in the Border Tensions: Dance and Discourse* conference proceedings (University of Surrey, 1995), chapters in *Analysing Performance* (P Campbell ed. Manchester University Press, 1996) and *Dance in the City* (H Thomas ed. MacMillan, 1997).

BEVERLEY CHIAT, an opera graduate, made her debut as the Queen of the Night in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* at this year's Grahamstown Festival. She recently impressed audiences at the prestigious 'Concert Series' at the Baxter Concert Hall with her fine interpretations of lieder in solo recital. She has sung with great distinction with the foremost national orchestras of South Africa.

SUNNY CHU graduated from the Opera School at the Pretoria Technikon, where she studied with Lorraine Haevermann. In 1993 she was awarded the Morrison Bursary. During her studies she took part in several productions where she sang, among others, the parts of Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* and Mimi in *La Boheme* at the Roodepoort City Theatre. During this period she sang at Sunday morning concerts for PACT at the State Theatre. She is currently studying with Marieta Napier in Cape Town.

PROFESSOR ROGER COPELAND is Professor of Theatre and Dance at Oberlin College (Oberlin, Ohio, USA). His books include *What is Dance?* and he is author of the forthcoming *Cunningham's Legacy: The Nature of Post-Modern Dance*. He has published frequently in the dance, theatre, and film pages of *The New York Times*, and his essays have also appeared in *The Village Voice*, *Partisan Review*, *The New Republic* and most of the major dance publications. He has worked as a consultant to American public television's *Dance in America* series and to America's National Endowment for the Arts. He has held visiting professorships at Yale, Carlton and the University of Bristol in the UK.

GAVIN COPPENHALL studied and now lectures in traditional African music at the University of Cape Town. He holds a degree in religious studies with an MMus in trance music and its use in the fields of divination and healing.

PROFESSOR DAVID DARGIE worked from 1977 to 1989 on promoting new African church music for the Catholic Church in Southern Africa, publishing cassette tape collections and compilations of African traditional music and new church music composed in African style. From 1989 to 1994 he worked on methods and materials for the teaching of African music, lecturing and giving workshops at universities and colleges in Europe and America. He was appointed in 1995 as the Head of the Music Department at Fort Hare University and has published a work on Xhosa music (1988).

CLARE DEMBOVSKY is a South African actress and ex-University of Cape Town lecturer, now living in London. She is a lecturer in dance and drama at the Rambert School, and co-ordinator of the Rambert SA project (involving scholarships for SA dancers to study at the Rambert School). Her special interests include the development of an artistic and cultural exchange between SA and UK artists. Ms Dembovsky recently completed an MA (Dance) at the University of Surrey. Her dissertation was on Jazzart Dance Theatre.

DR DESMOND DESAI is a lecturer in mathematics at the Cape Town Institute of Education and Training. He has been a researcher of Cape Malay and Islamic music since 1981. He has a PhD in ethnomusicology from the University of Natal (1993) and has presented several papers, notably one on *The Ratiep Display*, at an Australian musicological conference in Melbourne (1985).

AN FISKE graduated from UCT Ballet School in 1960 and became one of the founding members of the newly subsidised CAPAB Ballet Company in 1963. In 1969 she attended the New York Hind School and obtained her Honours Degree in Psychomotor Therapy. This was followed by an MA in dance movement therapy from Antioch New England Graduate School (1984 - 1987). In 1985 Ms Fiske received an Honorary Award from Antioch for pioneering work in dance movement therapy in South Africa. She presently works as an In-patient Manager at a private psychiatric clinic.

PROFESSOR SUSAN LEIGH FOSTER, choreographer, dancer and writer, is the Professor and Chair of the Department of Dance at the University of California at Riverside (USA). She is the author of *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance* (University of California Press, 1986), *Storying Bodies: The Choreography of Narrative and Gender in the French Action Ballet* (Indiana University Press) and *Corporealities* (Routledge), both published in 1995.

SHARON FRIEDMAN lectures in contemporary dance, dance history and teaching methodology at UCT Ballet School. She has initiated and co-ordinated movement programmes in a wide range of communities in Cape Town and choreographed extensively in the contemporary dance medium as well as musical theatre. She is co-author of *Teaching Creative Movement: A Practical Guide*, to be published by Kwela Press in August 1997.

CHARLES GARTH is President of the Historical Dance Foundation, Inc, in New York, and was formerly on the faculty of the Schola Cantorum in Basel, Switzerland. He has been the Director of the International Early Dance Institute for six years. His Renaissance/Baroque choreography includes Purcell's *Dido & Aeneas* and Scarlatti's *Venere, Amore e Ragione*. Choreography for television includes *La Grace del Amore*. Mr Garth has performed and taught in North and South America, Europe, Russia, the Baltics and Japan.

SYLVIA GLASSER is Artistic Director of Moving into Dance, which she founded in 1978 as a non-racial dance company and training organisation. She has a diploma from the London College of Dance and Drama, a BA (University of the Witwatersrand) and an MA (University of Houston). Ms Glasser has worked in Australia, Canada, the USA, Holland, France and Spain, teaching, choreographing, lecturing and touring with her dance company. In 1990, she received the David Webster Award from the Department of Social Anthropology, Witwatersrand University, and the FNB Vita Choreographer of the Year award. She has had several papers published in international journals.

PROFESSOR GARY GORDON is Head of the Department of Drama at Rhodes University and is also Artistic Director of the First Physical Theatre Company. He has created many diverse works; his collaboration with other artists has produced innovative theatre such as the danceplay, *The Unspeakable Story*. In 1989 he was the first recipient of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for contemporary dance and was awarded the FNB Vita Choreographer of the Year award in 1995 for *Shattered Windows*. He has an MA from the Laban Centre and he was a member of the teaching faculty there.

DR TRÂN QUANG HAI is a renowned Vietnamese musician who has given over 2 500 concerts in 50 countries. He has done musical research with the research team UMR 9957 of the National Centre for Scientific Research in Paris since 1968. As an expert on overtones, he has written many articles on that subject and made, with Dr Hugo Zemp, a film, *The Song of Harmonics*, which was awarded 4 international prizes. He was also awarded the Medal of Crystal in 1996 for his 26 years of research into overtones.

NAN HAMILTON studied drama at UCT and Rhodes University and is presently working on her Master's degree at the University of the Witwatersrand. She has a considerable background in acting, directing and writing, particularly with inter-cultural groups, and has worked in South Africa on television in these capacities, with the emphasis on dance. She has given workshops at various conferences in South Africa.

DR DEIRDRE HANSEN has a PhD from the University of Witwatersrand (1982) in ethnomusicology (Xhosa musical culture). Since 1982 she has been a senior lecturer in Ethnomusicology at the SACM at UCT. Her major interests include African musics in SA, particularly music, dance and literature in traditional and contemporary settings and the reinterpretation and redefinition of traditional forms. She has conducted fieldwork since 1969 among the Xhosa and Zulu peoples, and since 1989, among the Tembe Thonga (Tsonga) in North East KwaZulu. Dr Hansen is curator of the Kirby Collection of African music instruments. She has been published on Nguni Bushmen and Tonga music and is cited in the American Biographical Institute Directory of Distinguished Leadership (1990-1995).

DR VINOD HASAL holds a PhD in performing arts and a degree in North Indian classical music and dance and has presented several lecture demonstrations and performances for prominent organisations, including the University of Durban-Westville. He is currently a lecturer and performer at the University of Bombay.

ALFRED HINKEL trained at the UCT Ballet School and taught and toured as a dancer with Die Namaqualandse Dansgeselskap (1975 - 1978). He taught ballet in Windhoek (1979 - 1981) and danced for Sue Parker's Jazzart Contemporary Dance Company. He has worked for all the Performing Arts Councils and SABC TV and founded Pace Dance Company with Val Steyn. He founded Jazzart Dance Theatre in 1986 and joined CAPAB in 1992. In 1994, he started the Siwela Sonke Contemporary Dance Company for NAPAC. He continues to choreograph works for his various dance companies, the Napac Educational Dance Programme and musicals. He won the Vita award for best contemporary choreography in 1990 and the Standard Bank Young Artist Award (1997).

ASSOC PROFESSOR KAREN HUBBARD, from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, holds a BA in sociology (Kent State University), an MA in dance (Ohio State University) and a certificate in African and Kenyan studies (University of Nairobi). A former Fulbright-Hays Scholar, her work deals with the development of American vernacular dance from its historical roots in the plantation dances of enslaved Africans, and the cultural, historical and aesthetic aspects of its influence upon American jazz dance. She is a member of the American Dance Festival's *Black Tradition in American Modern Dance Humanities Scholar Team* and has served as a consultant for the National Endowment for the Arts. Her New York performing experience includes Broadway, daytime TV serials, commercials and film.

JONATHAN HURWITZ was educated in Johannesburg and started reviewing ballet in 1975. In this capacity he wrote for *The Star*, *The Citizen*, *The Rand Daily Mail* and other publications. In 1980 he became the editor of *Arabesque*, the first South African journal devoted exclusively to dance. He held this post for three and a half years. In January 1984 he joined Pact Ballet as the company's publicist and was subsequently promoted to senior publicist. In addition, he has organised several exhibitions (among others, on Pavlova, Nijinsky and Romeo and Juliet). He has also served in an advisory capacity on various boards and committees.

JAGGED DANCE, founded in 1994 by Debbie Goodman, Jacki Job and Geli Schubert, is a professional non-funded company that aims to create highly-skilled, experimental and innovative dance theatre. The company has been awarded various FNB Vita Dance Indaba and Umbrella Awards.

JEAN JOHNSON JONES is the Director of the Laban Notation Institute and a lecturer in the Department of Dance Studies at the University of Surrey, England, where she lectures on the dance technology and movement analysis courses. Her research interest is movement analysis and the application of Laban movement analysis and labanotation to computer animation, multi-media programme design and the documentation of African dance. She is doing PhD research at the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies, titled *Uncovering the Cultural Codes of the Shangana-Tsonga*.

PROFESSOR STEPHANIE JORDAN is Professor of Dance Studies at Roehampton Institute, London. She trained in both dance and music and has taught practical and theoretical aspects of dance in Europe and North America. Her books include *Striding Out: Aspects of Contemporary and New Dance in Britain and Parallel Lines: Media Representations of Dance*. At present, she is writing a book on music and ballet, supported by grants from the Radcliffe Trust and British Academy. She has written numerous scholarly articles, presented papers at conferences in Europe, Australia, America, Hong Kong and Japan, and is an established dance critic.

DR JOANN KEALIINOHOMOKU studied social science and anthropology at North Western University, USA and has a PhD in anthropology from Indiana University, Bloomington. She is trained as a modern dancer and in some non-western dance forms. She was a traditional music archivist at Indiana University, taught anthropology at Northern Arizona University and is now Professor Emeritus. She is a dance scholar, especially of the dance cultures of Pacific peoples, native Americans and African Americans and was a major consultant for the PBS 8-hour TV series *Dancing*. She has written extensively and co-founded *Cross-Cultural Dance Resources* in Flagstaff, Arizona. She won the Arizona Humanities Council Distinguished Public Scholar Award in 1996.

DR JACO KRUGER has been researching Venda musical culture since 1983. He has written papers on, among other topics, Venda musical bows and the construction of Venda xylophones and he lectured at Venda University for some years. He currently teaches African music and social musicology at Potchefstroom University.

DR GYIMAH LABI is currently a senior lecturer in the Department of Music, University of Ghana and Guest Conductor of the Ghana National Symphony Orchestra. He obtained a DMA (Composition) from the College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati, USA (1983), an MMus (Theory/Composition) from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA (1979) and a BA (Music with Philosophy) from the University of Ghana (1976). He taught at the University of Nigeria (1984/85) and worked for the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (1971/77). His publications and manuscripts include 5 orchestral compositions, a number of chamber pieces for the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society and a new work for 6 pianos and orchestra. *Symphony-Concertante* was written during the first half of 1996 and was successfully premiered in Liverpool on the 8th of Nov. 1996.

DR DELE LAYIWOLA studied at the University of Ife in Nigeria and later obtained a PhD in theatre studies from the University of Leeds, England. He has been teaching dance and theatre studies at Ibadan for ten years. He has also taught African literature at Ife and was Commonwealth Fellow at the University of Ulster in Coleraine during the 1996/7 academic year. He has published in the areas of theatre, dance, African and Irish literature, and the theory of culture.

THE MAP MARIMBA GIRLS PLUS is the name used by the Maru A Puka School marimba band. Directed by Alport Mhlanga, it is one of the top marimba bands in Botswana. It performs regularly in Botswana and South Africa.

MINETTE MANS is a senior lecturer at the University of Namibia. She was previously Head of Department and Deputy Dean of the Centre for Visual and Performing Arts. In the past year she has given her time to research on Namibian music and dance. This will be extended into a four year research project in collaboration with a French Institute, drawing up a geo-music/dance map of Namibia and preparing publications for schools and the public on this diverse performance practice. Her first book, *Ongoma*, includes notes on Namibian musical instruments. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Namibian Society of Composers and Authors of Music and is also involved in the rights of commercial musicians.

LYNN MAREE, a one-time practitioner of ballet, Highland and traditional Irish dancing, holds an MA in sociology of education. She has contributed to the publication *Apartheid and Education* (1984), edited by P Kalloway, and over many years to *Dance Theatre Journal* and was previously involved with dance funding in the UK and other dance policy and cross-cultural performing arts projects. She is on the board of the Akshaya Dance Company, Badejo Arts, and the Education Council of the Royal Opera House and is an external examiner for The Laban Centre.

PROFESSOR DENIS-CONSTANT MARTIN is presently Director of Research at the National Foundation for Political Science, Paris, France. He teaches at the Paris Institute of Political Studies and conducts research on the relationship between culture and politics. He is currently working on the New Year Festival in Cape Town, after having done field work in Eastern Africa and the West Indies. He has published several books and many articles on various political systems and on popular music.

JOE MOKWUNYEI is a lecturer at the University of Benin in Nigeria. She holds a BA (Hons) in music from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and an MA in theatre arts from the University of Ibadan. As a singer and theatre artist she has taken part in several drama and music performances on stage and television in Nigeria and abroad. She has presented papers at international conferences and was awarded a fellowship of the International Centre for African Music and Dance, University of Ghana, where she is currently working on her PhD.

JAYESPERI MOOPEN recently worked with the Nigerian choreographer, Peter Badejo. She has collaborated with organisations which include Moving into Dance, the Johannesburg Dance Foundation and currently the Soweto Dance Theatre. Her productions include *Mowgli's Adventures* and *Tribhangi*.

The **MPUMALANGA REGIONAL CHOIR** has 63 members and represents 17 secondary schools from a region lying within a radius of 200 kilometres. The choir is led by Mesdames Solms and Lombard and regularly performs in Pretoria, Johannesburg and smaller regional centres. They are presently engaged in a performing tour of the Western Cape.

LINDA MULLER qualified in music education at the University of Cape Town and furthered her studies at the Birch Creek Centre for the Performing Arts in Wisconsin, USA, before completing an MMus with distinction in percussion performing at UCT. She has presented papers at the International Society for the Systems Sciences and the International Association for Cognitive Education. Two years ago she pioneered a curriculum development and in-service teacher training project, now done in collaboration with the Western Cape Education Department and funded by the Swedish International Development Agency. She lectures in music education at the SACM, UCT.

TSOKOLO 'MUSO, the Executive Director of the Lesotho Academy of Arts, obtained his MSc at Lund University, Sweden. Apart from his background in sociology, social welfare and community development, he is a researcher into ethnomusicology, dance ethnography and oral poetry for Unesco - Iofa (Austria). He is a member of the Unesco Commission for Lesotho, and is also a dancer, singer and actor.

SAVITRI NAIDOO graduated in Bharata Natyam, in Madras, India under Srimati Indira Rajen. In 1980 she established the Vadhini Natyalaya School of Indian Dance in Cape Town and currently teacher of Bharata Natyam and folk dancing to young students. Thirty-two dancers have graduated in Bharata Natyam since the opening of the school.

DR PATRICIA OPONDO completed her tertiary education in the USA, and obtained a doctorate in ethnomusicology with a specialisation in African music from the University of Pittsburgh. She is currently a lecturer in ethnomusicology and co-ordinator of the African Music Project at the University of Natal, Durban. Her research interests include the creative expressions of African women, performance practice and music education.

DAVID PATRICK qualified at UCT in 1986/7 with degrees in medical micro-biology and religious studies. He then worked in para-medical posts during alternative national service. He began music studies in 1993, developing particular interests in ethnomusicology, history and composition. Prizes and awards include 3 class medals, undergraduate scholarships, the Peter Klatzow Prize and the Junior Music Bursary from the Foundation for the Creative Arts. His BMus was awarded with distinction in 1996. He is presently teaching music at Westerford High School in Cape Town.

CUT AJA RIZKA is an Indonesian dancer and choreographer who qualified from a college in Jakarta. She holds a diploma from the Institute of Art in Jakarta and has choreographed, danced, exhibited and promoted Indonesian cultural dances internationally.

GELI SCHUBERT-RIECHERT graduated with a Diploma in Ballet from the UCT Ballet School (1987). She has worked with the Community Arts Project (1986/87), Pace Dance Company (1990/92) and Jazzart Dance Company (1992/4) as teacher, choreographer and performer. She has studied and taught workshops at the Laban Centre in London (1995) and is presently freelancing for Yaku Dance Theatre and Jagged Dance. She founded the Kaida Dance Theatre in 1996.

ADRIENNE SICHEL is a South African-born and -educated theatre journalist, employed as a specialist writer by the Johannesburg newspaper *The Star*. Since 1980 she has observed and recorded the evolution of South African contemporary dance. Previous papers include *Ethnic Can-Can and Other Issues* and *Caught in the Cultural Cross-Fire: The Function of a Dance Writer* (American Dance Festival International Dance Critics Conference, 1993), *Restoring Rhythm to Shattered Lives* (Dance Alliance/Liberty Life Conference), *What Dance Can Do for the Community in the New South Africa*, (1994), *Cross-cultural Channel Surfing: A South African Dance Writer's View* (International Contemporary Dance Conference and Festival, Bytom, Poland, (1996).

FAY SINGER, Director of the SA Jewish Music Centre, is a Masters graduate of the University of Cape Town. She is the only music scholar in South Africa known to pursue research into Jewish music. She recently gave a successful series of lectures, *Music and the Old Testament*, at a Summer School of the University of Cape Town. She has presented her work at conferences both in England and the USA.

DR MARIA SMIT is a senior lecturer in music education at the University of Stellenbosch where she obtained a Ditt in 1997. She is a full member of the South African Translators Institute and has researched translation procedures from a cultural and linguistic point of view. She is the lexicographer and one of the main editors of the South African Music Dictionary.

PROFESSOR PHYLISE SMITH, a graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles dance ethnology program, has focused her research on West African dance and completed her thesis on *Expressions of Cultural Identity Through Participation in West African Dance*. She has studied and documented African dance in Senegal, Gambia, Ghana and Kenya. Currently, she is on the faculties of Scripps College of the Claremont Colleges, where she teaches West African dance, and Orange Coast College, where she teaches West African dance and world dance. Professor Smith has presented papers on West African dance both in the US and internationally.

ASSOC PROFESSOR PAMELA SOFRAS, Dance Education Advisor at the University of North Carolina Charlotte, holds a BFA from the Juilliard School and an MEd from Lehigh University. Prof Sofras has recently published a series of Dance Curriculum Booklets for the New Jersey school system. Since 1978 she has served with the American Dance Festival and, in 1983, founded the Young Dancer's School at the Festival. In 1996 she facilitated a workshop entitled *African American Performing Arts* for secondary school teachers. At the office of Academic Affairs, her duties have included assisting students to identify those courses with multicultural emphases.

DAVID SPURGEON became interested in dance whilst teaching 9-12 year-olds in England and Australia. He has lectured in English, drama, dance and communications for many years and is now a senior lecturer in dance at the University of New South Wales. Mr Spurgeon has taught various dance techniques, improvisation and composition to students in primary and secondary schools and tertiary institutions.

KATHY STINSON obtained a BMus from the University of Cape Town in 1994, with distinctions in ethnomusicology and history of music. She is currently completing a Masters degree in ethnomusicology. Her research focuses on the divination processes and music of several Southern Nguni diviners. Kathy has held a temporary lecturing post in ethnomusicology at UCT, and she runs African music courses in several Cape Town schools. She was responsible for *Umanyano eUCT!*, a student-based African music ensemble, which appeared at the 1995 Standard Bank Grahamstown National Arts Festival. She presented a paper based on her current research at the UCT Africa Seminar Series in 1996.

THANDI SWAARTBOOI is an African dance teacher and dance freelancer working with Amampondo, Heshoo Beshoo and Manyanani, and is a founder member of Phambili Marimba. She represented South Africa in Africa '95 workshops for African dance and music held in Zimbabwe and has choreographed and directed a dance drama for the Zamani dancers in CAPAB's BP Showcase.