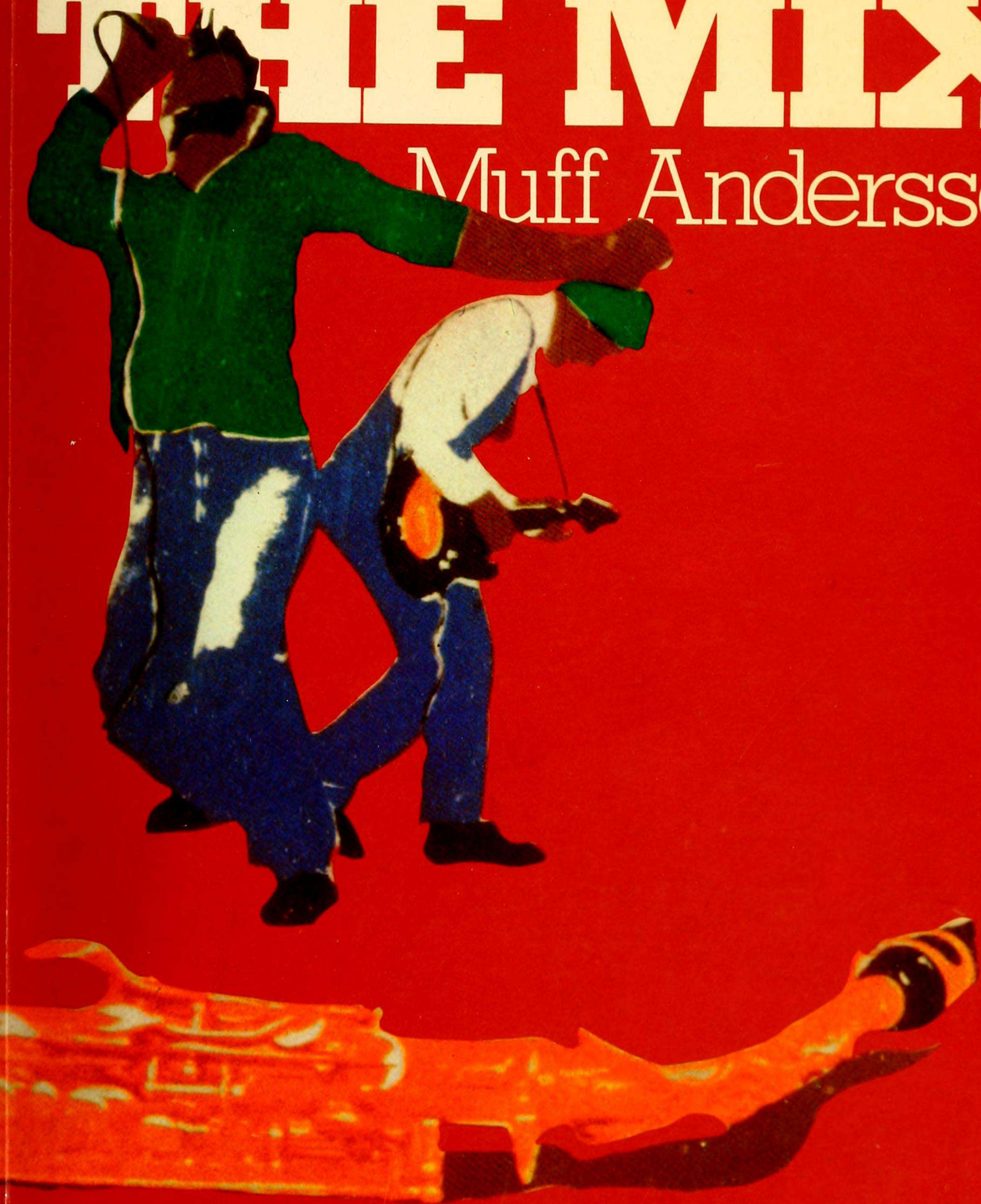


MUSIC IN THE MIX

Muff Andersson



The story of South African popular music

MUSIC IN THE MIX

155-57

This book is dedicated to:

Bra' Gav, who was my sounding board;

Sue's daughter Dominique, whose umbilical chord
was cut before the book was through;

And Tamsin, who loves music too.

Muff Andersson

MUSIC IN THE MIX

The story of South African popular music



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CONTENTS

1 THE BACKGROUND TO TODAY'S SOUTH AFRICAN MUSIC SCENE

- Chapter 1: GONE WITH THE WIND INSTRUMENT 13
Traditional African music and influences from the West
- Chapter 2: TRACING CONNECTIONS 19
The work of musicologists Hugh and Andrew Tracey
- Chapter 3: TOWNSHIP TUNES, RESISTANCE RHYTHMS . . . 23
The growth of township music, and its changing status
- Chapter 4: AND THE REST IS HISTORY . . . 37
The early years of the South African record industry

2 MUSIC AS PROPAGANDA: AN INSTRUMENT OF APARTHEID

- Chapter 1: MUSIC IN THE MIX, AND MONEY FOR THE RICH 45
The record industry and its policies
- Chapter 2: THE POLITICS OF PRODUCTION 61
Interviews with independent producers
- Chapter 3: ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL 85
Radio's stranglehold; Sarie Awards; 'Independent' radio
- Chapter 4: SUCH NATURAL RHYTHM 99
Music as propaganda

3 REPERCUSSIONS, THE DAMAGE DONE, AND FUTURE TRENDS

- Chapter 1: TOO MUCH PRESSURE 109
Why emerging styles were stunted
- Chapter 2: BAND ON THE RUN 119
South African musicians in exile
- Chapter 3: CAUGHT IN THE ACT 123
Interviews, notes and raves on five categories of musicians
- Chapter 4: TOWARD THE FINAL MIX 169
Thoughts about music for development



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Foreword

THIS book has changed considerably since I started writing it. The original idea was a sort of A-Z of South African musicians, but that idea faded pretty quickly simply because it is impossible to write about any group of people without touching on their environments, the laws which control their activities and the ideas that are imposed on them by the rulers in their society.

South Africa has spawned many types of music – vastrap, mbaqanga, mbube, kwela, tickeydraai, the list is endless – but all the forms that have emerged have in common a struggle to rise above the imposed economic and political conditions.

The same book could be written on art in South Africa, or literature, or sport. It is highly subjective, and not comprehensive – that would be impossible, since musicians come and go and the book could stretch into 10 volumes and still not even *mention* all the names of musicians who have made their mark locally.

This book attempts to trace the contemporary music scene in this country from its origins in black indigenous and white imported music. It discusses the problems facing musicians – apart from factors like record company exploitation, which is worldwide – that are unique to South Africa. Musicians here have no union to protect them; they are often directly troubled by the security police if their music becomes too political; they are forced to perform to segregated audiences on most occasions, and when they do play at non-racial venues they are subject to pressures exerted by baton-wielding police and snarling dogs. Most of all, professional musicians are in the stranglehold of one of the most repressive tools of the state: SABC radio and TV.

The book concentrates on light, commercial music – but also touches on other popular forms like the resistance music. It attempts to be not only a comment on the plight of an art form/expression of life, but also a comment on a very peculiar society: the two ideas cannot be separated. **M.A.**

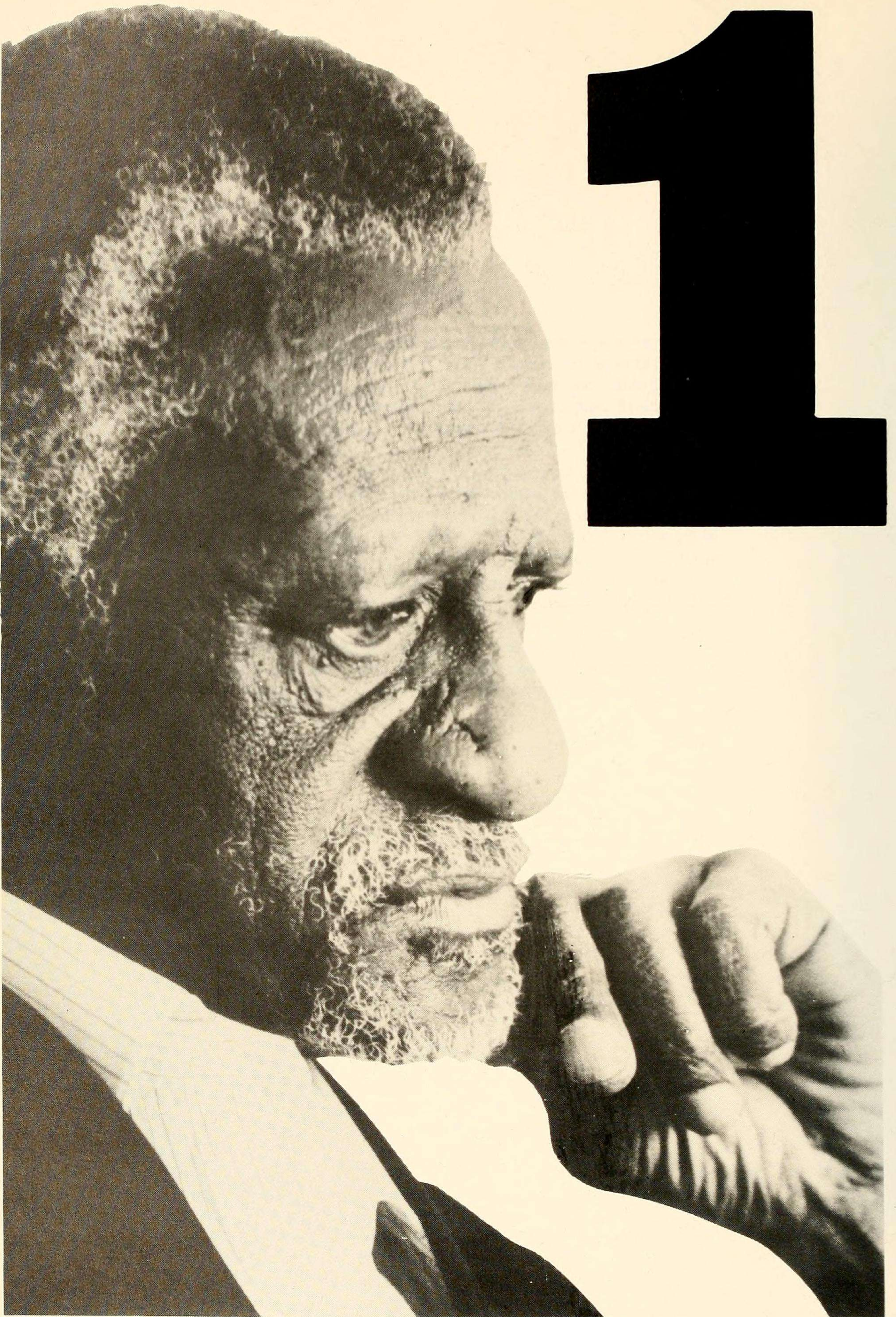
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

If it wasn't for Preston Will and Bish Russell there would be no book. Preston suggested, in March 1980, that "*there must be enough South African music around to write a book*". Sadly, he was not able to publish it. Bish then went to the trouble of finding a publisher, in addition to undertaking the unenviable job of editing the manuscript. I am extremely grateful to both of them.

I would also like to thank the following people: Sue Hope-Baillie, whose enthusiasm about the project never waned, not even when she fell pregnant with Dominique; John Pitt, who pointed out irregularities in the first draft; Matthew Shum, for helping to research the section on the "*Coon Carnivals*"; Des and Dawn Lindberg, who allowed me unlimited access to their library and Shaun Johnson, who despite an extremely heavy work load as a Journalism Honours student was prepared to do all the lay-out on his own – after very short notice.

Finally, I want to thank my parents Andy and Barbara, for their constant encouragement and good humour, and my brothers Gavin and Neil, whose clear insights have always been an inspiration to me.

Paul Weinberg



Wilson 'Kingforce' Silgee

Part

ONE

THE BACKGROUND TO TODAY'S
SOUTH AFRICAN MUSIC SCENE

Permission A Tracey



Hugh Tracey

Chapter 1 **GONE WITH THE WIND INSTRUMENT**

IN traditional African societies, music was a necessity – not a luxury. So much so that many African languages didn't even have a word for it; music was not seen as a separate entity as it is in Western society.

Despite the different societies in Africa and their different musical traditions, there are common aspects of music making.

In rural African societies music was not merely for entertainment or seen as an expression of creativity but was totally linked with life and the community. Music making was a social event. There was music at ceremonies like weddings and births, at communal activities like sports, parties and religious meetings. All the different stages one went through in life had related songs which were performed by the community. There were cradle songs, grinding songs, praise songs, songs for the sick, war songs, drinking songs, songs associated with puberty and lamentations to the dead. Music was learnt by absorption, passed on from one generation to another by word of mouth.

Certain musicologists like Andrew Tracey (who heads the International Library of African Music at Rhodes University in Grahamstown) feel that the attitude of the music industry towards traditional music is largely responsible for the fact that it plays a much smaller part in society than it used to. To some extent he's correct.

Because music making was a communal activity in tribal societies, audience participation was as important as the musicians themselves. This is not the case in many urban societies where the performer-listener barriers are carefully drawn and the audience is content to be entertained. Music, in modern societies, is a commodity like any other commodity. The division of labour has made music a product and made the audience consumers of that product. Its production is the business of the music industry.

But apart from its social function, there are a handful of characteristics that can be ascribed to most traditional African music. It is cyclical, highly repetitive, and often has a multiple entry principle. This means that each performer has a different entry point and often a different rhythm.

The principle of parts cutting a cycle at different points is very noticeable in South Africa, particularly in black urban mbaqanga bands. The word "*Mbaqanga*" means steamed mealie bread – almost like a dumpling and very quick to make. Willie Thabethe of the Black Music Foundation says a musician named Mike Xaba was the first to use the word in relation to music. He used it to mean "*quick money*".

In mbaqanga music it is common to have the guitars entering the cycle at one point, the singers starting off at another

point, and if there is a frontline brass or sax, their entering at different points too. Each entry demands the next.

Tracey feels that this conflict between parts mirrors the relationships between people in a traditional African society. He stresses too, that movement is an integral part of music but that the beat of a song doesn't always contain the dance rhythm. He describes the opposition between movement and sound and the relationship between rhythms as "*kaleidophonic*". As an illustration, Tracey reports on some Xhosa teenage music he recorded: "*The song appeared to be in straightforward three-four time and I couldn't relate it to the movement. The movement was a form of two against three which is the most common African crossing rhythm – but it wasn't the first beat that coincided. It was the third beat of the music that coincided with the first beat of the two-step – three beats of music to every two dance steps.*"

That notorious comment – "*such natural rhythm*"!!! – with which whites tend to sum up all African song and dance styles is, Tracey feels, patronising and ill-conceived but not inaccurate, considering the effortless use of complex rhythms in tribal societies.

"*African music is built on rhythmic relationships and that is the first thing a performer learns. It doesn't matter if you don't hit all the right notes, as long as you know when to come in and how you fit in. In Western*

society we have to dragoon people into keeping the beat. We have metronomes, and conductors. In African music if you're off the beat, there is no music."

Other common characteristics: African music seldom changes tempo, unlike western music where rhythm changes are used to express different emotions; as far as the scale system goes, it is broadly in the same music family as western music, although tunings are seldom the same; the pentatonic (five notes in the octave) sound occurs in a lot of vocal music – particularly in South Africa – but it must be pointed out again that scales are not like western scales, which is why some westerners think Africans sing out of tune when they perform western music.

Vocal music – with which we are mainly concerned since it is the predominant form in South Africa and is also the form used in the resistance music – usually has at least two parts. It can be performed by a soloist with a chorus response (while in South Africa the chorus tends to sing in unison, further north polyphony occurs frequently – harmonies of different melodies are sung simultaneously); a duet, where one singer might take the lead or both alternate; or an interlocking principle where each singer adds a line or note at a particular point.

Melody lines are very closely related to language, since so many African languages are tonal. The sung melody usually follows the sound of the spoken dialect – the word tone dictates what note the singer moves to. Each note the singer moves to has its own harmony note, and the infrequent practice of moving directly to the harmony note has been called "harmonic equivalence". It distorts the word tone, but is not considered incorrect – as is so much church music, which, in adjusting vernacular lyrics to western hymns, has disregarded the African word tone and effectively made gibberish of the lyrics. An example picked up by Tracey comes from eastern Nigeria and is based on the western hymn "Angels from the realms of glory". The Igbo translation of that, to the same tune, is "there is no sorrow in heaven". But when sung to other tunes, as happens so often with church music, these words come to mean three very different things: "There are no tears on the bicycle", "there are no eggs in the sky" and "there is no clothing among the crowd."

But before discussing the attitude of the church to traditional music, mention must be made of the types of instruments to be found in Africa. One researcher has commented that nearly every known type of instrument in

"In western societies we have to dragoon people into keeping the beat. We have metronomes, and conductors. In African music if you're off the beat, there is no music."

ANDREW TRACEY



Mike van Niekerk

European music – with the exception of the keyboard – has some kind of counterpart in Africa. This is not true of South Africa. Whereas the mbira is a national instrument in Zimbabwe and pan-pipe ensembles are common in Mozambique, the only communal music in South Africa is vocal. There are no large drumming groups as there are elsewhere in Africa, but instead there are big vocal groups – a phenomenon not all that common through the rest of Africa – and choirs and dancing in big numbers are the natural expression of community life. The Sotho people originally had a few drums, but the Nguni had only one little drum (the isgubu) and borrowed the idea of the bass drum from the British military bands in the nineteenth century.

Possibly the only important traditional South African instruments are the bows and simple flutes. Today most people don't know the names of the different bows and in the Xhosa language the term "*uhadi*" is used to describe virtually any music instrument.

As an explanation for the shortage of instruments in South Africa, some people have suggested that there are few suitable trees in most parts of the country! Others that the two spearheading groups in tribal times – the Nguni and the Sotho – were vigorous, warlike and always on the move. They didn't have a society that encouraged a more settled, complex instrumental music. Tracey suggests that people arrived in this country without instruments, because even directly over the borders there are well established instrumental cultures. He talks about a line which goes roughly along the Limpopo, north of which the music suddenly jumps in complexity. This is attributed by some historians to an early Indonesian influence (xylophones are believed to be from Indonesia). The lack of major instruments in South

Africa is generally seen as a weakness in the musical culture, because there is no physical object on which people can base their analysis of traditional music.

However, there are one or two minor instruments like types of rattles from South Africa which crop up in a book by J.H. Nketia, **The Music of Africa**. Nketia breaks up instruments of definite and indefinite pitch into four categories: ideophones, membranophones, aerophones and chordophones.

Ideophones (self-sounding instruments) are those used for rhythm. In this group there are rattles, clappers, percussive instruments that are scraped, stamped or struck, mbiras and sansas (hand pianos), xylophones, bells, bull-roarers and spinning discs.

Membranophones are percussive instruments with parchment heads or animal skin stretched over a container. These, in other words, are drums, whether the receptacles are tins, earthenware vessels, gourds or calabashes, or strips of wood held together by hoops or hollowed-out logs.

Aerophones are the wind instruments: flutes, made of bamboo, husks or stalks, wood or clay; pan pipes; reed pipes; and horns and trumpets from animal horns, elephant tusks, wood or gourds.

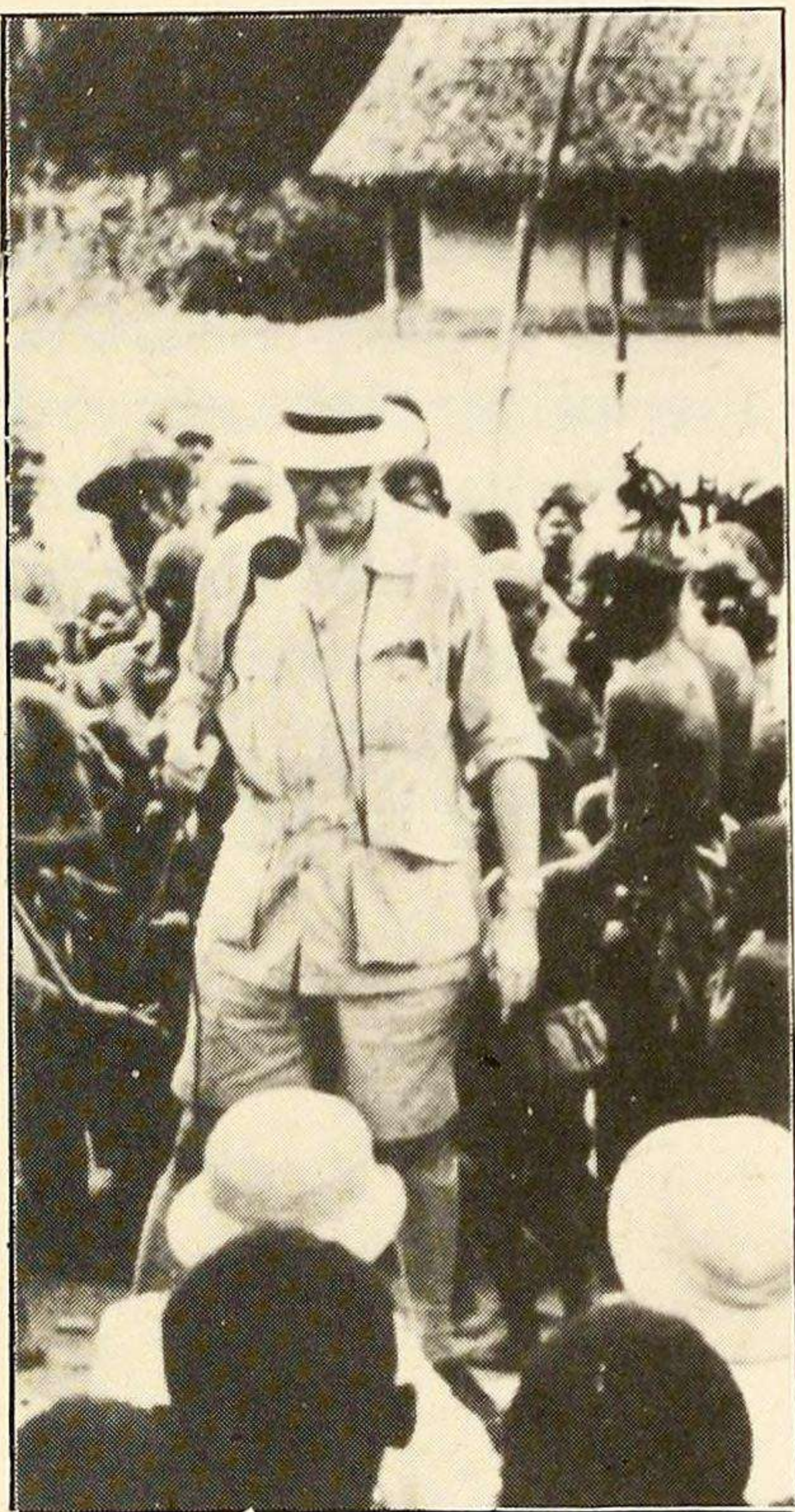
Chordophones (string instruments) include different bows, either mouth bows or ones played with quills and sticks; friction bows, zithers, lutes, harps and lyres.

Although all these instruments are important, there is a bias towards the percussive instruments. It is the sound of the drum that is most readily associated with Africa, not the flute (inspired by the Arabic culture) or the guitar (introduced to Africa by the Europeans).

It was the sound of the drum – because it was linked with paganism – which was most feared by the early missionaries. During the colonial era,

"Music is not on a pedestal, it is not a separate thing as it is in white society where it has to be learned, and is then bought and sold. In African society music is part of life. It isn't an extra."

ANDREW TRACEY



Hugh Tracey

performers were encouraged to direct their creativity into polite choral music and anthems, but with words by and large in the vernacular. But the form and harmony of European classical music and new developments in western popular music were also going to make their mark. As Christopher Small points out in **Music – Society – Education:** *“Wherever western capitalism and consumer values go, western music is there also . . . which local musicians have been persuaded, or forced through economic necessity, to accept as superior to the indigenous music.”*

Throughout Africa, composers started mixing western and indigenous styles. This hybrid was the basis for the new popular music – the highlife of West Africa and South Africa’s mbaqanga – which has both delighted and disillusioned music critics. Small, while admitting that the marriage of musics has given birth to *“a few stunted monsters”*, calls the meeting between European and African music *“one of the most fruitful exchanges in the entire history of music.”*

Andrew Tracey doesn’t agree. He feels that the most destructive influence on African music has been western harmonies built on the sound of the third. *“In traditional African music these days you almost never hear the original harmony. There’s always someone putting in that third note and you have this sickly-sounding western harmony all the time. The open harmony had a different sound and allowed for more freedom of movement. It used to be that you’d have the words first, and then get an idea of the melody from that. Now you have this chord structure and you’re linked to a fixed stereotyped circle.”*

“Urban music in South Africa – except for the gimmicky sounds of amplified guitars in the last few years, pennywhistles in the 50’s and American trick vocalisation – hasn’t changed

essentially since the first records I heard in the ‘20s. Always the same melody patterns and the same three chords.” This reference to the three-chord trick is probably quite accurate. It does seem that the majority of urban black music in South Africa is built up on the same three chords, but this should not be seen as a weakness since popular music from other parts of the world – like reggae, and rock ‘n roll – is also built up on simplistic chord structures.

It’s not quite certain exactly when guitars were introduced to South Africa. The concertina supposedly came in with the English settlers early last century, and the banjo and violin with the Malay people. The guitar was probably introduced by Portuguese sailors and 16th and 17th Century traders, and maybe even by Arabs along the east coast where the Ud (lute) is still played. Hugh Tracey (on the sleeve of one of his Music of Africa series albums) notes that the popularity of guitars became established with the development of industry and the constant movement of large numbers of people into urban surroundings, away from the normal sources of supply of traditional music.

“By 1950 the use of a guitar had become the hallmark of ‘town’ music as opposed to the more familiar forms of country music, the songs for the most part being imitations of foreign material set to vernacular words.”

“The proliferation of factories producing simple and inexpensive guitars for the African market brought the instrument into prominence during the last decade but added little to innate musicality or to the craft of indigenous instrument making, the skill of the guitar players featured in this record being the exception rather than the rule.”

Another exception to the three-chord style is that used in Zulu folk-guitar playing. The musicians tune their instruments differently and have given them

an essentially African sound – the Zulu guitar sound, and style of “*uhamming*”, rather than picking, came into being around 1940.

Andrew Tracey feels it is important to preserve traditional music and says as long as African languages are spoken the music will continue to grow. In what form? So far it's become obvious that the Church is changing its attitude and has been questioning how Christian worship can be made more relevant within African communities.

In Zimbabwe, Church music has been adapted to be sung to the mbira. Where drums were seen before as symbolic of pagan religion they are now encouraged in certain parts of Africa and the xylophone is being played in a number of churches in the Transkei.

One of the people doing an enormous amount of work in this area is Dave Dargie, a Roman Catholic priest who established the Lumko Music Department at Lady Frere in Transkei in January 1979.

Prior to that Dave Dargie had already started the work which was to be continued by Lumko – activating African composers to make music for religious purposes. This was done through composition workshops, following a Zimbabwean example.

Since April 1977, composition workshops have been conducted around South Africa. Dave Dargie reports that more than 1 600 musicians participated in these workshops, and yielded hundreds of compositions and adaptations in ten African languages.

The workshops have three categories of source material: makwaya (western choir music), neo-African (which combines indigenous and exogenous techniques) and indigenous (straight traditional music). From this source material new compositions are created with the aim of providing a genuinely African music which will make

Church music more meaningful and easier to perform. Lumko feels that a music which is meaningful for the people is a music that has high artistic standards.

Most compositions, says Dargie, do not have a long life – but gradually a body of successful pieces is growing. “*The adapted pieces must use techniques which can be assimilated by the people to whom they are given.*”

This means that most indigenous pieces are not suitable for general adaptation, so that elements of the so-called neo-African styles are usually chosen for adaptation. Musical instruments are different too. Lumko wants to make use of instruments that will fill needs which the wrong instruments (for example the electric organ, the most common Church instrument) cannot fill: indigenous instruments like the bow, exogenous African instruments such as the xylophone.

Lumko has various publications, cassette tape recordings of the workshop music and transcriptions, as well as a handbook for learning to play the xylophone. These were adapted for Xhosa church singing by Dave Dargie and Andrew Tracey.

The Big Question now, of course, is to what extent traditional African music should be encouraged.

The social and cultural context of traditional music has changed. The content and form must obviously develop within different economic circumstances and different musical norms (such as those of tuning) to meet the demands of audiences exposed to more sophisticated styles of music. Assuming that a form of traditional music will stay alive for a long time – and it seems that this will happen as long as the same ingredients are put into the music (John Blacking terms it the “*process*” as opposed to the “*product*”) – should we push for the *real thing* or accept

“Folk culture is created directly and spontaneously out of communal experience; it is the culture of the working classes, it expresses the communal experience of work; there is no distance between folk artist and audience, no separation between folk production and consumption ... this form of popular creativity has been destroyed by the means and relations of artistic production under capitalism. Cultural products are now produced and sold for profit and the consequent processes of taste manipulation and artistic exploitation have been made possible by the recording techniques which enable culture to be mass produced and individually consumed.”

SIMON FRITH

that music has changed to accommodate new social realities?

Different factors have to be taken into consideration when answering this. Striving for the traditional in independent black Africa is very different from what it is in South Africa.

The growing awareness of past cultural achievements in Africa is the direct result of years of colonialism. Few African cultures have not been altered and denuded (an exception is Mozambique, for the perverse reason that the Portuguese did next to nothing to develop the country, which meant that traditional culture could flourish and has remained relatively intact) and as Nketia remarks, *"it is no wonder that the search for African identity (has) awakened in independent Africa a new interest in traditional music. (It) is being featured in the programmes of African radio and TV stations. The preservation, promotion and recreation of this music now forms part of the cultural policy of many African governments. Anniversary celebrations of independence and other national occasions give it a special place, while national dance companies highlight the heritage of traditional music and dance in their respective countries."*

Nketia also mentions that "purists" decry the European-

African musical mixes as *"hybrids and vestiges of the colonial past that must be discouraged."* Andrew Tracey is a purist too, and he insists that traditional music must be encouraged, but his views must be looked at in the context of the way the South African government uses certain tribal structures to divide the working class and to control it.

Tracey: *"There is this feeling that if you go back too far to being African you're going back to the bush, the unfettered, the primitive. So many modern groups take their African influence from black American groups without looking at what's around them."*

"Take a group like Malombo. They are originally Pedi and they do the odd Pedi thing but I don't feel they know that much about their own music. These blokes should go back and learn to perform it properly in the traditional surroundings."

"But they want to be westernised, be modern urban people. They feel that the tribal African is backward. Yet he's got the culture and that will always be the source."

"I'm interested in what is permanent and that is traditional music. It can weaken and is weakening. It's only taught by people in their homes. It's got to get on to other levels - it must reach the schools and the radio."

Yet it is part of a reactionary policy to encourage people to look back to some mythical past to prevent them from identifying with the aspirations of the working class. Tribal symbols are not romantic, they no longer have the same meaning - precisely because they are being used by the state to mystify the structures of oppression. Examples are the use of authority figures like chiefs who aren't really chiefs but bureaucrats; the lagotla - which used to be the people's court but now has the function of protecting state security; the fact that by special ministerial declaration the state president of South Africa is *chief chief* with authority over all the other chiefs in the country. Almost as proof of the way tribalism is fixed arbitrarily is the figure of Transkei's chief minister, Kaiser Matanzima, who has less royal blood in him than jailed ANC leader Nelson Mandela.

Against this background, tribal music sours like sorghum beer. And for the same reasons, the black consciousness movement and liberal elements in South Africa are playing into the hands of the state by encouraging tribal music.

It is ironical that a person like Andrew Tracey, in reviving the music, has found a point of common interest with the South African government. ■

Chapter 2

TRACING CONNECTIONS

YOU could call it a marriage of contrasts.

Andrew Tracey is interested in "conserving a bit of culture" and so is the South African Government, but for different motives. Tracey is aware of the contradiction – but *his* commitment stems from a genuine love of music and a lifelong investigation of it.

Andrew has been continuing the work started by his father, Hugh Tracey. He feels Hugh was responsible for putting traditional music on the map, while he himself has been more involved with music as a participant, devoting years to studying specific aspects of it and learning to play various instruments.

Hugh came out from England after the First World War to join his brother who lived in Zimbabwe. His brother advised him to learn an African language so he learnt Shona and took a great interest in the Shona culture, collecting their songs and writing them down.

Hugh, according to Andrew, was amazed to discover that few other whites had an interest in African music and most whites thought that what they heard were just rude noises.

"African culture wasn't considered in the 20s. Missionaries and educationists were pushing European culture down the throats of the people."

After farming and then working in mining for a few years, Hugh got a grant from the Carnegie Foundation to do a

year's full time research on African music. With no training at all, he set out to record as much music as he could on a primitive recording machine, cutting rough discs ploughed on to aluminium.

In 1932 he decided to go into music full time and joined the SABC (then called African Broadcasting Company) as the director of the Durban studios.

He stayed in Natal for 12 years, and during that time Andrew was born (1936).

Hugh was instrumental in starting both the Indian and Zulu services, and played an active part in recording a lot of the music which is still housed in the SABC libraries today.

After the war he managed to get the support of Eric Gallo. It appears to have been a double edged deal. Tracey could record traditional musicians even though he had no interest in *stars* or making money out of them, while Gallo would have the rights to any potential hit material.

Two of his first signings, George Sibanda (an Ndebele guitar player) and Jean Bosco Mwenda (from Jadotville in Zaire) had hits throughout Southern and Central Africa. Sibanda's hits include *"Choosy Mama"* and *"Guabi Guabi"* while Mwenda is remembered for numbers like *"Mama Na Mwana"* and *"Mama Kilio-e"*.

Before 1950 Tracey was very closely linked with Gallo. He helped build their first record factory, Msaho, at Roodepoort

and did his research from there.

In 1954 he founded the International Library of African music.

Gradually he found overseas sponsors and was able to operate independently of Gallo, though they still pressed and distributed his records. He recorded in every country south of Zaire and Uganda except Angola, and Andrew still has all his early recordings – he's just been given a grant to have them all recut.

In the 18 years he spent recording, Tracey published about 300 albums – well over half the traditional music from Africa that came out on record in that period.

"It looks like quite a lot, but Dad reckons he did only a tenth of one percent of what should be recorded," says Andrew.

Andrew and his brother Paul – now living in Los Angeles where he is a popular composer for songs performed by Kermit the Frog and Ms Piggy of the Muppets – were brought up *"speaking and dancing Zulu"*.

Andrew was educated in England and when he was at university he learnt Congo-style guitar from records Hugh sent him.

He came to South Africa on holiday once or twice and then decided to stay here, working initially for his father at the library and later at a college of African music called Kwangoma in Bulawayo.

This was founded by a white Zimbabwean called Robert Sibson who wanted to develop a

"All I want to do, all I want to do, is absorb some more of his fantastic musical knowledge."

PEDRO ESPI-SANCHIS, WHO WORKED WITH ANDREW IN THE STEEL BAND.

Zimbabwean African music and, with Tracey's library and the Music School of the University of Zululand, it is one of the few places committed to researching traditional African music.

Andrew's job was to comb Bulawayo for musicians. It was during this time that he learnt to play mbira. He plays hundreds of instruments now, but claims he can only play a handful of traditional instruments to his own satisfaction.

"It isn't my job to be an expert in them though . . . I play them because I enjoy it and so I can get into the African aesthetics."

Then came "Wait a Minim", the revue produced by Leon Gluckman (producer of the first "King Kong") which ran for seven years all over the world.

The show featured Jeremy Taylor, Kendrew Lascelles, Michel Martel, Jeanette James, Zelide Jeppe and Marina Christelis, but the basis was the music by the Tracey Brothers. They had a big repertoire of songs because they'd been playing guitar for years and had done many concerts and radio shows.

During the South African run of "Minim" Andrew spent six weeks researching Chopi music, and then *"had the nerve to try and play it on stage; it was horrible, and coldly received – just sound effects really, with action going on in front."*

Andrew and Paul constantly brought new instruments into the show and "Minim" was probably the first exposure most white South Africans and Europeans had to African traditional music.

"To most white people we were doing something exotic. I still resent the fact that people come into my library and museum and say 'queer instruments, what exotic strange instruments' – because they're not, they're our own home instruments."

"Most South Africans, and most Zimbabweans, have never heard of the mbira – even though it's their national instrument."

"Minim", reflects Andrew, made some money and was a nice experience because it took him all over the world, but it lost him valuable research time.

In 1968 when he returned to South Africa he went straight back to doing research with his father, concentrating on Zimbabwe and Mozambique, and touching on Malawi and Zambia, but hardly doing anything in South Africa.

"I felt I didn't want to do a big, wide coverage like Dad. He believed African music was so unknown, despised, ignored and forgotten that his job was to put it on the map, which he had a great part in doing."

"I like to specialise in areas where I can spend more time, learn the instruments, and go back several times to absorb it."

At present Andrew still runs the library, which acts as an information centre on African music, and publishes its journal.

Eventually he would like to start short weekend courses at the university, which would not be for university credits but would help people to familiarise themselves with African music, and its transcription and composition, with the aim of adapting it for use in African schools.

"The school books they're bringing out in Zulu and Sotho are pathetic. If you called that stuff traditional then there'd have to be something very wrong with your perception."

In 1977 and 1978, Andrew got a group of young musicians together and taught them to play the Jamaican oil drums and various African instruments. The band, Andrew Tracey's Steel Band, was a great success wherever it played, but broke up when various members left to go overseas. Andrew plans to start it up again.

He was also on the committee which appointed Khabi Mngoma, the founder of the Ionian Choir in Johannesburg, to the chair of music at the University of Zululand. Professor Mngoma, who had a long history of

promoting African culture and recreation in the townships, got the job over the heads of many overseas academics and a few local people including Professor Yvonne Huskisson of the SABC.

"She had a lot of support from other members of the committee who were mainly Afrikaans professors but we felt Khabi Mngoma was the only person for it."

He has between 40 and 50 students and they study both traditional and Western music. Andrew reckons the African side is weak because there is not enough available material to work from.

"Music has to get on to a more conscious level. People must be trained in it... there isn't one black school teacher in the country who can talk intelligently about it."

"Radio is very slack. They do record and they have the programmes but I don't think they give nearly enough push. They are always bound by the standards of the announcers who do the programmes – urban people – and the majority of their listeners who want urban music."

"Many Africans resist going to African culture because the SABC is government controlled and encourages tribalism. It's a terrible reversal of thought but it works that way."

Andrew, apart from admitting gratitude to Gallo for supporting his father's research, thinks adversely of the music and radio industry.

"Think of the millions they work in... think of the artists who have their stuff used... they shelter under excuses like 'the music wasn't composed by that man really, he just adapted it', though I suppose there is a grain of truth in that. There are people who put their names to other people's compositions. They tell a group to write so many numbers by a certain time, and then take the credit for themselves."

"The industry contains some terrible exploiters, who go for





Andrew Tracey

crass commercialism and never for the real music. They just go for the money. Good music comes through despite the industry, not because of it.

"Then they create these things in the studio. I don't know if I'm being one sided, because I do see the bad side, but when Dad was in broadcasting he saw it too. Arrangers used to get the latest thing from America, find the hook in a pop tune, arrange it onto a 4-bar cycle and put it onto an African market."

Andrew feels that the industry should be sponsoring music research in South Africa, sponsoring chairs of music at universities and encouraging music in education.

"They do none of these things.

"I'd like to see African music more integrated in African society, in other words more like it was: to comment on and support Africans in what they are and what they do.

"The themes of urban pop music here are largely the same as world pop music – banal, erotic, romantic stuff. You find very little of the socially integrated stuff which was the most valuable aspect of traditional music. It was the people's music, but it isn't anymore." ■

Chapter 3 **TOWNSHIP TUNES, RESISTANCE RHYTHMS...**

TRACEY is right.

Unadulterated traditional music has not been the only people's music in South Africa since economic circumstances forced people to the towns before the turn of the century. It was not only the necessary adaptation to a new environment that changed the music but the influences of the western music being promoted by the fledgling record industry, which was to give to music the new status of *product*.

Johannesburg must be the focal point of any discussion on the start of *township* music, since it was here that the most important developments in indigenous jazz, the introduction of radio and the start of the record industry, took place.

First we must look at the economic pressures that forced black workers in their hundreds of thousands to Johannesburg after the discovery of gold in 1886. Measures which the government introduced to ensure a steady supply of cheap labour to the mines included the 1913 Land Act, which reserved major portions of land for whites and made it virtually impossible for black subsistence farmers to support themselves. The same farmers, crippled by new taxes levied on them, were forced to earn money – which they could only do by working for white employers on farms or the mines. So it happened that by the turn of the century there were something like 200 000 migrant workers on the Witwatersrand.

In most cases these people came from supportive communities in areas with a rich musical tradition, where all events like weddings and births were celebrated by song and dance. Isolated on the outskirts of the city, without their families around them, the workers experienced a great deal of loneliness and suffered from the lack of recreational facilities.

Obviously the shebeens – or illegal pubs – provided some noisy solace, and it is in these places that the “*marabi*” music was born, when musicians jammed on old guitars, German concertinas, pianos and home-made percussion instruments. “*Marabi music*,” a legendary band leader was to remark disparagingly later, “*was made from whatever instruments were available, by anyone who could play or make a noise.*”

The *marabi* tradition and the shebeen scene have become romanticised over the years; yet there was nothing romantic about the shebeen. There *is* nothing romantic about the shebeen. In the book **The Marabi Dance**, Modikwe Dikobe puts the shebeen atmosphere, its urgency and tragedy, into perspective: “*When it rained, the yard was as muddy as a cattle kraal, and the smell of beer, thrown out by the police on their raids, combining with the stench of the lavatories, was nauseating. The beer business was mostly done on Sundays for the benefit of the domestic workers. The skokiaan enabled the men to fight more*

bravely . . . Those with stronger heads drank methylated spirits . . . the marabi parties were very popular but not favoured by respectable people. They knew marabi as a dance party for persons of a ‘low type’ and for ‘malala-pipe’, pipe-sleepers, homeless ruffian children.” According to Ezekiel Mphahlele in his **Down Second Avenue**, “*Skokiaan is a drink made by beating compressed yeast in warm water and leaving it to ferment . . . it’s deadly.*”

The “*respectable people*” – a small group of teachers and traders, and people educated in the mission schools – seemed to prefer a tamer form of entertainment. It was among this group that the Zulu ragtime choirs of Reuben Caluza became popular, as did song-and-dance cabaret-style artists like the Manhattan Brothers.

Given the background of the dreary social life in the townships, it is easy to understand why gramophones – first sold in South Africa in the early 20s – became so important and sold on such a huge scale in the urban black community. Although there is much disagreement and little recorded fact about the developing styles of the early township music, it is generally agreed that the biggest stimulus to the development of black professional musicianship came in the form of a trinity after World War I: gramophone records, the introduction of American jazz to the townships, and the start of radio.

“Marabi, that was the environment. It was organ or piano. You get there, you pay your shilling, you get your scale of whatever concoction there is. Then you dance from Friday night through to Sunday evening. You get tired, you go home, sleep, come back again. Bob a time each time you get in.”

**SOWETO VETERAN
TENOR SAXOPHONIST
WILSON “KING
FORCE” SILGEE**

The early records of Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Louis Armstrong made a strong impact. Peter Rezant, who led the swing band The Merry Blackbirds from 1932 through to the '60s, says there would have been more than the eight major big bands in the townships if musicians had been able to read music; the more technically able the band, it seems, the more sophisticated the audience it attracted. According to Rezant, his Merry Blackbirds were top of the pecking order of the big bands, followed by the Jazz Maniacs, the Harlem Swingsters, the Rhythm Clouds, the Rhythm Kings, the Jazz Symphonators, Ramblers Swing Band and the Jazz Revellers.

While they all played swing, Rezant says the other seven drew to some extent on the flavours of the marabi music. *“Their audiences were slightly different. We (the Merry Blackbirds) didn't really play for blacks. We performed mainly at the white fetes and city hall functions, or in the cabaret spots at clubs.”* He is adamant that the Merry Blackbirds were never criticised for being too American, or for having inherited an *“Uncle Tom Jazz”*: *“How could people criticise me for playing Duke Ellington or Glen Miller? That was the music the other bands wanted to play, but they couldn't.”*

Rezant claims that the only problems encountered by the Merry Blackbirds came from white musicians and audiences. The former because they were obviously threatened by the competition from the townships: *“We played just about everywhere, but only one-nights. White musicians wouldn't allow us to get a residency job. Once we played at Wembley, and then the Musicians' Union suddenly came in and threatened to oppose the management's licence when they applied at the beginning of the year.”* White audiences could not get over the fact that the Merry Blackbirds were talented and local. Rezant:

“We used to play at the Inanda Club, the place of the bluebloods. We played there for three months, and many whites used to make the excuse to their friends that we weren't locals. That's the way it is in South Africa if you go into a small dorp, into a shop on the whites' side and speak English instead of Afrikaans. They always think you're from somewhere else and so they are polite.”

Of all the other major big bands of the time, Rezant is only really complimentary of the Jazz Maniacs: *“They were good. They played the 'Woodpecker's Ball' like you wouldn't believe. If you didn't see them playing you wouldn't have known that it wasn't Woody Hammond. The Jazz Maniacs didn't play marabi, they played swing like everyone else, but I would say they were the people responsible for bringing the word 'mbaqanga' into use. They played to a different audience from ours.”*

The Jazz Maniacs had a staunch following in the slum areas around Johannesburg like Prospect, Doornfontein and Sophiatown – a place that is as strongly connected to township music as Nashville is to country and western and Kingston to reggae. Everyone who lived in, or just visited Sophiatown in the early '50s says the same thing about it – that it wasn't an endless monotony of little square houses stretching for kilometres each way. No – Sophiatown was an energetic little community with a character of its own, a bubbly personality. It was unique in having freehold tenure for blacks – but a white suburb was encroaching and the government declared that it had to go. That didn't just mean the people living in shacks, but **everyone.**

The Western Areas removals were due to start in mid-February 1955. *“Asi hambu”* – *“we won't go”* – became the defiant slogan of the people of Sophiatown but despite efforts to resist the removals, 2 000 police armed with stenguns, rifles and

knobkeries succeeded in moving 110 families. Eventually Sophiatown was pulled down completely, and whites moved in to newly built houses. Sophiatown became known as Triomf!

So this was the background of groups like the Jazz Maniacs, the Manhattan Brothers, The African Inkspots, the Woody Woody Peckers, the Quad Sisters, the Crazy Dazzlers and a group that was to launch four great individual singers – the Skylarks, consisting of Miriam Makeba, Abigail Kubheka, Letta Mbulu and Mary Rabotapa.

The band with the most devoted following from the '30s right through to the '50s was undoubtedly the Jazz Maniacs, formed by a popular Doornfontein shebeen pianist-turned-saxophonist, Solomon "Zulu Boy" Cele. The 15-piece band featured some of the legendary township names – Zakes Nkosi; Mackay Davashe; Jacob Moeketsi; at one stage Dugmore Slinger, and Wilson

"King Force" Silgee, who took over the leadership of the Jazz Maniacs when Zulu Boy died a mysterious and tragic death in 1944. Up until that time the Maniacs resisted turning full-scale to polished American swing, as performed by Peter Rezant's Merry Blackbirds. The music columnist for **Drum** magazine at the time, Todd Matshikiza, offered an explanation for the Maniacs' decision to retain a predominantly marabi feel in their music:

"Zulu Boy was not an antagonist of American swing, but he saw in the use of more instruments the possibility of developing African jazz-marabi into an orchestral form. And if he adopted the western idea, he would at least give vent to the African form of expression... the African idiom."

But by the time the Jazz Maniacs finally broke up – probably because of the combined pressures of township

violence in the dance halls and the eventual reluctance of white night club management to hire black jazz bands (this was because the white musicians' union resented the employment of black musicians) – they were including many more swing numbers in their set.

The Jazz Maniacs are significant because they carried the spirit of marabi through to the dance halls, and they provided inspiration for a new breed of jazzmongers – Dollar Brand, Hugh Masekela, Kiepie Moeketsi, Jonas Gwanga, Gwigwi Mwrebe, Bra Sello and the like.

Although this will be more fully explored in the next chapter, it is worth noting here that the record studios chose to ignore most township groups, with the exception of a few vocal groups in these early days. Groups who were recorded included Reuben Caluza's choirs and the Manhattan Brothers, a harmony vocal group that performed Xhosa and Zulu cover



Permission P Rezant

The Merry Blackbirds



Zakes Nkosi

versions of American hits. This purely vocal music with no instrumentation has come to be known as *mbube*.

There is confusion over the origin of this word. Musicologist David Rycroft claims it means "bombing" and derives from the war years, whereas most people who lived and played when the term was first used say this is incorrect. Joe Makwela - the first black person in the country to popularise electric bass and now employed in the Gallo black music section, Mavuthela Records - says "mbube" comes from "imbube", which means "lion" in Zulu. Although the word is now outmoded except when it refers to vocal music, Makwela's assertion does seem to be borne out by the first and best known recorded mbube song, Solomon Linda's "Wimoweh" ("The Lion Sleeps Tonight") which was also known as "Mbube" and "The Mbube Song" in versions performed by Miriam Makeba.

By the late '30s the companies started signing up the more commercial mbaqanga bands, much to the disgust of the big bands and the lovers of the "real" music. Although today the word mbaqanga is used to describe most ethnic township music (the term marabi fell into disuse from the time marabi music moved from the slum areas and shebeens, which is where it came from in the first place), in those days mbaqanga was seen as a decline, a bastardisation of all the forms of music that arose spontaneously from the townships. It was often called "msakazo", or radio music, because it got a lot of airplay. Critics wrote it off as a gimmicky music that would sell, and musicologists who liked to equate "African" with "tribal" resented it. Rycroft wrote in 1959:

"The spirit which moves these Bantu people to bubble over into song still remains but it's too commonly misdirected into an imitation of Western popular styles. Aspiring African stage and

recording artists compete with each other to produce music that is closest to Western conventions and farthest from tribal music, forfeiting the best of their talent of natural and uninhibited self-expression by doing so."

Rycroft's observation that township groups were aping western musical styles is, sadly, correct. Apart from the big bands like the Merry Blackbirds who never pretended to be interested in anything but American swing, most of the township bands found themselves competing with imported American records, and their audiences started judging their achievements in terms of their overseas success – an attitude that still persists today.

Rycroft's colonialist fervour (and comment on the bubbly spirit of the Bantu!) can be attributed to the time at which he was writing. Today his ideas seem more than a little reactionary:

"The tribal African's habit of making up his own little personal songs and of blending music with every phase of life persists when country folk first come to town. Traditional singing and dancing is likely to materialise quite spontaneously when fellow tribesmen meet after working hours. Snatches of tribal melody are often heard in the streets, perhaps sung to the accompaniment of a tribal instrument, or more commonly, a guitar or concertina.

"Public opinion demands sophistication and conspicuous non-tribalism in a permanent townsman . . . unwilling to stoop to tribal music or recreation some of these new townsmen have devised new forms of choral dance song with inhibited steps and gestures which they feel to be more fitting for the town."

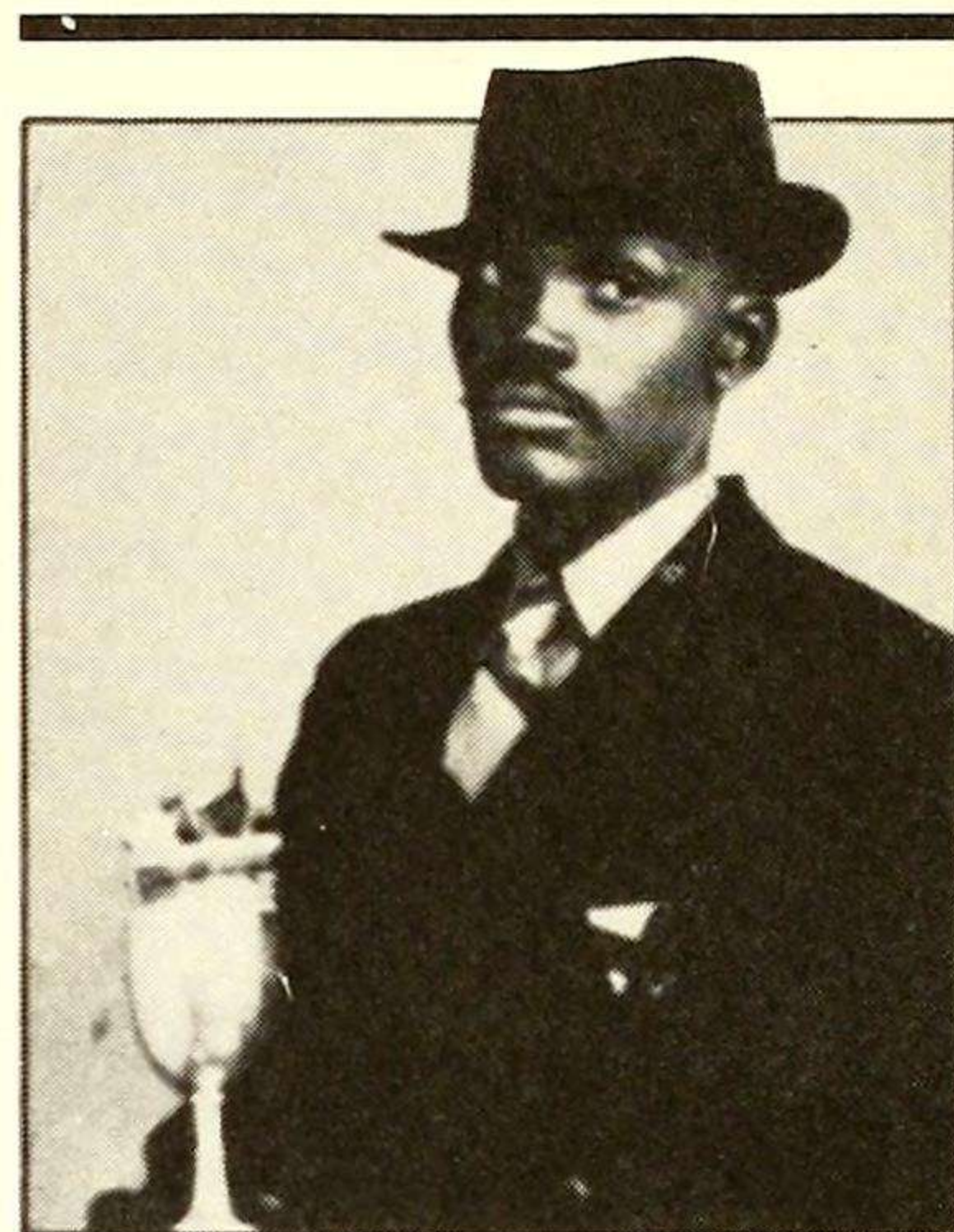
He sums up: *"In sophisticated Johannesburg a style which they call 'jive' has grown up which, though retaining some vastrap features, leans more heavily towards America against a brisk and slovenly beat."*

While Rycroft was criticising mbaqanga for not being African and tribal enough, its critics today claim it's repressive because it still has links to tribal life. Examples are to be found in the lyrics of plenty of popular mbaqanga. One that springs to mind is Abafana Baseqhuden's *"Dumelang Morena"* (*"Greetings to the Chiefs"*) which sold in the region of 80 000 copies a few years ago. A mbaqanga festival will still pull more people than any jazz show. Ian Bernhardt, founder member of the Phoenix Players and promoter of the first King Kong, explains its popularity thus: *"It might be knocked by a few better educated people for political reasons, but the vast masses are uneducated and go for the stuff they understand."*

In the '50s – at the time of the mass removals to Soweto – white impresarios like Ike Brooks, Alfred Herbert and Ian Bernhardt started organising musical variety shows like *"Zonk"*, *"Drums of Africa"*, *"Township Jazz"* and *"African Jazz and Variety"*, which ran for more than a decade. Everyone, but **everyone**, who was to become famous in the townships as a musician or singer was a part of the *"Township Jazz"* and *"African Jazz and Variety"* troupes – Caiphus Semanya, Miriam Makeba, Letta Mbulu, Hugh Masekela . . . the list is endless.

Thandi Klaasen, another incredibly talented person to have come from Sophiatown, remembers that her employers (she worked as a *"teagirl"* in a shop in Johannesburg) sent her to audition for the *"African Jazz and Variety"* show. She sang *"Cow-Cow Boogies"* and was signed on. Also on the bill were Makeba, Dotty Tiyo, Dolly Rathebe, Sonny Pillay and Ben *"Satchmo"* Masinga.

One person who does not have happy memories of African Jazz is Hugh Masekela: *"African Jazz was purely cheap labour. I joined it when I was about 16, and was always made to feel I wasn't*



Solomon Linda

Permission Gallo

worth anything. Ian Bernhardt would tell me: 'You're not worth £10. What do you do? You just sit there and you go nyah, nyah nyah!' There was African Jazz and there was Township Jazz at the Selbourne Hall. Selbourne Hall was full every day for years, sold out, but all the musicians ever got out of it was three guineas a night."

It was in one of these shows that the 10-year-old Lemmy "Special" Mabaso (the "kwela kid" who stole the show in "King Kong" later) first appeared. He'd been spotted playing barefoot on a street corner with his brothers Meshack and the late Jerry Mabaso. In those days they called themselves the Alexandra Township Bright Boys, and as Lemmy puts it, "we were doing fine with our improvisations."

Kwela music was supported by both white and black music lovers. It was developed by street urchins from Alexandra in the mid-'40s. Little boys like Lemmy Mabaso, who adored the music of both the marabi jazz musicians like the late Zakes Nkosi and the American style jazzmongers, began to imitate their heroes with cheap penny-whistles, home-made paraffin tin guitars and tea-box basses. The term "kwela" means "pick up" and was popularised by a line in a song called "Tom Hark", written by Aaron Lerole: "Here come the khwela-khwela vans."

"Khwela-khwela" was one of several names given to roving police vans on the look-out for illegal street corner gambling. When a van arrived all evidence of the game would be hastily hidden and somebody would innocently play a penny-whistle to a suddenly captive audience until the danger was over.

After "Tom Hark" whites started calling any music they heard with a vague township style "kwela", and somehow the term stuck. Even today most whites call all music played by blacks kwela, without realising that the name specifically refers to pennywhistle jive music.

The record companies picked

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Abefana Baseqhudeni

up on kwela very quickly and signed on a number of penny-whistlers for a pittance.

Probably one of the biggest successes from this time was Spokes Mashiyane, who was paid between £20 and £30 by Trutone for each seven single record that sold between 50 000 and 70 000 copies. Aaron Lerole, whose "Tom Hark" netted Columbia (GRC) a quarter of a million rands, was paid next-to-nothing for his smash hit.

The newly developed Union of South African Artists put a lawyer by the name of Harry Bloom on to Trutone, protesting that Mashiyane's contract was the last of the slave labour documents.

At the start, the "committee" of the Union consisted of such people as Gwigwi Mokwebi, Zakes Nkosi, Ian Bernhardt, Guy Routh – who was then general secretary of the Garment Workers' Union – and Dan Poho, who led a group called the People's Choir.

The union started as a combination of a trade union and as an organisation to raise money for the training and development of musicians. It was the first organisation that attempted to protect black performers.

Masekela: *"The union was at Dorkay house when it started. There was a piano where we could rehearse, and that was the place where we all came together as musicians. That's where all the playwrights came from, Athol Fugard and so on, and theatre people like Gluckman. It was the wealth of South African talent, across the board."*

The union succeeded in breaking Mashiyane's contract with Trutone and he signed with Gallo on better terms and a royalty basis. According to Bernhardt, *"the first royalty cheque he received from them was something like ten times as much as he'd made in his entire life to date."* The union also managed to get a royalty payment from Pete Seeger for

ALEX DEATH BLUES

**Good, nostalgic and damp vibrations
keeping coming up, surfacing
of good ol' township
let us go on an excursion of the dark city**

**at the corner of London and 7th Avenue
I hopped up; that was the "zone"
flash on my mind is the period of
terror, victimisation and gang wars.
the vultures of the early 50's
the msomis and the spoilers of the mid-50's
name like matthews, ginger and lefty
brought icy fear to thousands**

**the late 50's: emergence of political leaders
the "AZIKHWELWA" bus boycott at no. 2 square
1957: white caps stood around stonily
as women opened a meeting of the congress
with the words "Verwoerd! mugudulo kanyoko
uzawunya!"**

**that was typical of ol' Alex
ol' birthday blues for Alex**

**talk of prosperous businessmen
talk of graduates, fashion models, boxers
musicians, soccer maestros etc. etc . . .
that was Township; jack of all trades
master of not less than all
from gangster, beauty queen
Bourgeoisie businessman, to everyday people:
the masses**

**gone is the booming laughter
gone are the loud-playing hi-fi sets
Alexandra is dead . . . or is it?
It was not a model township
but its soul lived in all its masses
that closeness which no hostel will ever provide
is now dead
the spirit of Township lives in all its people.**

DUMISANI DHLAMINI



Lemmy 'Special' Mabaso (right)

Solomon Linda's "*Wimoweh*", which is still being paid to his widow.

Trevor Huddleston, an Anglican priest working for a monastic order based in England, was the person most instrumental in starting the union. By all accounts he was a well-loved man. He was the person who presented Hugh Masekela with his first trumpet and arranged for him and Jonas Gwangwa (trombonist) to have music lessons. Says Masekela: *"If every Christian was like Huddleston, I'd be a Christian today. He was a great guy. He gave the government hell – they eventually deported him. And right from the start he saw a potential for music, knowing that if South Africa were not an oppressed country we'd probably be the leaders musically in the world."*

In 1953 Huddleston was chairperson of the Western Areas Protest Committee, which was protesting the forced removal of 58 000 inhabitants from Sophiatown and the other Western Areas of Johannesburg. *"I stopped going to church because of him, or rather because of what happened to him,"* says Peter Rezant. *"When he stood out against Sophiatown until he got into real trouble, not one member of the Anglican church came out in support of him."*

On the day the Freedom Charter was signed, Huddleston was one of three people to be awarded the highest distinction in black South African society: the Isitwalandwe, the feather worn by the heroes of the people. The other two similarly honoured were Albert Luthuli and Yusuf Dadoo.

Rezant says that most musicians would do anything for Huddleston. At various benefit gigs they raised enough money to build a swimming pool in Soweto. *"We used to call it the Trevor Huddleston swimming pool. Now I notice the authorities have started calling it the Orlando West swimming pool."*

When Huddleston left in 1954,

the union organised a farewell concert for him that would raise funds for the union at the same time. Under the banner "*The Stars are Weeping*", the concert took place at the Bantu Men's Social Centre in Johannesburg and was an unprecedented success.

Choirs arrived unannounced, black writers turned up to read eulogies for Huddleston and all the top names of the time, from Dolly Rathebe and Miriam Makeba to the Manhattan Brothers, performed. It cost £1 to get in and more than 2 000 people arrived.

With all this money the union was able to get its own premises – Dorkay House, in Eloff Street, which was the home of the first all-black African Music and Dance Association, AMDA, and is still the headquarters of the Phoenix Players.

So far the emphasis has been on music in the townships played for entertainment. But all this time there was another music, a music that was purely vocal, like most traditional South African music. It was completely uncommercial, yet known by millions of people and passed on simply by mouth. Although the form was traditional, the lyrics spoke of freedom.

There's no saying when the first freedom song was sung in South Africa, but certainly one of the most significant was Enoch Sontonga's "*Nkosi Sikelel' i-Afrika*", sung for the first time to a large gathering on January 8 1912, at the formation of the South African Native National Congress. The first recording was made by the Congress' Secretary General, Sol Plaatje. This song has gone on to become a national anthem in South Africa.

There were songs about education, anti-pass songs, performed during the passive resistance campaign of the '50s. These included "*Mayibuye, Afrika!*" sung to the tune of Clementine; one with the words "*Jan van Riebeek has stolen our freedom*"; the still popular

**Nkosi sikelel' i-Afrika
Maluphakanyisw' uphondo lwayo
Yiva nemithandazo yethu
Nkosi sikelela, Nkosi sikelela
Yiza moya, Yiza moya, oyingewele
Nkosi sikelela thina
Lusapho, lwako**

**Lord Bless Africa
Let its horn (of hope) be raised
Listen also to our pleas
Lord bless, Lord bless
Come spirit, come spirit, spirit
Lord Bless Us
Us, thy children**

ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY TODD MATSHIKIZA

"Abelungu Goddam" ("Goddam the whites") chant; "Thina Sizwe!" (roughly translated the words are: "We Africans! We Africans! We cry for our land/they took it/they took it/Europeans/they must let our country go.")

Another was: "Hey! Malan, open the jail doors, we want to enter, we volunteers."

Possibly the best known songs from these times were those sung by the women in the campaign against passes.

Until 1955 only black men were made to carry passes. In 1955 the women were informed that they'd have to carry passes from January 1956. The women's campaign grew daily. In October 1955, 2 000 women convened at the Union Buildings in Pretoria – South Africa's administrative centre – to protest against passes. A year later, on August 9 1956 (now known as Women's Day in South Africa) 20 000 women gathered at the same place.

They came from all over South Africa, black women and a few white, and stood with a clenched fist salute for 30 minutes in silent

protest. Even the babies on their backs didn't cry. Then they burst into song, singing "Nkosi sikilel' i-Afrika" and the warrior's song of the women of Natal with new words "Strijdom, you have struck a rock once you have touched a woman; you have dislodged a boulder, you will be crushed."

Nowadays on August 9 those women are still remembered, in the "Women's Day Song":

Remember all our women in the jails

Remember all our women in campaigns

Remember all our women over many fighting years

Remember all our women for their triumphs and for their tears

A campaign spread to all the small dorps round South Africa, where women would publicly burn their passes. Then as they were led off in great numbers by the police they would sing numbers like: "Behold us joyful/The women of Africa/in the presence of our baas/The great one/who conquers Lefurutse/With his knob-kierie/And his assegaai/And his gun."

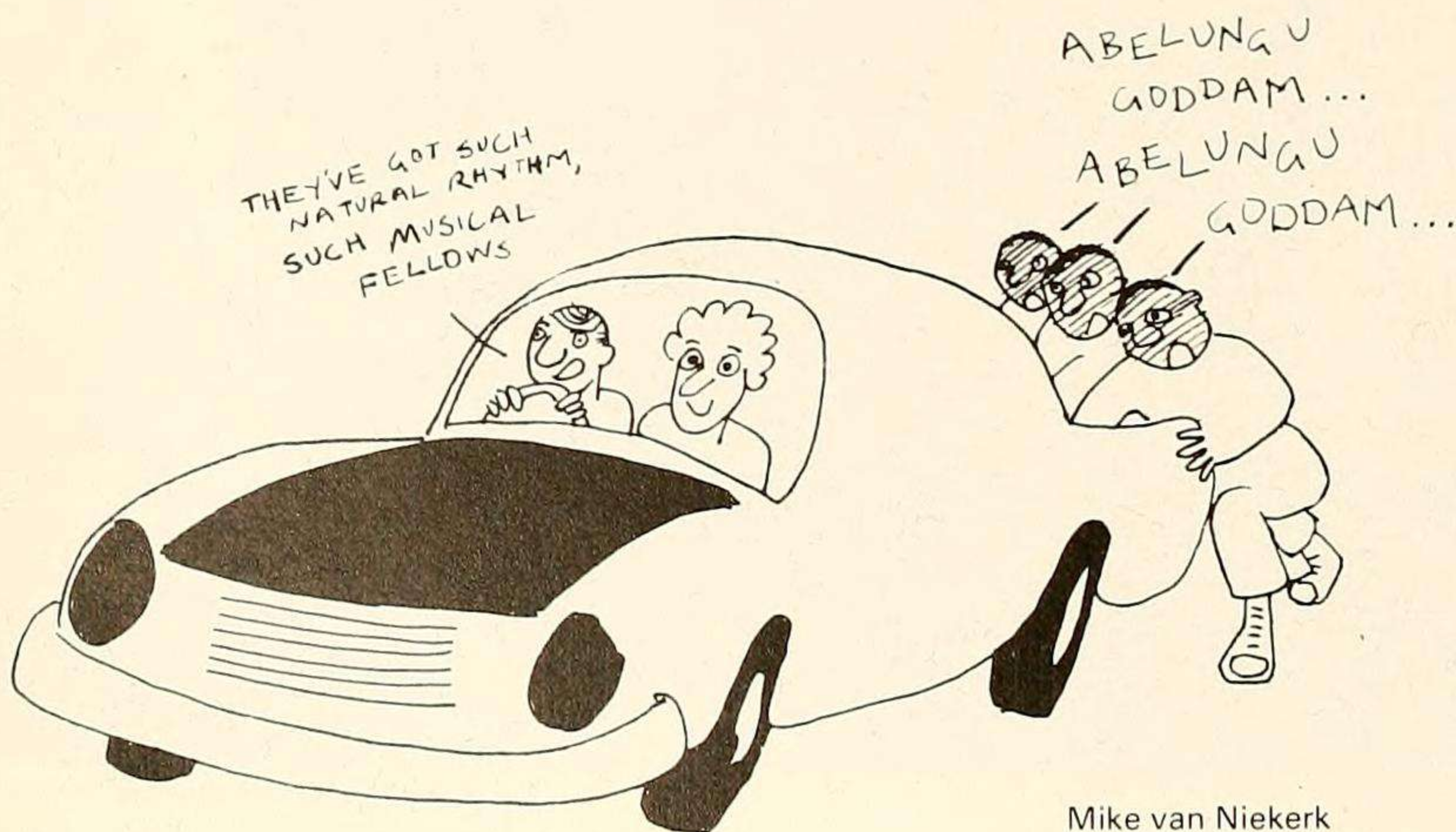
The reference is to one of the major displays of resistance in Zeerust.

Chanted slogans have always been used in South Africa to give direction and inspiration to those involved in one way or another in resistance against the state. Since 1976, there have been slogans calling for an end to Bantu Education; slogans calling for stay-at-homes; for boycotting Christmas celebrations; releasing leaders – like the "Free Mandela" slogan which has become a world-wide petition campaign and demands for equal rights and equal pay. The most famous chanted slogans in South Africa are "Amandla/Ngawethu" and "Maatla ke a rona". Both mean "Power to the People".

Another of the most significant community chants is still "Azikwelwa" ("We refuse to ride"). It was first used by the people of Alexandra in August 1943 during the bus boycott. For nine days 15 000 people trudged nine miles to work after the bus company raised its fare from 4d a journey to 5d, and then the bus company gave in. "Azikwelwa" has always been the cry of the bus boycotters. In Johannesburg, in 1943, in Cape Town in 1980. But the best-known boycott was the Alexandra boycott beginning in January 1957 when the people walked to and from Johannesburg for four months.

While the people of Alexandra were walking, the Union of South African Artists was busy organising musical events – talent contests, festivals and township jazz shows. At that time shows ran to white audiences one night and to blacks the next. It was the era of "West Side Story", and lawyer Harry Bloom suggested to Ian Bernhardt that they do an African musical. Because there is still much controversy about "King Kong", the story of the life and death of South African heavyweight boxing champion Ezekiel Dlamini, it is best to give two separate accounts of the musical.

Ian Bernhardt: "About two



Mike van Niekerk



Permission Rand Daily Mail

Todd Matshikiza

weeks after suggesting it, Harry phoned me to say he'd just read about the death of Dlamini. Anyway, he started writing and then through friends he met a tetchy black journalist named Todd Matshikiza, who composed the score. Todd was very against it when we started. He was an obnoxious bugger, against the union probably because there were whites involved. But he started writing music and another young journalist called Pat Williams from the **Sunday Times** started writing the lyrics.

"We then started getting money together. A great friend of Matshikiza's, an executive of Anglo-American, made an incredible contribution.

"This friend and a guy called John Rudd – who was later imprisoned under the Immorality Act – got together with a stockbroker and they ran around getting people to put down amounts of R500 as an interest free loan . . . they wouldn't make money but they'd get it back if King Kong was successful. A surprising number of people put money into it, and we made about £6 000. We decided to share all the money we made with the African Medical Trust Fund. Their representative was David Abrahamson, later known for other acts of patriotism.

"Despite all this happening there would still have been no production if two very talented South Africans had not returned to the country simultaneously from overseas. The one was Leon Gluckman (of "Wait a Minim" fame) who'd been in Australia. I persuaded him to handle this production on the most ridiculous terms. Never before in the history of theatre has anyone done so much for so little. The other guy was Spike (Stanley) Glasser, who was a classical musician. He'd been studying overseas and landed the job of arranging the music with Sol Klaaste, a brilliant little consumptive pianist who had a B Mus degree."

Hugh Masekela: "The whites who got involved with King Kong

were all drawn from the liberati, the new intelligencia who mixed with blacks. I know that Ian Bernhardt got together with some Anglo American boys to finance the thing. They could be called I suppose, liberals – but on the other hand they had all these people being exploited by them on the mines.

"Right – so King Kong was sponsored by these liberals who loved the arts and who loved Todd. Todd was one of those Africans who live in the townships who speak English and whose children speak English, and who has white friends. He was learned and advanced, a fantastic speaker and writer. A dynamic guy, I'd place him alongside Can Themba in terms of his concept and perspective on the real South African. Normally a guy who writes music and plays like that makes a fortune. At least on a South African level he shouldn't be any different from George Gershwin and Richard Rodgers, Jules Stein, Rogers and Hart . . . he was in the same class, but he died a pauper.

"Then there were Spike Glasser and Leon Gluckman, the greatest human beings to come out of white society. They really worked hard to make King Kong happen. We did all the music at Spike's home, and he treated us like kings. Mackay Davashe, Sol Klaaste, Kiepie Moeketsi, Gwigwi Mwrebe and Spike arranged all the music, from a tape of tunes which Todd gave us. We'd listen to it, and the others would sit around the piano while Spike wrote everything out, orchestrated.

"As they finished an arrangement they would give it to me and Jonas Gwangwa in the kitchen, and we'd copy it out. That was our first music lesson. We were never really paid for that work. I don't know how much Sol or Todd ever got, but Spike and Leon told the promoters that we had to be paid decently.

"Kiepie, who was a key person in King Kong because he

played all the difficult and incidental music, was getting about £35 a week while King Kong was raking in hundreds of thousands. I think Todd was getting £80 a week, I'm not sure, but we were earning £15 a week, playing every night. **That** was the great King Kong."

The musical opened in February 1959 and toured around the country successfully, before going to England where it ran for a year to highly critical audiences. It was criticised for being non-political and too westernised. An example of its reviews is the following by Robert Muller: ". . . Politically, King Kong is about as dynamic as a bag of laundry. Everything, including the gangsterism and the social misery, has been agreeably prettified . . . South Africa House can keep calm. We are told nothing about Johannesburg life that is likely to rouse us to anger. We are just being entertained by a slick, American-type song-and-dance musical.

". . . let's not get the wrong message. A full-blooded entertainment this may be, but a whistle and a wiggle are no match for the policy of apartheid. One swallow of black and white collaboration doesn't make a summer of South Africa's bleak shame."

Bernhardt and others saw the show as a gigantic success. Financially, after making half a million rand, it was.

"Bearing in mind that London has a very sophisticated theatre environment and very sharp critical pencils, King Kong was successful by any standards," says Bernhardt. "What was important wasn't just the fact that it was a success though. It gave people the opportunity of going to work in England for a year. It launched 100 careers, and really elevated the whole black performing arts scene onto a new level. Other black composers benefited because of Matshikiza's achievement."

Another view of the visit to London comes from alto sax and

clarinet player, Kippie Moeketsi:

"Can you imagine an alley cat from the centre of Johannesburg rubbing shoulders with royalty in glittering premieres where we were toasted and feted by celebrities like Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon? Who can believe that I refused caviar and champagne because I had no taste for it; and everybody there was gobbling and swilling all those delicacies.

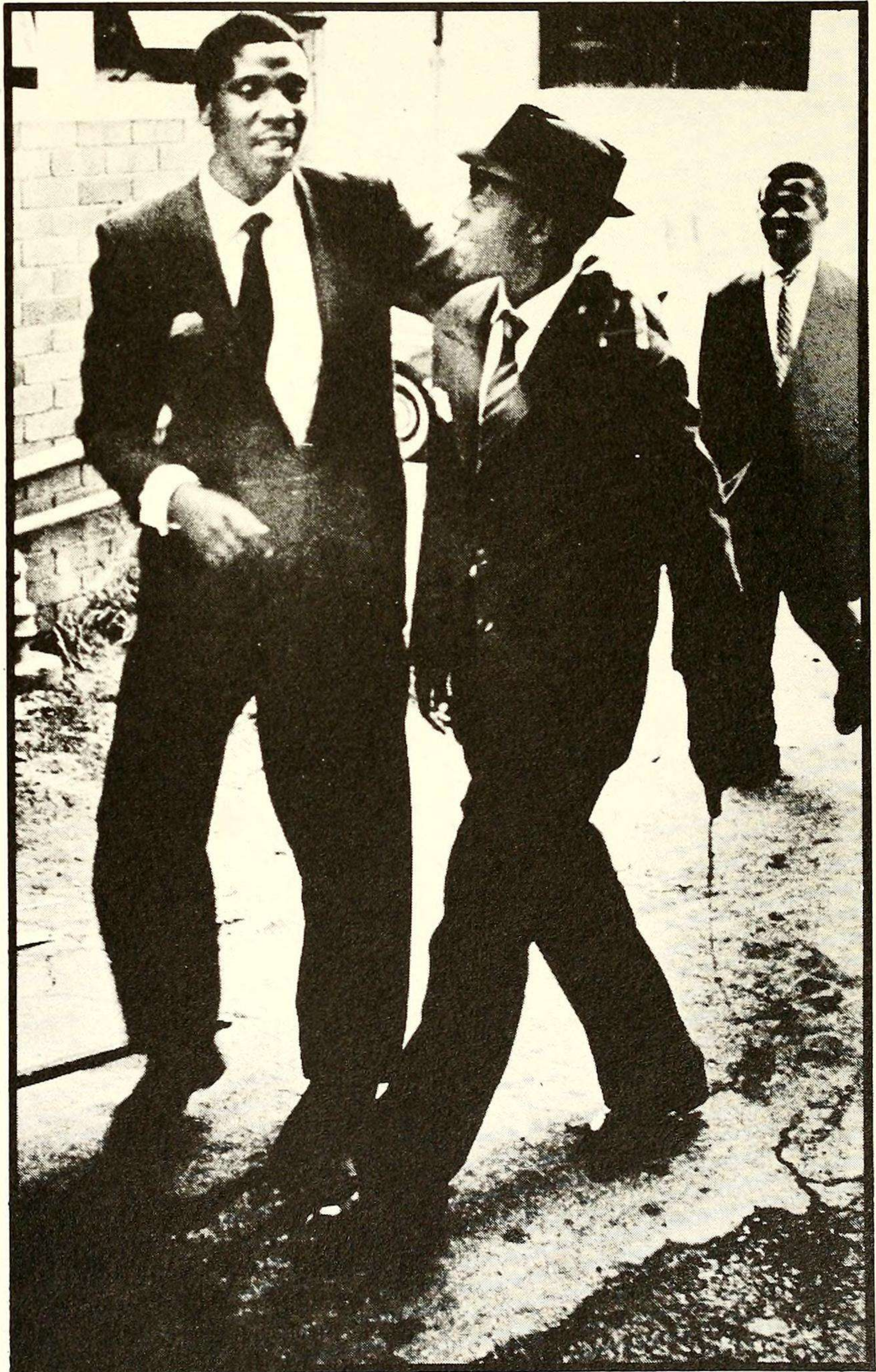
"It was an incredible trip into the world of make believe. I learned something about this world. It is a place where dog eats dog; the law of the jungle prevails, based on the survival of the fittest and the craftiest."

His cynicism is understandable. Despite being one of the greats in South African music, Kippie Moeketsi is penniless today.

One of the young penny-whistlers in *"King Kong"*, and now a highly successful record producer, West Nkosi, still considers it to be the only *"true black"* musical to have emerged from South Africa, with the exception of Gibson Kente's *"Sikala"*. This is despite all the white involvement in *"King Kong"*, which was to be followed by a spate of *"township musicals"* including Bill Brewer's *"Shebeen"* and Alan Paton's *"Mkumbane"* and *"Sponono"*. *"Sponono"* was the only one that achieved any measure of success and went to America with the Kong company manager Meshack Mosia.

"King Kong" was the last really successful theatrical / musical venture between whites and blacks until the '70s. The Verwoerd era was becoming more sinister and from the year the Nationalists took power they introduced more and more repressive laws until by 1965 the Amended Group Areas Act had made such projects impossible.

To quote Bernhardt, *"the wickedness behind their actions has now borne fruit. The legacy now, 15 years later, is that people don't want to work together anymore."* ■



Nathan Mdledle (King Kong)

Permission Rand Daily Mail



Peter Rezant

Chapter 4

AND THE REST IS HISTORY

THERE is a parallel between American and South African musical styles. There is also a parallel in the exploitation of blacks by whites in the record industries of the two countries: where blacks make the music, and whites make the money.

Talking to virtually any white record producer in South Africa, it becomes obvious that township music is considered to be inferior to local white music, in terms of quality. But while it has little or no status in the eyes of the white record bosses simply because it doesn't appeal to their individual tastes, no one denies its selling power.

The two opening paragraphs of a recent book on light music in South Africa by a director of the South African Music Rights Organisation, Ralph Trehwela, illustrate just how little status is accorded to indigenous music by the industry: "Our first pop songs were immigrants.

"Those brave little ships that billowed into Table Bay on their way to and from Holland carried more than precious spices; they carried music." Trehwela is suggesting that the starting point of popular music was the same as that from which the National Education Department would like all South Africans to believe our history started – from the time the first whites stepped onto Cape soil.

This attitude appears to be a hangover from the early days of the record industry, which firstly ignored black music (possibly

because of the beliefs that the *Native rhythms* were not worth putting on wax, and that the black workers were too poor to be able to support an industry) and later recorded only certain types of music that the industry was persuaded had mass appeal.

Peter Rezant recalls that in the early '30s the record companies were only interested in getting black groups to play Latin American music like the rumba and the samba: "they used us to make an interpretation of that kind of music. They thought that through this they might create a black market.

"I don't think before that they considered us commercially in those days. They didn't record *marabi*, the *shebeen* music. It wasn't the type of music they thought people with money would buy. The first time they thought about blacks was for choral music. The first black person they recorded was Reuben Caluza who had singers singing this Zulu ragtime."

The record industry has a history of exploiting its artists.

Joe Nofal, who has worked for the industry for 50 years, confirms that in the early years it was unheard of to pay black artists royalties. Spokes Mashiyane, at the height of his career, was paid a flat fee of around £20 for each hit single. Thandi Klaasens remembers that her group (The Quad Sisters – members included her sister Thandeka, Stella Khoza and Joyce Mbanase) recorded under the Trutone label in the late '50s

and earned about £5 a recording session.

Masekela: "Look at the *Manhattan Brothers*, and all those other people from the *bundu* who came in to record for them. The *Manhattan Brothers* are paupers today. The *Skylarks* – Letta Mbulu and Makeba are in exile. The *Dark City Sisters* – they died a living ghost. Spokes Mashiyane sold millions and millions of those breakable 78s, and he died of sclerosis . . . what I call the 'sleeze'. Lemmy Special made millions for Gallo and he's virtually an alcoholic. Mabel Mafoya – I bet you couldn't find her today. Mabel Masoka **made** Trutone; she had a record called 'Nontsokolo' that just sold for years and years and years. She's in Zambia now, penniless. Nancy Jacobs had a hit with 'Meadowlands' when the mass removals were going on. I'm sure she hasn't got any bread.

"But you look at the companies, they've moved to plusher surroundings and they're driving bigger cars. I hear that Gallo have just moved to some fancy new building. Do you know where Mahlatini lives? Do you know that he doesn't even have a bicycle. So much of the music around South Africa today is because of Mahlatini, and he walks to the bus stop, he walks to the train. Mahlatini's problem was that he was too nice. Zakes Nkosi from the *Jazz Maniacs* was too nice, so was Gwigwi from the *Harlem Swingsters*, and so was Todd Matshikiza, and they all died poor."

“Up from the Georgia cotton fields it came, through the Mississippi Delta, across the dusty Southwestern plains: guitar, harmonica, tambourine, the slap of bare feet and the raw, plaintive voice. From slave shack to street corner, from New Orleans to Chicago . . . It started out as a field holler, became a blues chant, jazz, rhythm and blues . . . The record men came along, putting the sound on wax, selling it first to hundreds, then thousands, eventually millions.

“The black man made the music. The white man made the money.”

From “THE BLACK MILLIONAIRES”

Blatant get-rich-quick-on-musicians'-sweat schemes continued until very recently. Producer Billy Forrest remembers that as late as 1968 black music was brought out on a production line basis. A producer would put down 18 sides (i.e. nine single records) in an afternoon.

“The musicians were paid what was called a title figure of about R4,50 and sold the copyright of their songs outright. Sammy Bengu – who is starving now – sold thousands of records and had three hits in a row for Trutone, but he'd sold the copyright and lost out.”

The South African record industry probably started in 1914 when the Brothers Mackay started importing British records which they sold from ox-wagons, along with pianos and other musical instruments. They were the agents for His Master's Voice (the label of the London-based Gramophone Company), and were later joined in the business of distributing imported records by Polliacks, the agents for the Columbia Gramophone Company.

In 1931 Gramophone and Columbia merged to form EMI – Electrical and Musical Industries Limited – and in 1938 their South African agents merged with the Mackay Brothers becoming directors of Polliacks. They were granted the franchise of all EMI products.

The first proper recording studio in the country was established in 1932 by Eric Gallo. Six years before, Gallo – then an engineering student working in Mtubatuba on the north coast of Natal – picked up a newspaper carrying an advertisement offering the Transvaal agency for Brunswick Records. All that was needed was £1000.

His father lent him the money, and in February 1926, Eric Gallo opened a retail store in Pritchard Street, Johannesburg. Called Brunswick Gramophone House, the shop sold gramophones and records and did incredible

business with its first movie song hit, Al Jolson's *'Sonny Boy'*. Gallo then decided to expand the wholesale business and moved to larger premises. He employed his first travelling salesperson, Phil Goldblatt, who still works for Gallo Records today. Before Gallo set up a recording studio in a converted basement below an old movie house in Johannesburg, both the Gallo and Mackay-Polliacks enterprises were sending artists like Chris Blignaut, Betsy de la Porte and Jan van Zyl abroad to record.

Reuben Caluza and the Zulu Double Quartet were among the few blacks who were sent overseas, although Rezant claims there were other people who *“recorded the sort of unrepresentative music that was probably the precedent to Ipi Tombi.”*

Where it was considered impractical or too expensive to send artists overseas, they were recorded in make-shift studios. Here groups like the Amanzimtoti Zulu Choir, Mseleku and his Merrymakers and the Bantu Glee Singers had their first recording experiences.

According to Joe Nofal, *“we cordoned off part of our workshops with velvet drapes. There were no tape recorders then and you had to record straight on to a disc.*

“Everyone stood around and sung into one mike, suspended in mid-air. You just had to hope it would all come out.” Afrikaans choirs were recorded in an Irene Church.

Dance music was in vogue at the time – it was the era of the New Mayfair Dance Orchestra, Carol Gibbons and the Savoy Orpheans. Ray Noble – a top British band leader – had as his crooner the Johannesburg born and bred Al Boley. Others in that band included future band leaders, Glen Miller, Claude Thornhall, Ray Berduk and Ray McKinley.

Imported jazz recordings by Duke Ellington and others sold well in the black townships, but

local jazz music was only recorded later.

Local black music, mostly recorded on Zonophone (distributed by Polliacks) included izibongo (praise singing), tribal music, choral music, folk songs and the traditional music of the mineworkers.

In terms of township music, only the most commercial mbube material was recorded. Mbaqanga music and jazz were largely ignored.

It's hard to say whether the studios ignored the township jazz bands because, as suggested earlier in this chapter, they thought those bands not worth recording and the black market not worth exploiting when they could so easily make their money out of imported music; it could be that even in those days the recording industry had absorbed the tenets of what later became government policy – to discourage black identification with the urban areas – and concentrate on music with a rural feel.

There is yet another possibility – that the big bands of the time effectively boycotted the studios because they were making enough money from live gigs and saw no point in earning a few pennies, with no royalties, from the record companies. Leader of the Jazz Maniacs, Wilson "King Force" Silgee, says the going rate for a double-sided recording was about R4,20 which his band was not prepared to accept.

Peter Rezant's assertion is that the standards of the record industry were so low that it was just as well the "real musicians" weren't associated with it. *"Recording is one of the things that has really killed artistry. Immediately recording came into being a fellow found he could put together a tune in a couple of days and say: 'Hey, this can be marketed', and then go off to Gallos and say he's got a piece for them, and they feel it can be marketed so they put together a studio band to record the piece and that's it. If anything goes*

When I come into Jo'burg in 1953
I wasn't used to town or city ways
So this is what happened to me
They take advantage of my ignorance and my simplicity
and my big wide innocent smile
they pretend they's making friends by me
make me fork out in the meanwhile
I didn't know it was
tsotsi style . . .

I go to the big department store
find myself a damn nice job
drive around delivery vans
I bring home a nice few bob
One morning I go out as usual
saddle my plenty new bike
A guy say hey, you gotta walk
I'll cut your throat,
don't you know we's all on strike
you can't do nothing 'bout it
tsotsi style . . .

So what can I do, I can't go to work
Sit around at home all day
Soon get the sack, got no more job
Lose my self-respect and my pay
I got no more food in my stomach
tell me what me do
s'gibengas got all the money
so I become a tsotsi too
I make my living in
tsotsi style . . .

Now the next few months me busy
making money mighty fast
selling the white man jwala
guess it was too good to last
for in the end the cops caught me redhanded
pinching a new Chev Corvair
and in a couple of hours I was landed
in the middle of Marshall Square
And all because of that
tsotsi style . . .

So when I got out I was freezing
there wasn't much I could do
so I bought a B flat pennywhistle
learnt to play a tune or two
very soon I was making records
for Gallotone, Africa
making legalised money
as a top pennywhistle star
soon I was swinging in
tsotsi style . . .

JEREMY TAYLOR

“(They) saw in the African a source of income . . . quality did not matter. Something to pat your foot to – anything with bounce or rhythm, original or copied but it must sell.”
WALTER NHLAPO,
BANTU WORLD

wrong, they fix it up in the studio. Meanwhile that original fellow's done nothing to improve himself. The record industry killed the big bands.”

In 1938 Griffiths Motsieloa – formerly of a group called the Pitch Black Follies – was employed by Gallo as the first black talent scout and from that time the industry, which had expanded from Gallo and EMI to include Teal, Trutone and GRC, took more interest in the music that was coming out of the townships. This was the highly commercial mbaqanga, which was to cause much bitterness with the big bands.

Rezant: *“There was a song called ‘Tomatiesous’. Nobody knows who wrote it, but when Gallo went to record it they used a band from Bloemfontein. When the record came out I went to speak to the man responsible for the recording, Alec Delmont (then head of the Gallo recording operation) to ask why they used a band like this because they were deficient. I said the record wasn't doing us any good, that we were all in the music business together and it wasn't good for the people to identify other musicians with that music, and when I finished he said: ‘You know what, Peter. We here agree that that kind of music stinks, but that people like it. They want it as rough as it is.’”*

In later days there was a lot of criticism levelled at mbaqanga by the critics. Walter Nhlapo wrote in **Bantu World** in 1956 that it was the brain child of the recording companies *“who saw in the African a source of income . . . quality did not matter. Something to pat your foot to – anything with bounce or rhythm, original or copied but it must sell.*

“There are still musicians who play the pure, polished jazz of days gone by, musicians whose music does not appeal to, and stir, the masses to promiscuous gyrations, musicians whose music does not sell, but all the same, the kind of jazz that savours of the pure and the best.”

Joe Nofal reckons that in the early 50s the white market was very big. Artists like Willie Ferreira and Nico Carstens sold between 40 000 and 50 000 copies of a single and Al Debbo ran to 70 000 and 80 000 while a group like Zakes Nkosi and the City Jazz Nine did at the most 10 000 copies.

But by the mid-50s the record companies started realising how much money they could make out of black music if they branched out with mbaqanga and kwela.

Kwela was the first black music to really take off. It sold on the white as well as the black market and therefore the companies were interested in recording it. Artists like Spokes Mashiyane and Lemmy Special were the big names of the time, selling hundreds of thousands of records, even though the money they made from the studios was barely enough to live on. Jeremy Taylor's *“Tsotsi Style”* which he recorded with Lemmy *“Special”* Mabaso illustrates the conditions these musicians had grown up in.

To quote Nofal: *“Generally we paid the black artists outright £5 or £6 or whatever; as far as we were concerned it was a chance we took. The number could have been a flop and we had to cover studio time in expenses. On the other hand people like Nico Carstens got royalties. They were small, but there was no question of a cash payment and people like him often got advance royalties too.”*

In 1955 an A&R person (artists and repertoire, responsible for which artists are signed to a particular label, and for the music that comes out on that label) discovered the Bulawayo Cold Storage Band which played a popular number called *“Skokiaan”*, written by August Msarurgwa. Alec Delmont of Gallo sent the number off to his contacts overseas and a number of top artists, including Louis Armstrong, recorded it.

Locally, Nico Carstens covered the number with a backing side

called "Zambezi" which he wrote in two days. "Skokiaan" – still considered one of the biggest selling black songs – sold hundreds of thousands of units. Msarurgwa didn't get much richer. Following the success of "Skokiaan", "Zambezi" went on to become a million seller in South Africa. Both were later covered by many bands and featured in "Swinging Safari", a top-selling cover version album by Bert Kaempfert and his orchestra.

Then, as now, there was no protection for black musicians. The Union of South African Artists achieved a lot in a few isolated cases, but generally musicians were at the mercy of the record industry.

Unethical practices – like buying rights to a band's name so that if any of the personnel in the band got uppity he or she would be fired without much ado and replaced by another out-of-work artist; and copyrighting compositions under the name of the producer – started in the 50s and continue today.

As mbaqanga grew in popularity and the black market became wider through the advent of SABC's Radio Bantu in 1960, so the exploitation in the industry grew.

Political and economic conditions were making it harder for musicians to make a living out of live appearances. In the overcrowded townships, there was the problem of gang violence at the dance halls. In the towns, the musicians had hassles with

passbooks and entertainment factors – like the white musicians' union opposing their employment in white nightclubs.

Under these circumstances, it was inevitable that their dependence on the white-controlled studios should become greater. And with no organisation to protect them, their dependence on the companies for survival growing daily, the question of musicians being in control of the production of music became a dream.

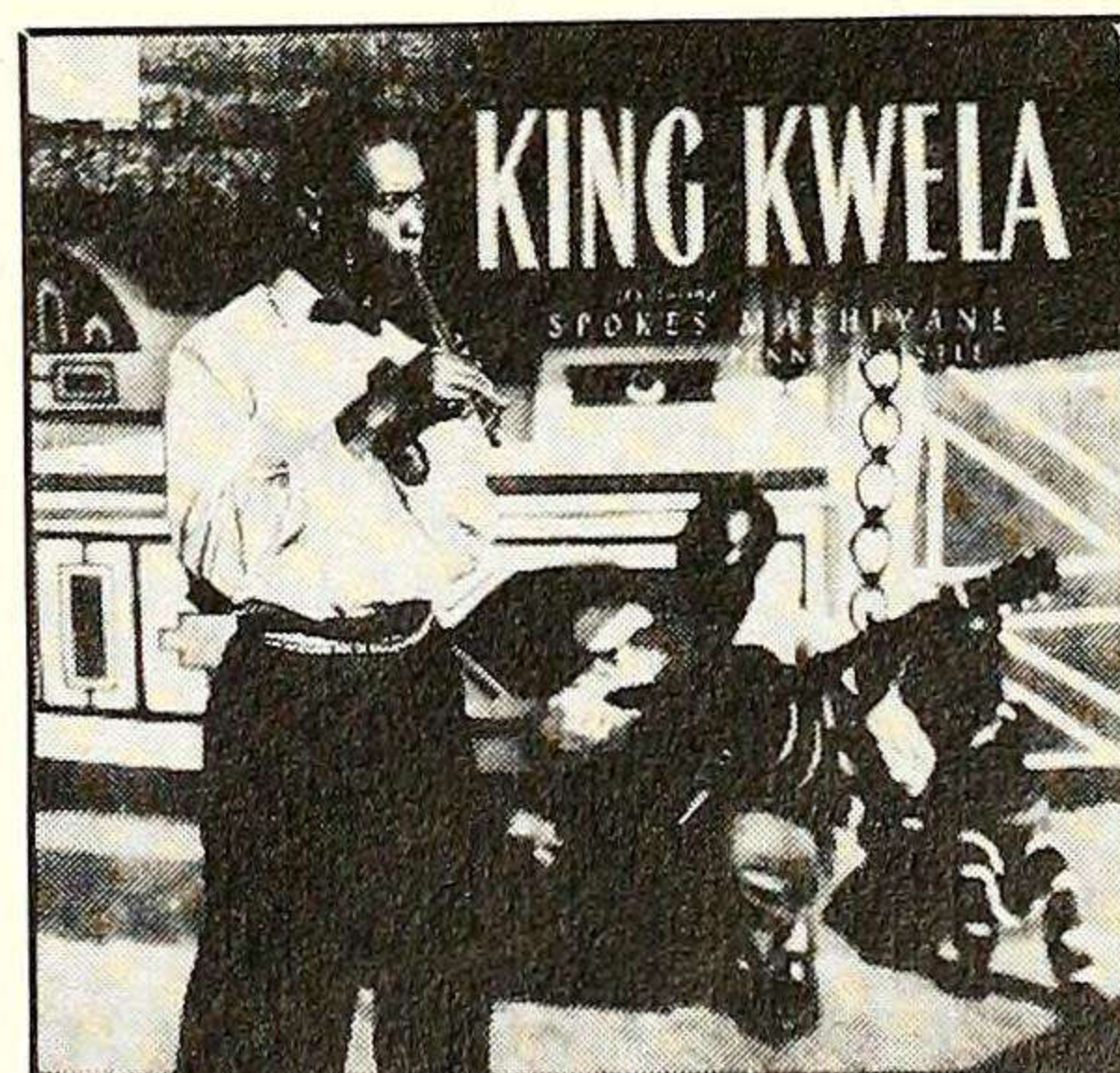
As Hugh Masekela puts it: *"Because of these circumstances you suddenly have a music industry and the musicians are not partaking of the profits of the industry. There are so many musicians dependent on the industry that they form a ready labour pool, always thinking in terms of being hired, in terms of having an employer. If you are a musician you get maybe five percent royalties to shut you up. Even if you're doing well, you can be sure that the executives in your record company are doing better than you."*

"A guy like Kippie Moeketsi should be living like Smokey Robinson. Sol Klaaste, Gideon Guma and Zakes Nkosi – those people made the record companies, but they never partook of the profits."

"Why isn't Dambuza from the Manhattan Brothers on the board of directors of Gallo now? Why isn't Kippie an executive, why doesn't Miriam have a share of the company?" ■

"It's amazing how the media, the liberals and the government all work hand in hand. The government needs it to seem that some Africans are shining, and the liberals want it so they don't have bad consciences. So the media tells the government: 'We'll promote these people, just as long as you don't let them get too rich'. So it was that during King Kong we made the front page of the Rand Daily Mail all the time, yet we earned £15 a week."

HUGH MASEKELA



Sue Hope-Bailie



Joe Nofal

Part

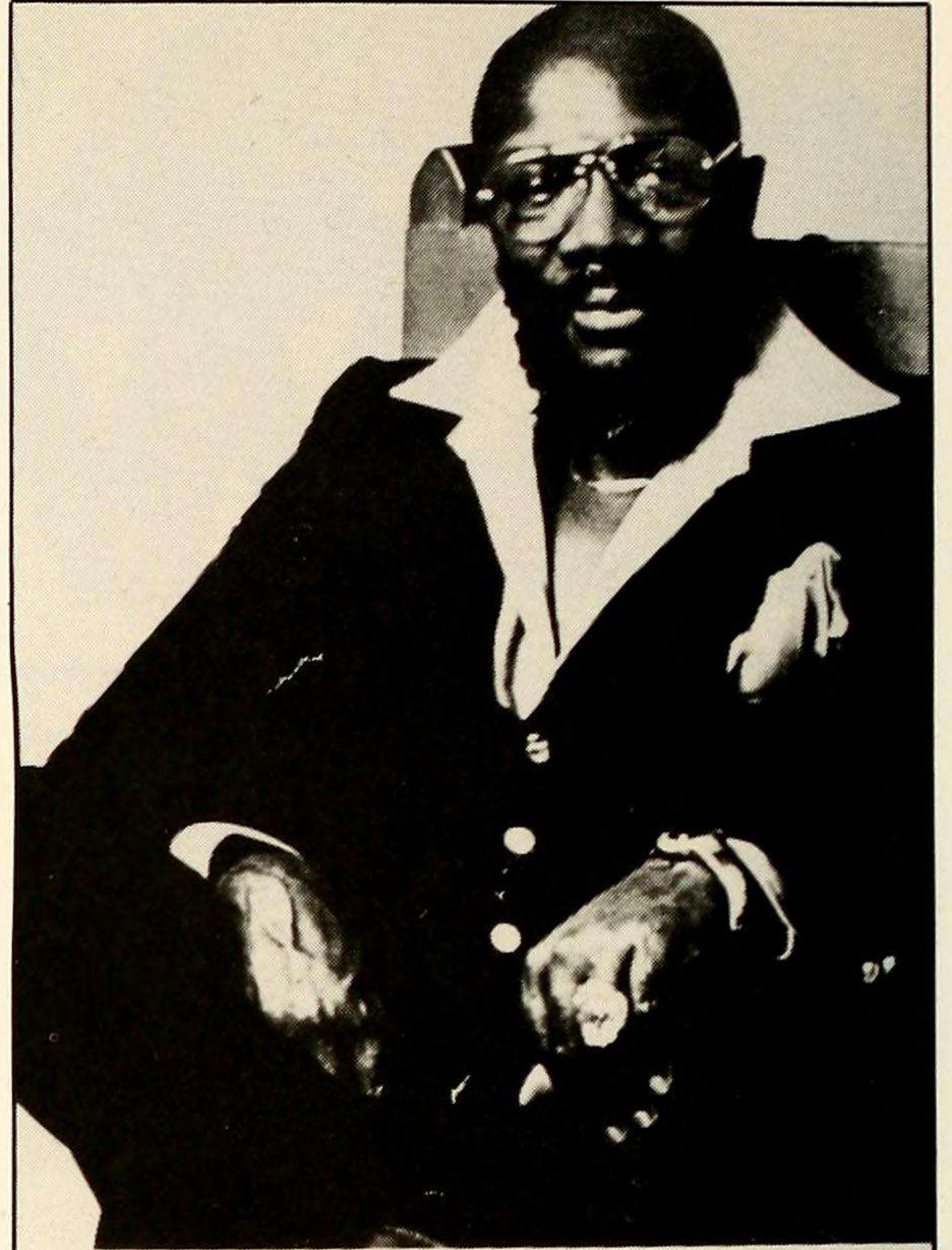
TWO

MUSIC AS PROPAGANDA: AN
INSTRUMENT OF APARTHEID



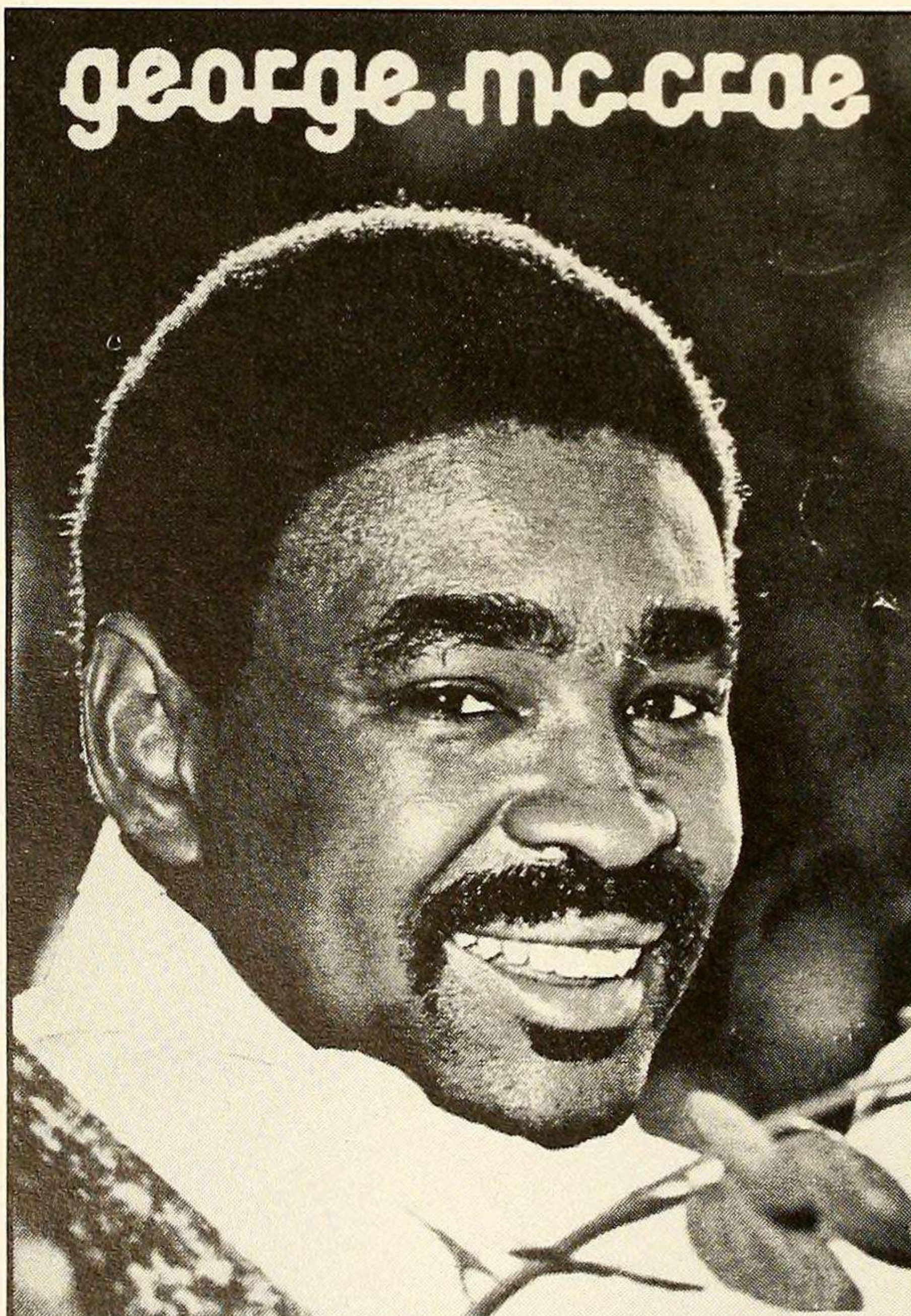
THE HUES CORPORATION

A QUIBELL BROTHERS PRESENTATION · SOUVENIR PROGRAMME · 40c



Isaac Hayes

A QUIBELL BROTHERS PRESENTATION · SOUVENIR PROGRAMME · 50c



A QUIBELL BROTHERS PRESENTATION · SOUVENIR PROGRAMME · 50c
INCL. G.S.T.



THE PLATTERS

Chapter 1 **MUSIC IN THE MIX, AND MONEY FOR THE RICH**

SOMETIME in 1978 an obscure songwriter, a final year medical student named John Ireland, had a hit with an updated version of "Greensleeves." Ireland set the old ballad to a disco beat, wrote some new words, and called it "You're living inside my head."

Teal, his record company, made a great hullabaloo about it. Press and radio people were wined and dined and accordingly, John Ireland was suddenly being promoted as South Africa's most exciting discovery. His record shot to number one on the Radio 5 charts.

Barely weeks after "You're Living" was released, Teal presented Ireland with a gold disc (which represents sales of 25 000 units of a record), and at a ceremony much publicised by **the Star, Family Radio and TV** and numerous other publications. Radio 5's chief Pieter Human was given a gold disc too – "for helping the record go gold."

Ireland was unquestionably a star in the eyes of the media and subsequently, the public – it's not often a local white artist sells 25 000. Clout had done it with "Substitute", but there was mild discomfort in the industry when it was discovered that the only member of Clout who'd played a major part on the record was vocalist Cindi Alter. Most of the backing tracks were actually laid down by other musicians, a regular practice in the promotion of *image* bands.

Anyway, rumour had it that "You're living inside my head"

had sold less than a quarter of 25 000, and questioned about it, the Teal employees could not deny this. Teal claimed that the record had received such favourable publicity and had set the record industry buzzing to such an extent that they were confident it would eventually reach gold status.

Which it still hasn't done. And no-one but his family and friends have heard of John Ireland since. No reflection on him, poor person, just an example of the hyping in the South African record industry.

It's certainly not unique to South Africa (which doesn't justify it anyway) but hyping here does exist on a grand scale.

Teal and the Gallo Group (Trutone, GRC, RPM and Gallo), WEA, the EMI group (EMI, CCP, CTV), the independents like Jo'burg (distributed through WEA) and Sunshine (distributed through EMI) and many others say they've all *heard* about hyping but would never dream of indulging in it themselves.

A year ago, a former record company employee visited me at a newspaper's offices and said she'd been sacked for refusing to falsify sales figures for her company.

She claimed that an aspect of her job involved changing sales figures to make it appear that artists were selling thousands of records less than they actually were, the reverse of what happened with Ireland. "By doing this the company was making an extra R80 000 a year out of unsuspecting artists," she

said. "When musicians were presented with a gold record for sales of 25 000 you could bet your life they'd sold nearer 50 000, poor fools." She claimed this happened a lot with top selling artists from overseas.

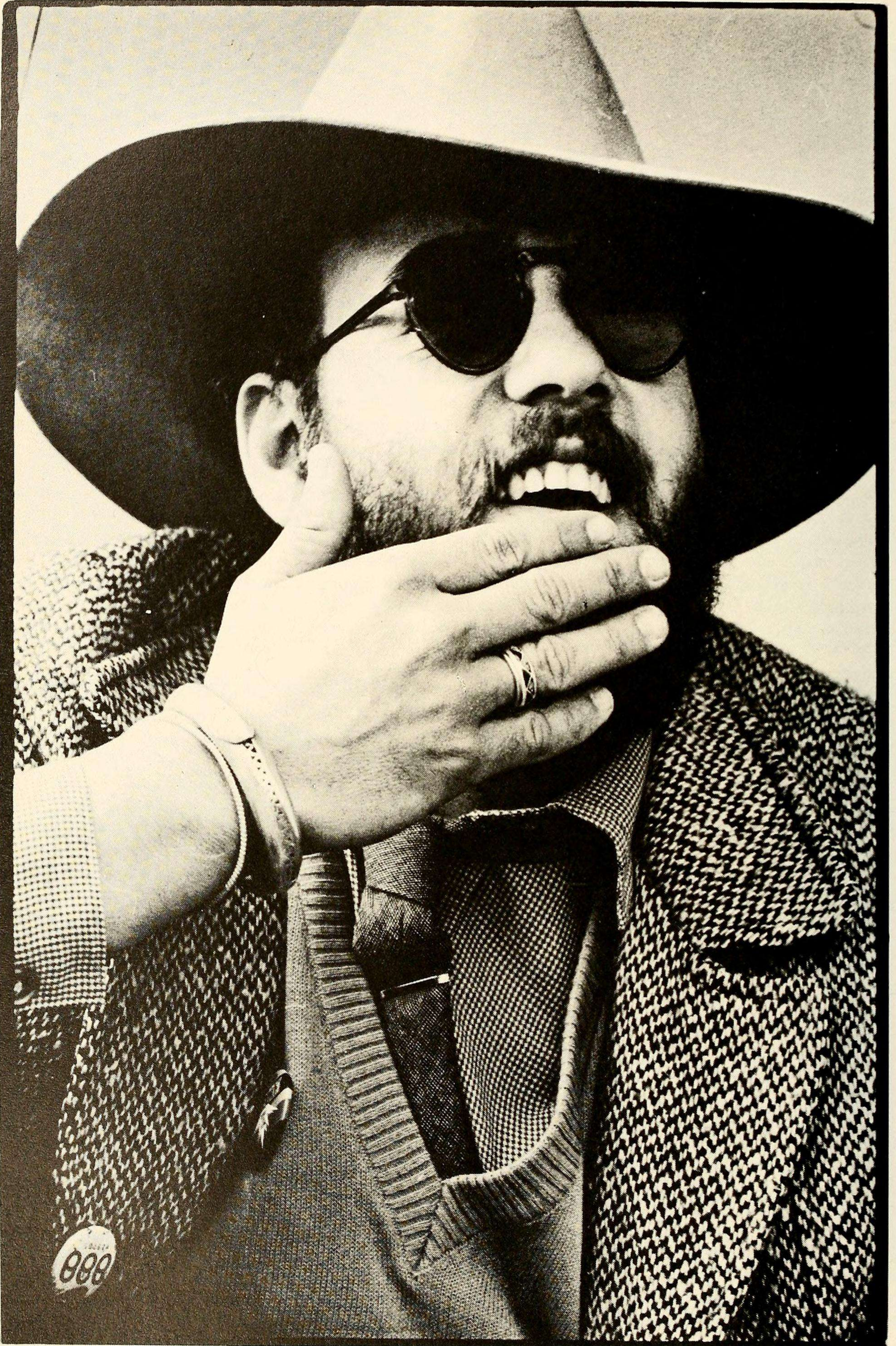
I queried it with the company bosses who told me in no uncertain terms that the person involved was talking junk, and moreover that she'd been sacked because she was grossly incompetent, was no doubt being vindictive and that if the story ever appeared in print . . .

Others in the industry have spoken off the record about other aspects of hype: particularly as regards getting records onto a radio playlist.

One record PRO claims to have been told by a boss when discussing the promotion of a record through a particular disc jockey: "Just give him what he wants. If he wants a little boy, give him a little boy. If he's into boom, give him boom. But get that record on the air."

Another promotions person reports that a singer-songwriter angered by the bribery in radio, threatened to expose it to the press. The following day her single was allegedly taken off the radio station's playlist . . . and she decided to keep her mouth shut in case the same thing should happen to her future singles.

All of this information can be treated with big pinches of salt. It all has to be *claimed* and *alleged*, because the informants are not prepared to put their names to paper, being frightened



Paul Zamek
46

of coming up against the entire record industry and its endless supply of funds for legal action.

But obviously wherever you're dealing with lots of money there are going to be areas that are dirty: hyping is going to happen, it has to happen, because of the nature of the industry.

"There's no such thing as a free lunch" is an expression you learn very quickly in dealings with the record industry. Even at the fancy press conferences the industry feels it's doing the press a favour and expects 20 good write-ups to come out of a conference in return for half a boiled egg. The industry knows that music journalists tend to live out all the cliches to the hilt... fast living, fast talking, fast smoking, fast drinking; they know too that there are some journalists on major papers who'll end up reviewing the food at a cabaret show, and not just review it but complain about the service too. They know all these things and use them in the same way they use information like knowing a particular reporter's gay, and maybe insecure about it, or knowing that so-and-so is hung up about the way they write. All these things are useful; they can't be blamed for that. They've got to shift records, right, and they see a way of doing it. That's business.

While working as a rock columnist I had an experience with *payola*. A certain impresario in Johannesburg brought out a certain musician from overseas. The show was to open in Durban. The impresario phoned me and asked if I'd like to attend the opening, because the newspaper didn't have someone in Durban who'd be able to review the show and I was the resident music critic. As far as I was concerned there'd probably be reporters from other Johannesburg and Cape Town papers travelling along too, so I said "great". It turned out that I was the only reporter, that I was met at the airport and put up in a five-star hotel, given very expensive treatment - food, drinks and so on - and a few days later whisked back to Jo'burg.

I thought it was all very nice, nothing more than that. How I was being treated, that is. The show was diabolical - poor sound, incompetent organisation. Even the artist was terrible. So I went back to Jo'burg and wrote what I saw. But when the story appeared the following Sunday all hell broke loose. I'd broken some sort of unwritten law. The impresario in question actually accused me of being "unethical".

Fixing the charts is probably

the most common form of hype. Another A&R person, while denying that a particular company ever took part in such practices, said it's the easiest thing in the world to get a particular record on the charts - provided, of course that it's accepted for airplay in the first place.

"You don't even have to bribe record bars to hype figures. You just pick up the phone and say to your buddy 'please return this one at number 19', and you do that at all the record outlets which the radio phones to get sales figures.

"They don't mind doing it, and when the radio stations phone for the figures, it's returned at number 19 by your buddies and you get your single on the charts.

"Then the kids hear it being given a lot of airplay, and you stand a better chance of selling it."

Another method of chart hyping involves buying hundreds of copies of records from the bars from which the radio stations take their figures, but this isn't as common simply because it's trickier and more time consuming.

If you can get a single on the charts for the price of a phonecall and maybe a bottle of Scotch, why bother lining up a few hundred people to buy copies

AS ARTISTS WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO IGNORE OUR OWN ENVIROMENT...

TO IMPORT IDEAS IS TO PERPETUATE THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF GLOBAL EXPLOITATION OF WHICH CULTURAL IMPERIALISM IS PART

WE HAVE TO MAKE OUR ART RELEVANT Y'KNOW, BRING IT ALL BACK HOME... HEED THE CALL OF MOTHER AFRIKA AND ALL THAT

HOWZEET! WANNA HEAR MY NEW "EL PUNKO AND THE BRITS ELPEE?"

AYMAZING!! HESITATE NOT A MOMENTO!



EXTRACTS FROM INTERVIEWS

CLIFF RICHARD

Are you aware that there are groups both inside and outside South Africa who're trying to persuade artists to boycott this country?

You're talking about the apartheid thing now. Yes, I know about the boycott, but I believe you can do one of two things. Either boycott or come here and take a strong stand.

So why have you chosen to come here six times and **not** take a strong stand?

You can't say that. I've always insisted on multiracial audiences.

It's all very well to be proud of creating "multiracial harmony" among the rich people who can afford to come to your concerts.

That's got nothing to do with me. That's got to do with economics or something. But why are we talking about politics? It's an abstract thing that hangs over countries and has no meaning. I'd rather talk about God.

SUZI QUATRO

I came to South Africa because I like to go where the people are. Oh, and because of the gold. I wish someone would give me a small gold bar.

MILLIE JACKSON

I'm only here for the bucks

CASHEARS

I don't believe it's good to come here and take all the money you make back to America . . . so what I've done is I've given R200 to a children's home in Soweto.

of a particular record?

No one seems to be able to draw a distinction between hype and promotion. As EMI label manager Paul Zamek puts it, *"where one ends and the other begins I don't know, but I think hyping charts isn't particularly constructive because at the end of the day it gives you (the company) an untrue reflection of what happened."*

"We in South Africa are a branch of a major world industry, just a little branch, and we've got to get our attitudes together and realise that we've got to work together to find out exactly what can happen in South Africa. That way you are going to find that people hype charts to no constructive end."

Several of the independents (which have to rely on the larger companies for recording, pressing and distribution) have complained that the big companies sometimes deliberately hold back the release of records so that various sales outlets can't get them into stock – even if they are genuinely in great demand by the public.

Sometimes an independent's single, by virtue of big sales of the first pressing, enters the charts. The first pressing is sold out and then, mysteriously, the record becomes unobtainable. Demand for it lessens, and in no time it drops off the charts.

Says independent producer Malcolm Robinson: *"The big companies claim that something went wrong with the pressing, or the labels. Sometimes they manage to press two A-sides so that the entire pressing has to be scratched, or the pressings are just so bad no self-respecting company could let them go out anyway. But when it comes to their own singles, nothing ever goes wrong and they all come out on time."*

Simply because of these hyping practices it has been impossible for anyone in South Africa to come up with accurate charts. Radio 5's top ten is selected on the basis of what Pieter Human fancies that week.

Springbok phones various outlets; but only after the companies have spoken to them first.

There is still no album chart in the country. Audiomix, on SABC's English service, used to compile an album chart after phoning the different companies each week to get their sales figures. But they scrapped the idea altogether because the companies were giving figures which in no way reflected the true sales. There'd be, on the Audiomix charts, an absurd listing of records that the individual companies wanted to promote. It's a ploy that has worked. The companies, with the exception of the independents which concentrate on local music, have always been more interested in promoting international than locally produced albums. The local product costs time and money and a certain degree of imagination in marketing strategy that most A&R people here just don't possess. It's easier to launch an exciting Kate Bush promotion than to do the same for Steve Kekana, because a Bush album promotions kit arrives, complete with posters, biographies and badges – all done by the overseas company. This is despite the fact that Kekana is one of the biggest sellers in the country.

It's crazy logic, but the record industry here prefers to spend the most effort on the overseas albums. Though they sell more than local albums, often the biggest profits come from locally produced singles. The industry works on the knowledge that white per capita spending power is much greater than that of blacks – therefore whites buy more albums and blacks, because of their greater numbers, buy more singles overall. Albums aimed at whites are also more expensive. A Steve Kekana album will take two and a half days to record, at a total cost of around R2 000 (including the packaging) and sell on average 30 000 copies at R4-80

each. An album by Buffalo (a disco studio group fronted by Peter Vee) will cost around R7 000 to produce and package, and sell at the most 10 000 copies at R6-10.

EMI justifies such expenditure on the grounds that Buffalo stands more chance of making it on the market overseas. "If we don't make money from Kekana we can't invest it in overseas labels or record a Buffalo lp," says EMI's marketing director, and MD of its satellite company CCP, Howard Ipp. He dismisses with a "wait and see" the suggestion that Buffalo might not have a hope in hell of hitting the big time because Peter Vee and Co. are doing what so many others have done more successfully before, whereas Kekana's music is fresh and different. Similarly, the local companies would sooner put R10 000 into buying an overseas label which they know radio will support through airplay.

"If we spent the R10 000 on five local acts at R2 000 an act, that's taking a big chance," says Ipp. "The local singles have to compete with international ones and radio is obviously biased in favour of the international ones. We can't afford to spend that amount of money if we don't know they're going to get played. R2 000 a single is a lot of money. If it doesn't get airplay on Radio 5 or Springbok we're dead.

"If a company spends R10 000 on an international label to the detriment of local recordings there's a reason: rands and cents."

Overseas labels cost up to R100 000 a year. Most companies refuse to discuss just how much they put into overseas labels, but WEA Records claims that only 20% of its music sales comes from South African artists – a figure which MD Derek Hannan says WEA intends to increase through the "rural" black market and the Afrikaans sector. Even RPM, a company that started 13 years ago representing only local talent, now has more overseas labels

than it has major local artists.

It's generally accepted that Satbel fell through buying up too many overseas labels that couldn't be marketed properly in South Africa.

Says Gallo's A&R chief Ivor Haarburger: "Purchasing of overseas labels is crazy when you think of it. Mostly it's just a prestige thing, and I don't think overseas companies realise that we aren't even one percent of the world market. Just think about it. You pay the money up front for a label, advance it. Then against those advances there are royalties of between ten to twenty four percent. That is, ten to twenty four percent of the retail selling price."

No one's suggesting that these acts are not bought by our record companies, EMI's label manager Paul Zamek suggests; "our culture is apparently gravitating towards the American way of life; there's no way we could ever not have these acts represented in South Africa because people want them. It'd be unfair. It'd be inverted." But the overseas, the BIG OVERSEAS obsession must be put into perspective.

The BIG OVERSEAS is what every record producer, every musician and every company is striving for. Overseas is achievement, recognition; if it cracks it overseas or comes from overseas it must be good.

So we had Clout. Who ever wrote an article saying *this is a fine band because . . . ?* Who ever said, *so and so is a poor guitarist because . . . ?* No one offers constructive criticism because Clout cracked it overseas and therefore Clout is the hottest band in South Africa.

The obsession is perpetuated further. Through importing glamorous, if jaded, overseas artists. Impresarios like Ronnie Quibell specialise in bringing out acts who were last heard of elsewhere in the world in 1962, groups like The Platters, The Realistics, The Temptations (although admittedly these days he's bringing out some well-

"Only on the fringe of the English-speakers is the rock lifestyle apparent in any density.

"So we have misplaced New York models sauntering their stuff in Raffles and misplaced London sweeps whining 'Wot 'Bout Me' in a Durban band called Wild Youth, misnomer superlative.

"Wot 'bout you indeed, kids? Apart from being born into the most privileged minority this side of the Shah's family what exactly is your gripe? The victim-of-urban-depersonalisation role just doesn't suit you, no matter how lekker tough it may sound on Sex Pistols albums. You can copy the stance, but you'll never project the conviction. That is a role fate has assigned to cities other than Durban."

PATRICK LEE, RAND DAILY MAIL

known people like Tina Turner as well). The shows are invariably bad. Poor sound, dreadful lighting, excessively priced. But because these groups are from OVERSEAS, Radio 5 pushes out their music, telling the masses to shake their groove thing, get on down and boogah! Or move their body, fine body, nice body, lean body, hard body...

And SABC-TV sets up an interview with these alleged stars, while every hack in town is going bananas over them. So the shows get packed out, mostly with middle-class blacks who respond to the references to black consciousness and identify with their brothers up there on stage because their struggle was the same once, and Africa is the roots, man, even if America is where the inspirations lie.

Recently though, people have started taking a stronger stand on visiting overseas artists. AZAPO (the Azanian Peoples' Organisation) and a few other black consciousness groups have urged overseas black artists to boycott South Africa – or risk having their shows boycotted in South Africa as was the case when Ray Charles tried to play in Soweto on October 19, the anniversary of the state's banning of two black newspapers, 17 organisations, and seven individuals.

Although the calls have been made by groups like Azapo, boycott action has been taken by many different sections of the community, from students and workers through to church and cultural groups. Boycott action has a long history among the oppressed majority of South Africa. It is seen as having a two-fold purpose: firstly it has a short-term objective as an immediate protest against foreign groups of individuals who are lending credibility to apartheid by appearing in shows which are directly or indirectly encouraged by the Pretoria government. Secondly, it has a long-term objective as a means by which a community can test



its unity and organisation.

The obsession with the BIG OVERSEAS, as far as white music fans go, is even more nauseating. John Paul Young, an Australian sexist in a sailor suit, returned to this country three times by popular demand. A demand created by the media for pop-starved white weenies who'd squeal for a singing frog, provided it was imported.

Possibly the most sickening example of media hype and a case where even daily exposure on television, radio and the press could not save the show, was the dreaded Rollers tour.

Nobody, apart from fudge-munching slugs who frequent Disneyland, had even heard of the Bay City Rollers in recent years. South Africa knew them as the group the former Rabbitt sweetheart Duncan Faure had joined.

But when white South Africa was offered having the Rollers over to tour, billed as "A giant step for rock 'n roll" (of which, as one critic was quick to point out, only the words "a" and "for" were inoffensive) they bought it. When the Rollers manager tastelessly flaunted an estimate of what the show would cost the band (he claimed it would set them back R169 000, but that the band was determined to bring rock 'n roll to South Africa) white South Africa bought it.

They bought the stories about cocaine and groupies, and suddenly a "sex and drugs and rock 'n roll" story would appear in the daily newspaper just as the Rollers hit town. All this publicity . . .

Still they could not pack halls. When, at their Johannesburg opening, they were slated outright by most music critics they cancelled their show, which was scheduled to run for another three weeks at least. Tails between their legs, the manager and a portion of the band returned to their home, to places where people would appreciate them. Odd this, from a group of so-called professionals.

Writing about the show, a **Rand Daily Mail** rock columnist commented: "*English speaking South Africans have traditionally regarded things local as inferior to things imported. This state of mind is a colonial legacy, and only in the manufacturing field is it completely eradicated. In media and the arts we still say, well for a local it's not too bad. Local pop musicians are treated as some sort of cripples who need sympathy and understanding rather than objective appraisal.*"

"*The Rollers capitalised on our apologetic attitude to our own music and sold us a glitter-painted lemon. I sensed this attitude some weeks back when manager Andy Truman was whipping up press interest from his R100 a day headquarters in the Landrost Hotel. Andy's attitude is definitely one of doing the colonies a favour. After all, we are caught down here in southern tropics and the real world does pass us by somewhat, huh?*" The columnist goes on to bemoan the fact that certain of his favourite local groups would never get the support, attention and financial backing that was given the Rollers. "*The giant record companies . . . should pull their weight. Only they have the depth of finance to launch worthwhile South African rock music on a viable level. Then we wouldn't have to put up with second rate overseas tourists.*"

But there's always this feeling that what is of Africa, must be retarded. It's the result of cultural imperialism. To quote EMI's Allan McInnis: "*We're in a very backward country. Africa is so far behind. Just look at America in the days when Elvis was around - they even had TV then.*"

As an April Fools Day joke once I wrote about two fictitious bands - The Electric Sosatie and Mmmmmm. I never expected anyone to take the absurd column seriously. I claimed that Electric Sosatie was fronted by a person named Hero Sandwich who used the cello as a lead instrument and took an anti-

"The relationship of musicians to businessmen has been strictly that of servants to masters."

**LEON ROSSELSON,
POP MUSIC:
MOBILISER OR
OPIATE?**

The role of the manager:

PADDY LEE THORP (PACIFIC EXPRESS, ZAYN ADAM JONATHAN BUTLER):

There are clean hand managers and dirty hand managers. If you're a dirty hand manager you get big muscles – I don't mind humping gear. I don't see myself as some sort of executive but as part of the band. Only thing you get out of being a manager – apart from a reasonable living and being a glorified roadie – is that you're always with the band, and you learn new things all the time, like the technical side of things.

MIKE FULLER (RABBITT, CLOUT, MARGARET SINGANA):

The manager has to work on three levels – on the personal, artistic/creative and business level. It's crucial to get the perfect balance between the three. Being a manager is like being married to the artist. God knows why you do it. You work long hours, you're never with your own family. You love the music, sure, but the personal side is what really gets you. When Rabbitt broke up, when Singana had a stroke, I went through hell. Not on a business level, but because of what I lost on a personal level. When Singana came back, seeing her sitting in a wheelchair and performing to thousands of people and watching it hitting them between the eyes made me feel – wow, I **am** part of those notes floating out.

consumerist stance, performing numbers like "Greaseproof Paper", "Hard Cheese" and "Statutory Rape". I said that while these bands had never made any public appearances, they were to be signed directly to Mike Chapman of The Knack and Blondie fame.

But the following day my telephone didn't stop ringing. Someone from virtually every major record company in town wanted to know where they could hear the Electric Sostie and Mmmmmm or where they could meet Mike Chapman. Two bands rang to say that they too, were anti-consumerist. Another person phoned and said that at last South African new wave music was going somewhere.

The most astonishing comment came from a friend, who criticised me for having an inconsistent line. "I always trusted you," she said. "You never fell for this 'well they're going overseas so they're okay' thing. Now you go on a rave about the fact that these arseholes are going to record with Mike Chapman. Where are your standards?"

The reason most people believed this fiction is simply that "Overseas is OK" is the line pushed by every South African publication they've ever read.

And, probably, because of this line, no publication dealing solely with music has survived. **Music Maker**, a sheet modelled on the British **Melody Maker**, folded after a few months – ostensibly through poor financial direction. Translated into everyday language that means the people who were running **MM** didn't understand their *market*.

From Jon Ossher, the editor with the transatlantic twang, to the lowliest reporter (in this case a schoolboy, whose job appeared to consist solely of reporting the weekly movements of a band from his school), the entire personnel on **Music Maker** were obsessed with overseas, New Journalism !!! Hunter S. Thompson !!!

So you'd have a 10-pager

along these kinds of lines (this bit is fictitious, by the way): "The-thoughts-of-Jonathan Rat-while-sitting-in-his-small-Springs-bedsitter-shortly-after-watching-a-tonsilectomy-and-now-munching-a-wholewheat-avocadopear-sunflower-seed-sandwich-underneath-a-photograph-of-Depravo-the-Rat-with-Jon Ossher-fiddling-the-knobs-of-the-tape-recorder-so's-not-to-miss-the-following-gems-from-de-Ratz-commander-in-chief-ohyeah-and-this-rare-moment-captured-for-alltime-by-Josh Rosen-natch."

Natch. . . Jon Ossher = Josh Rosen.

The fact that Jonathan Rat's thoughts just might not capture the public imagination was besides the point. The fact too, that in terms of moving copies of a magazine off the shelves of the CNA a better choice of subject would have been Steve Kekana or Mpharanyana, was never considered.

So week after week **MM** came out, with centre spreads on groups like the Babys (don't worry if the name means nothing to you – it doesn't to anyone else either, at least no one in South Africa) and cover photographs so unfocussed they could have been of anyone from Clout to Francesco the Clown. And all in the name of art.

The groups that made the front cover were those who'd proved their hipness somehow. No black musicians – with the exception of National Wake – ever made the front of **MM**.

Talking about precisely this, a **rock fiction** being created in a country where rock 'n roll has never been a viable music, Patrick Lee wrote in the **Rand Daily Mail** ("The Medium's Misplaced Message" Feb 6 1980): "The majority of South Africans keep it (a rock 'n roll lifestyle) at arm's length. Young Afrikaners are generally repelled by the decadence of it. Urban blacks have attached to the disco phenomenon wholesale, but lack of funds prevents any real association with the full length of

the rock lifestyle on their part. Only on the fringe of the English-speakers is the rock lifestyle apparent in any density. Even there it's a long way from authentic, and causes more tension than turbulence.

"So we have misplaced New York models sauntering their stuff in Raffles and misplaced London sweeps whining 'Wot 'Bout Me' in a Durban band called Wild Youth, misnomer superlative.

"Wot bout you indeed, kids? Apart from being born into the most privileged minority this side of the Shah's family what exactly is your gripe? The victim-of-urban-depersonalisation role just doesn't suit you, no matter how lekker tough it may sound on Sex Pistols albums. You can copy the stance, but you'll never project the conviction. That is a role fate has assigned to cities other than Durban."

That fierce criticism from a person who admits he himself is a misplaced Californian, awed by the blemish free posters, the odour of super-wealth and the cocaine-snorting excesses of the America projected by **Esquire**.

Music Maker at least had some style. Even if the news was out of date, and the attempts at new journalism pathetic, at least it was brave, and different, and from time to time you might even find a word of criticism about a particular local white rock band (should I say white new wave band. New wave was in vogue at the time, and **MM** made it plain it preferred white new wave bands).

Not so **Top Twenty**, which seemed to have a policy that it would treat anyone as a star if they could play three chords on the guitar, provided they were white, male and under 25. It came out in an orgy of exclamation marks.

Recently there've been plenty of fanzines – **Neu, Bass Culture** and the **Palladium** are just three of them – which come out in limited editions. All try to encourage an interest in the modern local bands (although

most of the articles are on overseas bands, or rewrites of those articles) and all are doomed to die as soon as trends change. A publication that inspired many of these fanzines was **Skratch**, a rough xeroxed "lp for the eyes" put out by one Gilbert Calvert, opportunist, humorist, capitalist, son and hero-worshipper of the late trumpeter Eddie Calvert.

Skratch (produced by "Hack and Botch incp") came out in a very limited edition . . . only about 50 copies. But lots of people read those copies, and though it was elitist (catering specifically for trendies) there was no doubt about its having some of the finest and funniest writing around. **Skratch** delighted in ripping off the established music critics and people in the industry.

Next to the headline "Normality !!! The hideous truth behind a bizarre new cult!" was a picture of the **Star Tonight's** music critic, Peter Feldman, with quotes from a column titled "Genuine Pearls of blank wisdom": "New wave, I seriously maintain, is a passing fad . . . a phase in music that should be spent long before the year is out . . . back in Springs or Potchefstroom there will be yet another band out of work. New wave, as such, is destined to be a shortlived success. You mark my words."

Humour like this is rare and resented in the music industry. Mostly people who are involved with music, record promotion and radio take themselves very seriously indeed. There's this feeling of gloriousness about building, buying and selling stars to the public. Patric van Blerk, describing his early obsession with music and his desire to work with the "God-like" record company chiefs like Matt Mann and Dan Hill, reckons he'd thrill just to look at a record label, not imagining he'd see his own name on it or anything, but just knowing that one day he'd be involved more intricately with PROMOTION.

Patric's one of the most sussed beings in the industry, but the schizophrenia that comes from being unable to reconcile a love of music with a desire to make lots of bucks seems to have affected everyone. This is precisely because, as Gary Herman and Ian Hoare point out in **The Struggle for Song**, music has two sides. On the one hand it is the most accessible of all kinds of ideological production, and on the other it's at the centre of a billion rand industry, the recording industry: "The record is a type of commodity specific to late capitalism, but the song retains links with an earlier stage of social development. Captured on record, the song becomes a commodity to be transformed into profit for the industry. The singer who works for a record company (or the songwriter dependent on publishers for income) becomes a productive labourer, exploited and expropriated – notwithstanding the rare attainment of rich rewards . . .

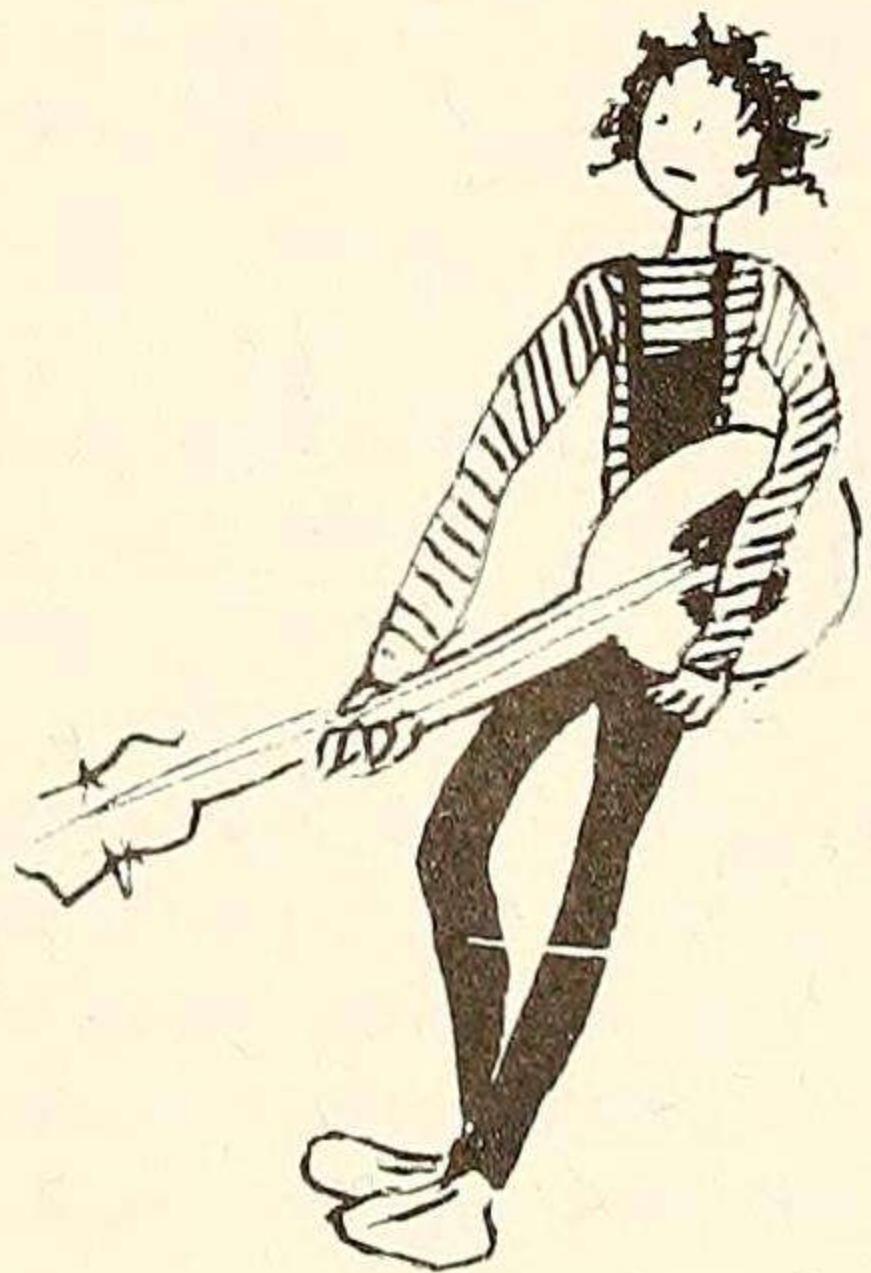
"There is an important contradiction stemming from the record companies' need to expropriate the ideological products of popular culture or subculture in order to reproduce them for exchange. This contradiction is specific to a society which mass-markets ideological products, and is at its most acute where song is concerned. There is a two-way relationship between the production of song and the production of records. Not only do record companies expropriate ideological products and transform them, but the companies' products can themselves be transformed by the culture which receives them."

The relationship of musicians to business people has been described as "strictly that of servants to masters". As Masekela says, musicians always think in terms of being hired. Why then, do artists enter the relationship with business so readily? The answer probably

RECORD COMPANY: signs contract with artist and in return for covering album costs, pays artist a royalty (usually 5%). The Company now has total control over all aspects of the album, from the packaging to the content. The company can also be involved in live shows as a way of promoting an album.



A&R - ARTISTS AND REPERTOIRE: promotes the record through radio, press, TV, discos, live shows. Through a sales team gets it sold in record outlets. An employee of the record company; is responsible for what music goes out on a label and what artists are signed by the company. Must be good at talent spotting and hearing hit records. The A&R also has to pick up on overseas acts for local distribution through catalogues.



THE PRODUCER: records the tunes in a studio that costs a minimum of R50 an hour, before additional expenses of hiring instruments and personnel. The producer usually makes the same in royalties from finished "product" as does the artist. Can be either an inhouse producer (attached to the company) or an independent. The producer must get the artist into the studio, set up equipment, sound engineers and employ any necessary studio musos. It's producer's job to capture the sound that will both capture the market and the artist's spirit. The producer works very closely with the studio engineer, who often understands the technical equipment better than the producer.

THE MANAGER: promotes the artist and the artist's music in every possible way. Employed by the artist to do everything from negotiating the contract to organising live shows, dreaming up the artist's image, making gig and travel arrangements, handling the press and publicity and making sure the artist eats healthy food and gets enough sleep.

THE PUBLISHER: Publishing is where a lot of money is made, as most artists sign away their publishing rights without understanding the process. The publisher has the dual function of suggesting possible hits to artists, and telling companies about specific tunes. Copyright royalties are split equally between the publisher and the writer.



THE ARTIST: is responsible for meeting the terms of the contract (it's usually for a three-year period with a two-year option for the company) which stipulates how much output is expected from the artist. One album and one single a year is standard. Each record carries producer's, artist's and composer's royalties, so it's best if the artist writes original songs.



Alexandra Scholtz

lies in the response of the individual musician to capitalism, the carrot that dangles from the hand of business: the desire for stardom.

Leon Rosselson describes the relationship: *"The industry that turns people into consumers and music into a product for leisure-time consumption is run on much the same lines as any other industry. Like any manufacturer a record company invests in a product and expects to see a return on that investment . . . The belief that money can make anyone a star is probably unfounded. Usually a group will have achieved some local popularity in pub, club or dance hall before an enterprising manager or A&R man picks them up. But without commercial backing, the climb to the top is impossible.*

"The manipulative role of the manager or agent is crucial. And the record contract is the gateway to success for any aspiring group. Without it there is no media exposure, only the routine grind round halls and clubs.

"So the bargaining position of an unknown group is very weak. In return for the promotion and the possibility of stardom, the companies will probably have total control over the music lives and even the personal lives of the performers. The music, after all, is only part of the product. To achieve the correct image, hair may be cut, or allowed to grow long, sideburns shaved, names changed, clothes overhauled, teeth straightened. Women, naturally, are even more likely to be remodelled in order to fit the stereotype."

The companies, naturally, do their best to appear as appealing as possible to the *artist*.

Writing about the imposing and ornate building from which WEA operates, a **Financial Mail** journalist comments: *"The music industry thrives on mystique and illusion, the creation of images for audiences to emulate. Style and appearance form the essence."* He goes on to quote

WEA MD Derek Hannan, who explains why his company is housed in such comfortable surroundings: *"Record companies – all of them – are run by attorneys and accountants. Talented people have trouble relating to them. So I create a particular style here. A certain environment that doesn't turn off the artists. It's very relaxed."*

EMI's Allan McInns bears out what Hannan has to say about the business of music. *"There's always been this friction between artists and record companies. The artists feel the companies don't know what they're doing and always have a different idea of what is commercial. I think that all over the world A&R people (artists and repertoire) are the backbone of the industry. A good A&R isn't a guy who picks a hit because he likes it, but because he knows it's a hit. He knows it will sell, and that's something the artists don't appreciate."*

The MD of RPM, Matt Mann, puts it in a nutshell: *"There are only two types of music. Good and bad. Good music sells, bad doesn't. I like good music."*

The South African record industry is like any other in the world, but with one additional factor: apartheid. So consumers are not only separated into markets that buy local or international products, but also into black and white *indigenous* music markets, endorsed constantly by the SABC's *ethnic* services. And black musicians are horribly exploited.

Yet the record chiefs show a startling lack of concern about either the enforced musical apartheid or the exploitation of black bands. Most of the executives don't believe the industry needs much done in the way of change. Caught up in the glamour of the music business, they blindly accept that blacks like one type of music, that whites like another and never the twain shall meet (except in the case of "international" where the industry acknowledges that the new black

"You just don't put up posters and banners, collect greenbacks at the door and later claim to have promoted a group. Brother, the truth is you've promoted your own bank balance. For God's sake, you're a Promoter of what?"
ELLIOT MAKHAYA,
POST NEWSPAPER.

middle-class has similar interests to the white middle-class); that mbaqanga is a noise, but a money spinner; that local is inferior to international.

The few who admit that there are indeed, things seriously wrong within the industry, choose the most curious things to grouch about.

The MD for EMI, Clive Kelly, who is also chairperson of the Southern African Recording Tape Distributors Association, says two things are very wrong: firstly, the pirating of music – which he is hoping will be rectified when the government passes a law allowing the industry a royalty on every blank tape (he reckons the industry loses something like R25-m at retail value every year through pirating); and secondly, that South Africans have had to pay an excise duty on records because the government views music as non-essential.

Joe Nofal says: *“What area do I think needs fixing up in the record industry? Well, to be quite honest – the Portuguese area. There’s a lot of money to be made in the Portuguese area.”*

Of all the whites I’ve spoken to in the industry, only one said he’d like to see an end to musical apartheid. Another said he’d like to see a stop to the exploitation of black bands in the country and more of a push being given to local black music. The second person was Billy Forrest, former singer (he had a big hit with *“Lazy Life”* in the days when he called himself Quentin E Klopjaeger, and was also with the Dream Merchants) and now an independent producer, concentrating mainly on black acts.

“I don’t know of any record company that’s ever given a black artist a copy of the recording contract. It’s unheard of. Do you know that I’ve signed artists on blank contracts? The artist has trusted me enough. Yet I could, if I so wished, fill that contract in so it looks like the artist owes me money for recording costs. So many black

artists enter this thing blindly. Because they’re true musicians, and want exposure at all costs. One of the biggest problems is illiteracy. There’s no protection for illiterate musicians.

“Another thing that needs straightening out is royalties. People do pay royalties now but there’s a certain company in this town whose contract I saw for a seven piece band and they want to pay one percent. Now one percent is roughly one comma seven cents a record. It’s ridiculous.” Billy believes that *“within two years – maybe three at the most – black South African artists will be bombarding the American top hundred like you wouldn’t believe. Black music in this country is so fast moving it’s hard to keep up.”*

But strangely, despite his passionate crusade to stamp out exploitation of black musicians and his determination that black music will *“crack it”* in America, Billy is too much of a South African to believe the music audience here can be anything but divided. *“You must appreciate different tastes. A Zulu can’t groove on Shangaan music. He’s gonna go for what he knows, what he feels comfortable with. Similarly, I couldn’t hear too much of what is played on Radio Zulu being right for playlisting on Springbok.”*

EMI’s Paul Zamek feels it’s crazy to believe there can be no common market.

“Everyone’s got the same ears. I’d think any radio person worth their salt would strive to get the different cultures to merge – because only then would you have a truly representative idea of what South Africa wants. You can’t cater to only set market tastes simply because you think that historically, people like a particular type of music. What people like Dudu Pukwana, Hugh Masekela, Letta Mbulu and Miriam Makeba were doing 20 years ago is only starting to happen in the western world now. We should have taken the opportunity of working

with those people years ago. Instead they’re in exile now.

“And we’re in a ridiculous situation. We’re exporting a sound through no conscious will of our own: just from the beat – the heartbeat and sound of the African drum or whatever you want to call it – it’s being exported to England, being shuffled around in the mix, being cribbed, basically, and being reimported and selling in South Africa. Bands like The Police. The Police have admitted they listen to the African top 40 for their inspiration. I would say that with all the popularity of reggae-ska-new wave bands we should start looking at the possibility of exporting our talent from areas like township jive.

“You get a group like Clout. I’m not knocking them at all, they’re professional, they’re great, they do what they do so well that they’re international. Yet at the same time they could be another European act; there’s nothing that really says they’re from Africa.

*“People like Steve Kekana, Babsy Mlangeni on the other hand . . . they’re amazing. They’re doing what the Police are **trying** to do.*

*“And groups like Juluka should be fully encouraged. Instead of having Volkspele at the United Nations they should have Juluka as a positive message of where South Africa **should be.***

“Stuff like the Abafanas and Ladysmith Black Mambazo is beautiful music in its own right. They’re story tellers in an African language, but I don’t think we can expect the West to get into them . . . ”

The area of crossover that Paul speaks of intrigues others in the industry, though they believe in crossover as music that sells on all the different markets (while still retaining those markets) rather than as music that transcends race and governmental groupings. There is nothing more than the profit motive behind most companies’ investigation of crossover. As

Frith points out: *"The recording industry is geared to capital accumulation and its profits depend on the number of records sold . . . The record business is ruled by the logic of mass production and a large market is its overriding aim. . . Record companies don't much care what forms mass music takes as long as its sources can be organised and controlled to ensure profit."*

"Crossover? The only time a record really sells well is when it's a crossover – like Donna Summer," says Gallo's Ivor Haarburger. *"We sold 50 000 of Summer's 'Bad Girls' even though the songs 'Bad Girls' and 'Hot Stuff' got restricted airplay. I believe the market is changing to become more international."*

Crossover, in industry terms, is pretty much synonymous with international. Although international used to be the word for overseas music, or imported music, it now also applies to certain local groups with what the industry considers is international appeal.

Ian Fihl, who runs the Joy music supermarket in Johannesburg as well as nine other retail outlets round the country, says he wants to *"try to forget about a black and white story, and get a more international feel."* Consequently he's got racks and racks of everything from reggae through to disco, but only a handful of local black music which he keeps *"for tourist interest."*

The idea of international music is very noble, until you consider the motives behind it. Says Clive Kelly: *"Certainly an international record which crosses over sells to the black market and that is where you get good sales. But what crosses to the black market we can't predict. If we could we'd all be a lot richer."*

Certain black producers like West Nkosi and David Thekwane feel bitter that so much money and effort is being put into international music at the expense of what the industry calls *"ethnic"* or local black

music.

West sees it in terms that make sense in the industry. *"Let's say I make money out of a promotion,"* he says. *"That money goes into promoting overseas acts like Dobie Grey. And I've got a very small budget so it's not even as if I can take people to lunch, those people at radio who are backing the overseas acts."*

"And so they don't want to play the black music. They have been looked after on the international side."

The promotional campaign planned by CCP for Double Exposure's visit shows the sort of privileges given to international acts. In addition to a cocktail party to which the media were to be invited, CCP organised – according to their own press release on Double Exposure – radio spots; radio and TV interviews; radio and disco airplay; press ads; press/magazine editorial coverage; radio and press competitions; newsreel coverage (film); 35mm and 16mm film shows; outdoor banners and billboard hoardings; posters; and special coloured vinyl promotional records.

For any local black act to be given that treatment would be a breakthrough.

David Thekwane, the MD for Tela Records (a Gallo subsidiary) feels that although local black music will never have thousands of rands pumped into it by the South African record industry, it is this music that will eventually be pursued by overseas companies. He doesn't believe that this means the music will pass into the hands of even bigger exploiters.

"I think the overseas companies will depend on us. They won't be able to do what we do, make the music we make, because the snag is that a lot of our artists can't read music. They play by ear, so those big companies wouldn't know how to work with them without us."

When I met David, one of the names of his groups, the BophuthaTswana Boys Choir

According to K-Mart, the chain-store that specialises in *"international"* records, these are the top selling records in the country from the beginning of 1978 continuously through to March/April 80. The ++ sign indicates a local release. ££ indicates they have performed in South Africa live. On the right is listed the record company.

1. Disco Rock Machine – Trevor Rabin and company ++ RPM
2. Commodores Live – Commodores TEAL
3. Feelin' Bitchy – Millie Jackson ££ TRUTONE
4. Joan Armatrading RPM
5. Bad Girls – Donna Summer GALLO
6. Lie to me – Brook Benton ££ TRUTONE
7. Betty Wright Live – Betty Wright GRC
8. Ten Percent – Double Exposure ££ CCP
9. Cool Sax, Warm Heart –
10. Letta – Letta Mbulu RPM
11. Aretha's Greatest hits – Aretha Franklin WEA
12. Tired of Driving – Eddie Harris TEAL
13. Kalaharari Rock – Harari ++ ££ GALLO
14. House of Love – Candi Staton WEA
15. Saturday Night Fever – Bee Gees TRUTONE
16. Off the Wall – Michael Jackson GRC
17. Gospel Truth – Brook Benton ££ TRUTONE
18. To the Limit – Joan Armatrading RPM
19. Movement – Isaac Hayes ££ TEAL
20. Sporo – Nzimande All Stars ++ ££ GRC

(others he produces are the Ericans, the Zombies, Sophie Tapedi, Teba Mazibuko and the Gudla Brothers) started off a discussion on this "homeland" and its so-called leader, Lucas Mangope. David admires him very much.

The discussion led, one way or another, into Zimbabwe and Robert Mugabe. David made it plain that he thought Mugabe was crazy. David's like most other people in the record industry – anyone who isn't interested in making money, anyone who believes in socialism, **must** be crazy.

Anyway, he was concerned that black people weren't making the money in music they should be making. Read that as, **producers** aren't making as much money as they could be making.

The reason for this cynicism lies in David's reply to a final question about payments to artists:

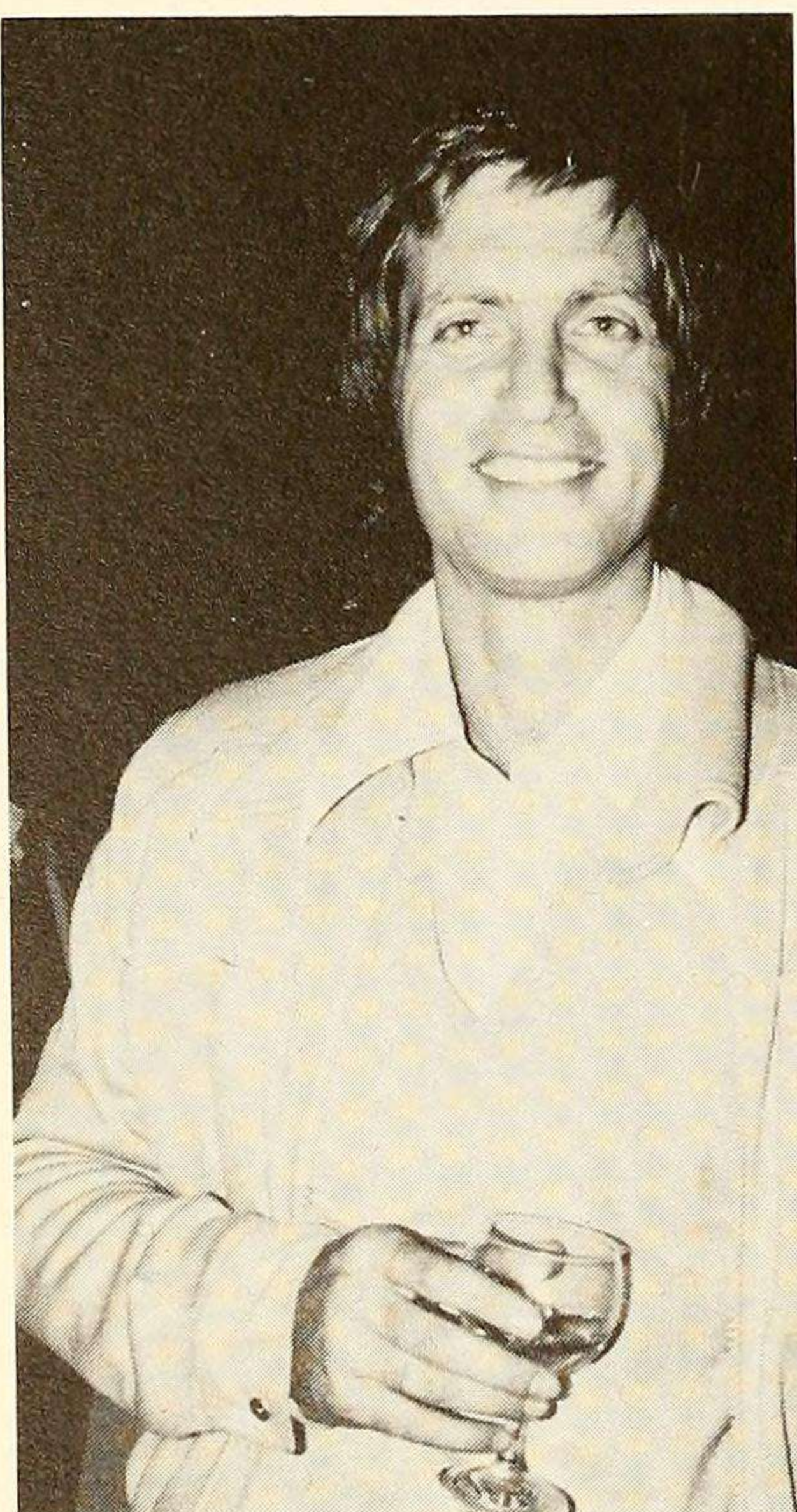
"Yes, I do pay small session fees. But if I didn't how could I afford to have so many artists?"

In a **Post** article headlined *"They promote their pockets"*, showbiz columnist Elliot Makhaya recently wrote: *"Promoters and producers have become people out to make a fortune without caring for the welfare of musicians. The fat become fatter and musicians are driven into a reluctant diet programme. There are, of course, certain producers who just twiddle knobs or doze off in a recording studio, marking time to put down their signature on a record they hardly contributed a note to."*

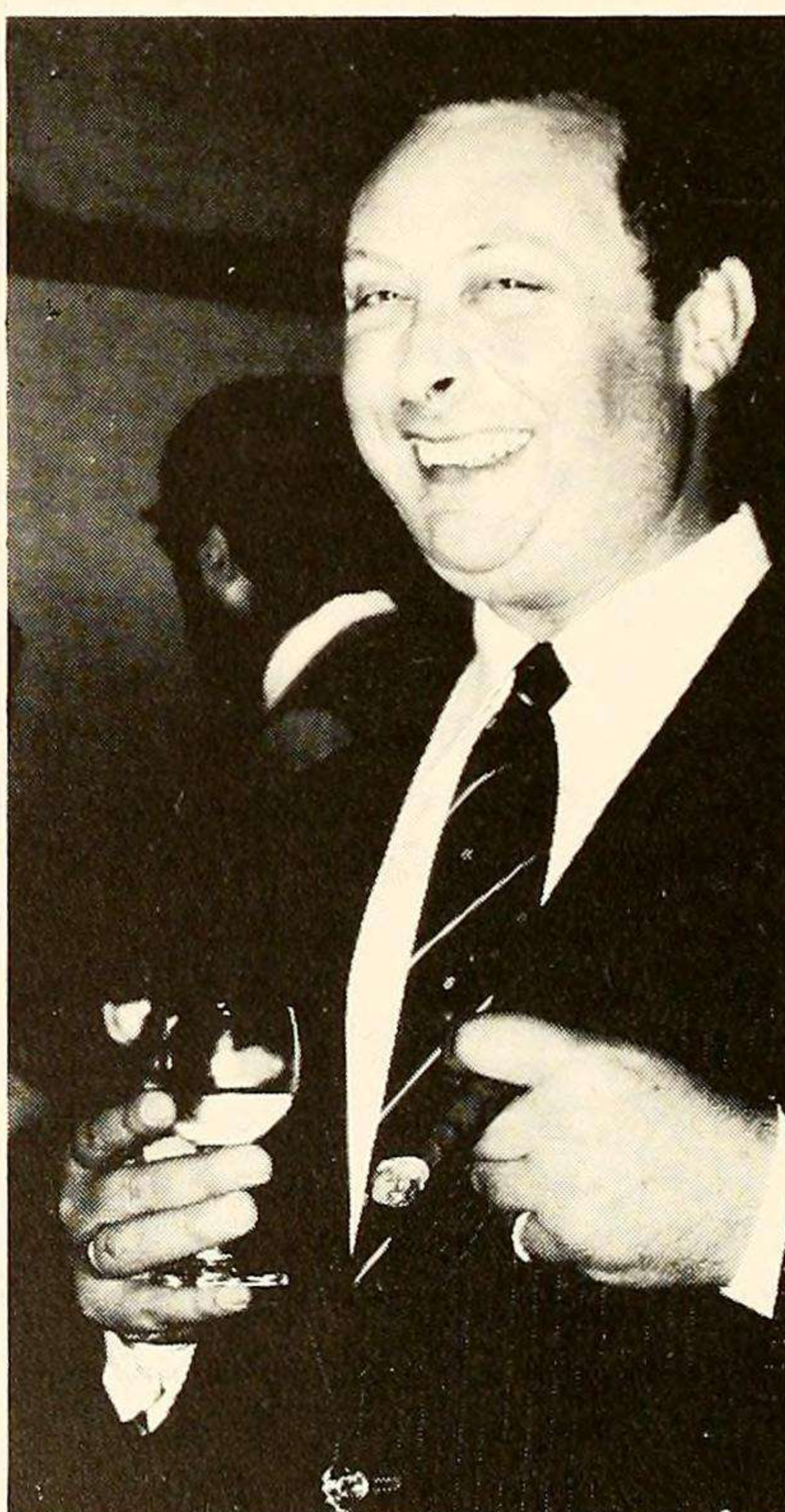
"You just don't put up posters and banners, collect greenbacks at the door and later claim to have promoted a group. Brother, the truth is you've promoted your own bank balance. For God's sake, you're a promoter of what?"

Howard Ipp, MDA of CCP and one of the few executives in the industry to be in possession of a post graduate degree (his MBA from UCT is the result of a

Sue Hope-Baillie



Howard Ipp



Clive Kelly

lengthy thesis called: "The marketing of Budget LPs to the Coloured People") puts the perspective of big business on the question:

"There are lots of crossover acts I wouldn't sign because it'd be so hard to persuade them to do a commercial number. Do you know how long it's taken Harari to bring out a big single like "Give"? Look at their record sales. They've never had a gold disc. Harari have at long last cracked it. Great, they've had a commercial single and maybe now they've 'come to terms with art.'

"Crossover's actually one of the most difficult areas to sell records. You have rands and cents dictating a situation . . . but I agree, we'll never really have a thriving industry until black crossover takes off.

"At present the industry isn't big enough to handle a local industry and the whole overseas thing. But I actually agree with buying up overseas labels, I believe in the market forces. I believe the last rand spent is where most of the profit's going to come from. So if people spend R10 000 on an international label to the detriment of local recordings there's a reason: money. Look, the object of a

record company is to sell records. Not to expand the mind . . ."

How would Howard like to see the industry improved?

"In the black areas we need a union that we as a company could negotiate with. There's a tremendous problem with the blacks not understanding business and royalty payments. We get into a lot of trouble and mostly it's not our fault. We need a body of people to look after black musicians' day-to-day business.

"Secondly we need a black hit parade. That would help everybody. We've got the K-Mart Charts but those are for international sales.

"Thirdly, radio, small as it is, should be more liberal in terms of what it rejects. On black radio you never know whether they're going to accept your record for a million reasons you won't believe. Dr Huskisson in all her glory believes it has to be pure ethnic. If a Zulu guy puts in a word that is spawned in Soweto she won't accept it.

"And we have to pander to this bureaucracy - sorry, this autocracy of SABC. Records are rejected on the basis of bad language, not on a musical basis. And it's decided by a ridiculous committee. That's Afrikanerdom.

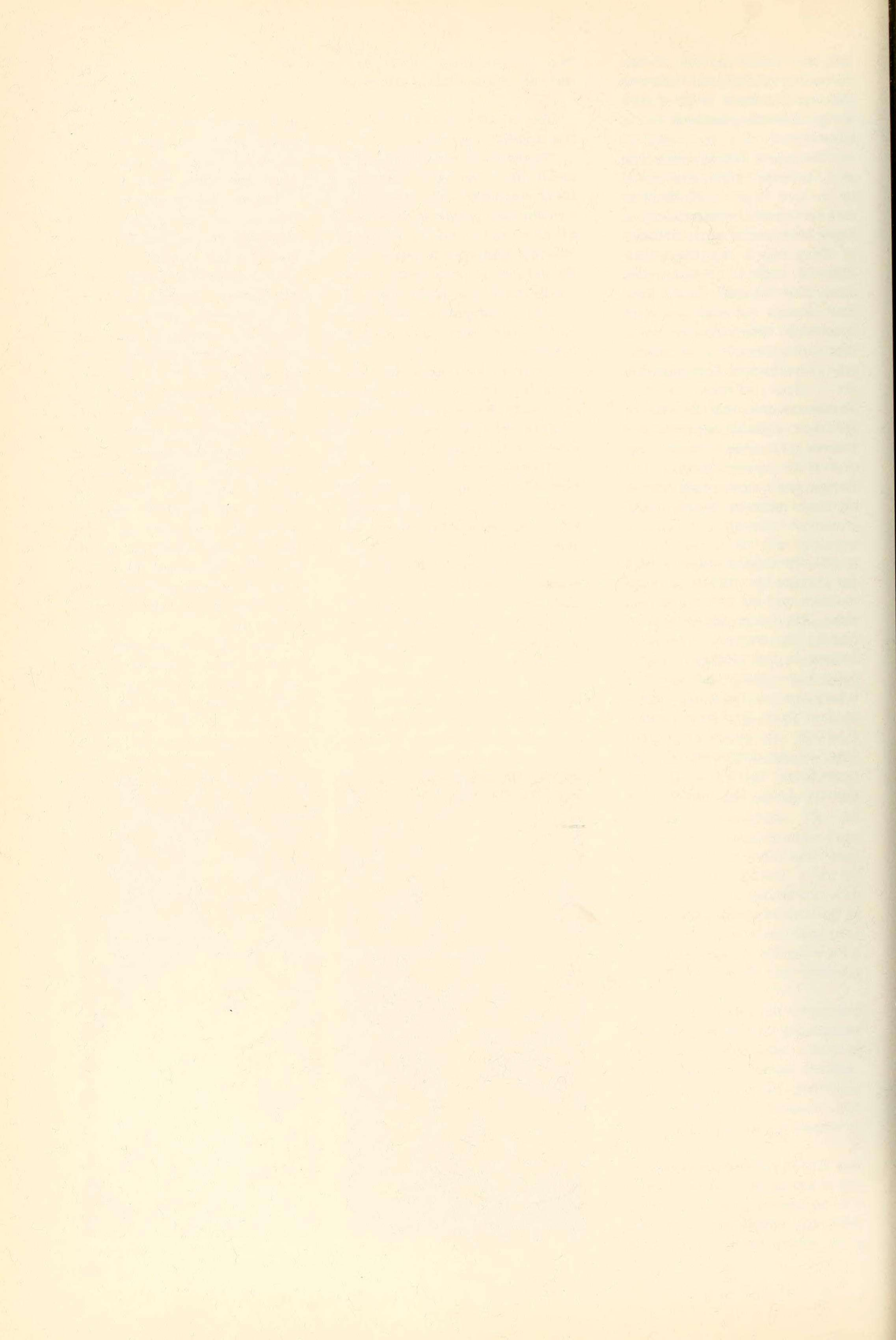
Music has crept into the stranglehold of apartheid. What they reject is disgusting and has cost us in the region of thousands of rands. But it's not just changing the radio attitude, you're talking about something much deeper."

Despite this progressive rap, Howard is **not** in favour of stations giving all different musics a fair spread.

"I'd agree with you in theory. The theory's great. I'm all for this liberal, 'let's all live together', communal approach. But there's the reality of it. Say Springbok Radio have a thousand listeners. I'll tell you what will happen. The thousand will be reduced to twenty."

How does that follow, I asked him. Maybe it would increase by twenty thousand. Instead of whites not listening because black and crossover is being played, maybe they'd mostly continue to listen and in addition a lot of blacks would listen to the same station? Howard thinks for a long time:

"It's a difficult one. Hmmm. Look - I vote Prog and if there was a more liberal party I'd probably vote for that. But when it comes to the crunch I'd actually disagree with putting ethnic stuff on Springbok radio. I want a radio station where I don't have to listen to that stuff." ■



Chapter 2

POLITICS OF PRODUCTION

WORDS from three outspoken, independent producers:

A: Choosers can be Beggars

– Grahame Beggs, who has been around for years (and who has grown more critical of the industry as he gets older) has been very successful with a number of local groups – the most recent being Clout. He feels there need to be three major changes in the attitude towards music in South Africa before it can grow: radio must become service orientated: music must become a compulsory part of education; the internal structure of the industry must change.

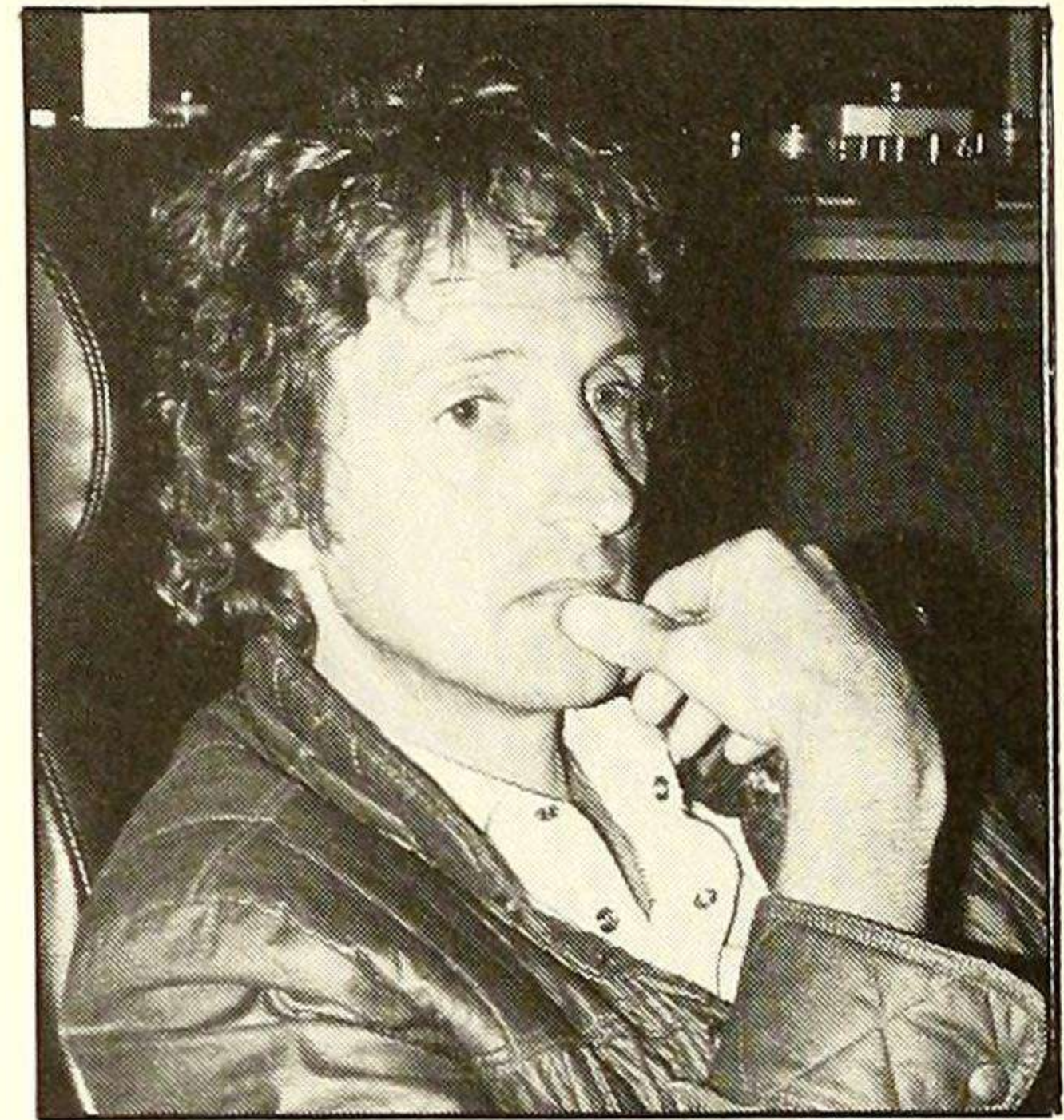
B: The Champagne Producer

– Patric van Blerk, one of the country's most indulgent, but charming, producers raps (and raps) about his life. And about how difficult it's been getting whites to accept a black performer (Singana). Patric is the parent of Rabbitt, the country's first and last teenpop idols. He is also a very well-known songwriter and these days he co-writes and co-produces for Joy.

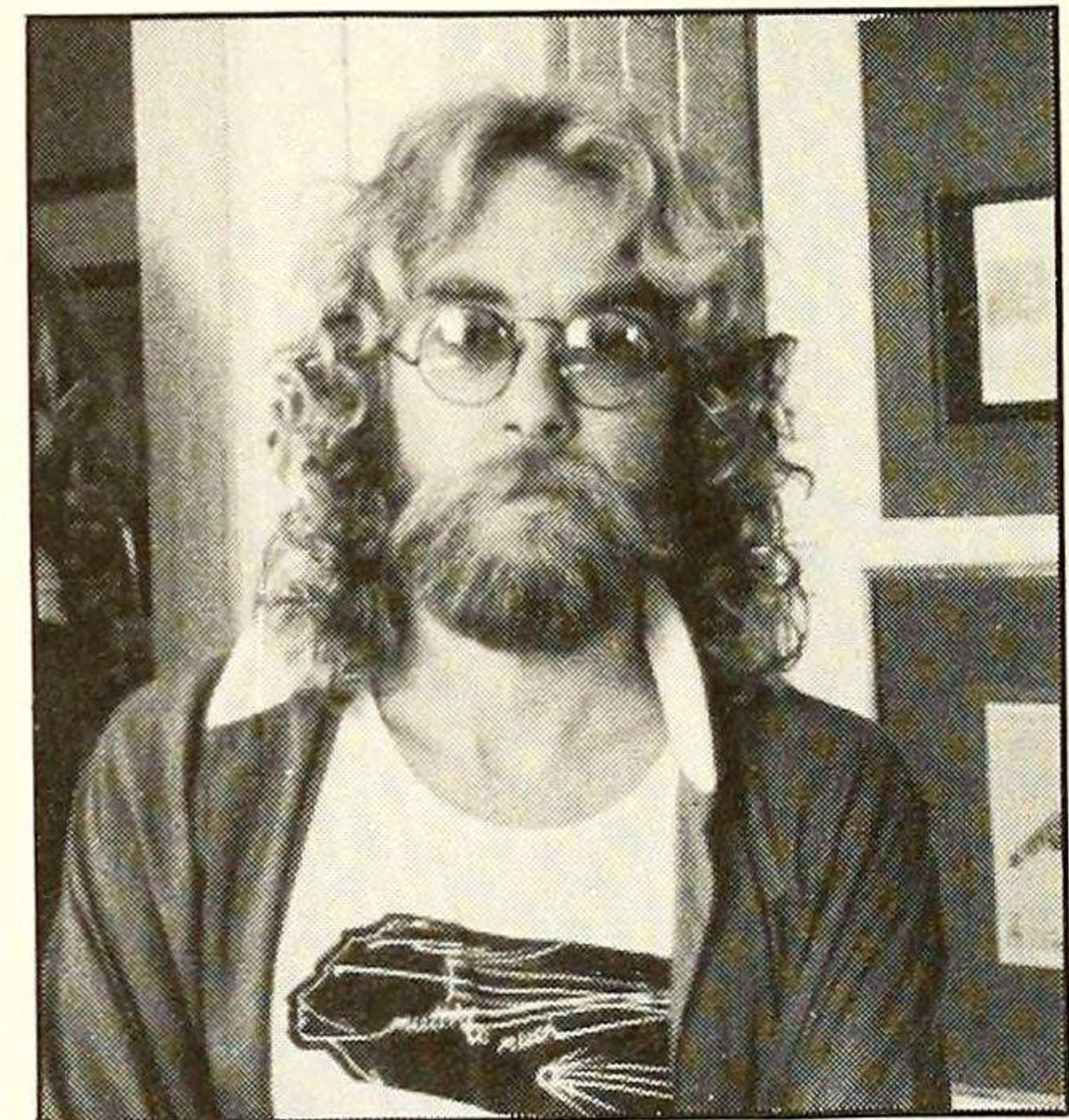
C: Lennon taught Marks

– Dave Marks, counter-culturalist and vehement anti-SABC campaigner, discusses the house that "Master Jack" built, and Third Ear Music, the company which is involved with all the acts no one else would touch because of their non-commerciality. Dave is responsible for the once-yearly Wits campus based institution known as the Free People's Concert; he also wrote "Master Jack", the only complete local song (written/produced/performed etc.) to have achieved the success it has around the world.

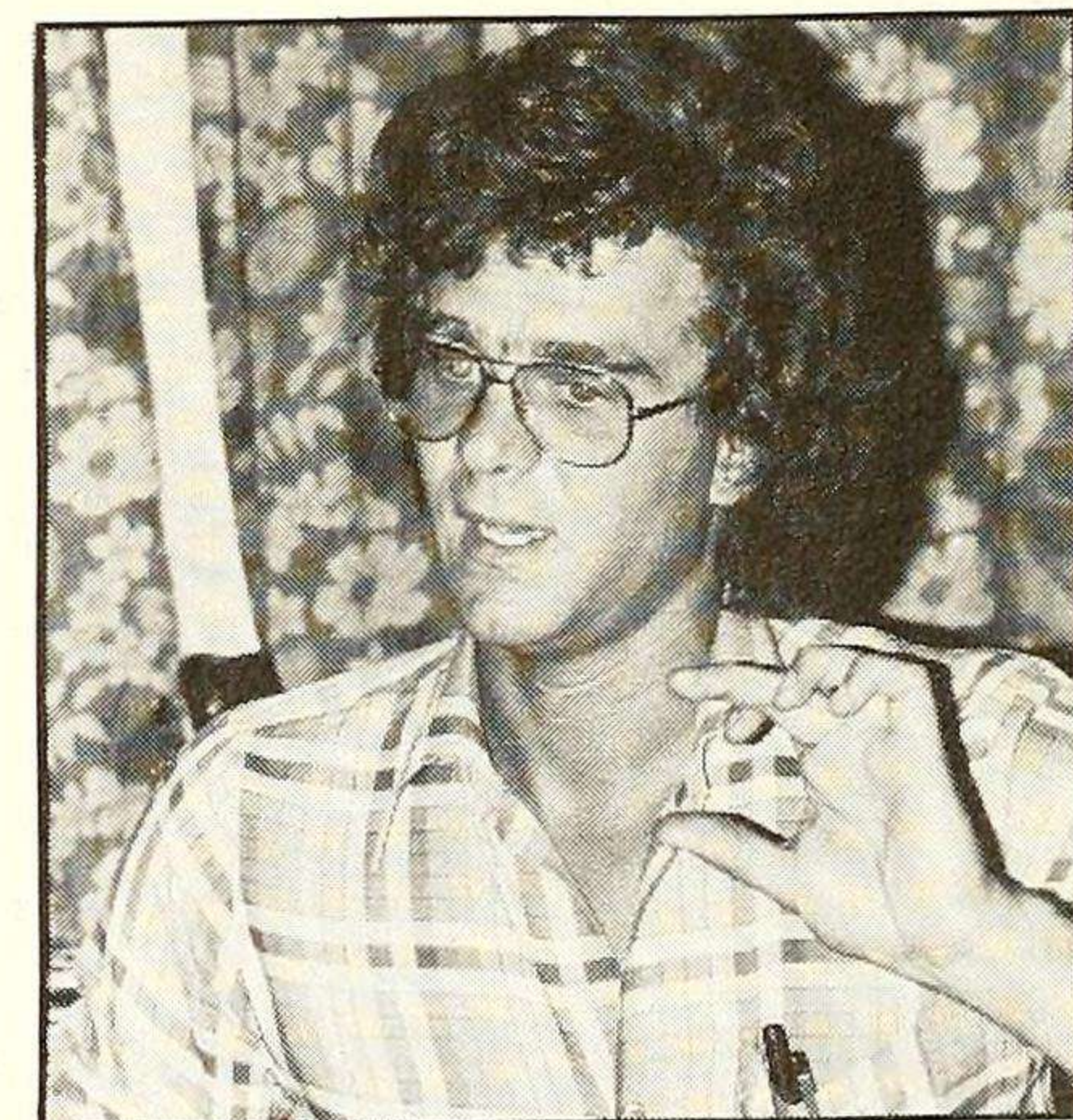
The independents all concentrate their money and energies on local talent, whereas the majors concentrate on overseas product. Simon Frith gives the following explanation of the role of independent manager/producers: "They function, in creative terms, as mini record companies: the producer finds and contracts his own acts, records them at his own expense and brings the finished tape to a record company; the company presses it, releases it on one of its own labels and pays a royalty to the producer on every copy sold. If the record flops it's a cheap deal for a record company, which has been spared the production costs."



Grahame Beggs



Patric van Blerk



Dave Marks



Grahame Beggs

Choosers can be Beggars

an interview with Grahame Beggs

ANDERSSON: When I was at school you were playing lead guitar for my favourite group, Dicky Loader and the Blue Jeans. Well, it was **one** of my favourite groups . . . anyway. Then you left and went to London. From then on you never really played anymore, just produced.

BEGGS: Dicky Loader was '61 to '64, and then the band I went across to London with was called the Shangaans. It was a bit of a disaster because no one could really play, but we were fairly unique because we were playing a kind of African-orientated music. They were put together by some wealthy Johannesburg guy who wanted a pop band and they realised they'd need someone who knew something about it so they asked me to come along. It was interesting from my point of view because I met a few people and saw how the studios operate over there. The Shangaans was an experiment; it could have worked but there was no reservoir of talent in the band. They were kind of mechanical robots who'd play what they were taught to play but they couldn't really contribute creatively. It was a helluva problem. An even bigger problem arose because I was the youngest member of the band, yet I was showing everyone how to do it. That raised all kinds of pressures. You try, age 20, to show someone of 25 how to play his instrument and show him note for note . . . Anyway, in the interim I watched a couple of

recording sessions. The Hollies – I watched them do an album and when the album came out I was shattered that it sounded so crappy after hearing how well they'd performed in the studio. In those days anyone who looked like they could produce a record got taken into the studio and became the producer. I can't remember this guy's name, but I was terribly disappointed in the record and thought shit, I can do a helluva lot better than him. I'd done seven albums in South Africa with Dicky Loader and the Blue Jeans and I'd always been interested. So that was how I started.

ANDERSSON: To get back to the Shangaans. You say you were playing African-orientated music?

BEGGS: I actually went to Hugh Tracey and listened to a lot of Shangaan music, a lot of tribal music, because I figured at that stage of my life that American soul really had its roots in Africa and all I was doing was putting together the third side of the triangle by taking the exact roots to Britain and trying them there. Had the band been individually talented, musically talented, and been able to contribute something musically, it may very well have succeeded. It didn't succeed because of the limitations of the musicians. But I researched African music and found the most amazing things, and found also that living in Africa if you're musical gives you access to a set of rhythms that just don't exist anywhere else.

ANDERSSON: What sort of future do you see for the "black music" in South Africa?

BEGGS: It appears to me that what's happening with black music in South Africa right now is that black tastes are becoming more white and more European-orientated records are being bought. The actual tribal stuff is falling away. The township music is a force of its own, but when township music comes across, leans a **little** more towards *white music*, for want of a better term, then we might have something not just dynamic, but exportable. There's no question about the amount of talent there is in Soweto for example. It's just a question of that music being recorded in an acceptable form – look at Bob Marley and the Wailers: they took Jamaican reggae, right, and played it in English. That's when the music became accessible. But they took those root rhythms and we have the same opportunity here. The most significant of my philosophies – no one's ever worked it out or bothered to ask me – is that if the black population of South Africa buys a pop record then it's a potential world hit. If blacks here buy a primarily white-orientated single that's made in this country then I know I've got something that will go throughout the world. If only whites buy it then I know my limitations. But as far as black talent goes, it's just a question of singling it out and getting the people into the studio and getting the right people making the right records.

ANDERSSON: Why is it then, that with the exception of The Flames, you've never really got involved with producing black bands?

BEGGS: It's not a question of not getting involved with black artists. I only get involved with any artist, white or black, who is reliable. Some black artists that I've tried to deal with I've found unreliable, just not turning up at the studio. And I can't waste time, not even for great talent. I get terribly frustrated when

people aren't on time. It's a job like any other job, it's just as dreary as a clerk in a bank and if people don't arrive I get really uptight. I just don't like to subject myself to all those pressures. It's not the question of a black artist or a white artist that makes me interested, but the question of a committed artist.

ANDERSSON: Sorry, I took you off the point just now. You were explaining about how you got into production.

BEGGS: Well, I'd always liked the studio aspect and when I turned 21 I gave up playing guitar. I had more ambition than playing guitar for the rest of my life, so I figured that I should come back here and talk my way into one of the record companies. In those days there was a lack of producers in South Africa. They were absolute amateurs, producers in the loosest form. I remember there was an engineer called Maurice Hallowell and sometimes Joe Nofal or Derek Hannan; it was really a question of their walking in and saying "that's fine Joe". They really knew fuck all. You couldn't say "hold on, it'll sound a bit better if we put on some bass here". Anyway, I decided to give it a shot. Aleck Delmont and David Fine interviewed me and paid me the princely sum of R200 a month and I became a producer. My first signing was the Dream Merchants, who were relatively successful and were really an innovation because suddenly records didn't sound that crappy and suddenly there were possibilities. From the Dream Merchants I signed the Flames and the Square Set and odd people in between like the Rising Sons, Una Valli (an Aretah Franklin type singer), Peanut Butter Conspiracy. The Flames – they were signed to Trutone and they'd made a couple of nondescript albums. Trutone were about to release them from their contract because they were unhappy with Trutone, but Trutone told me to listen to the album. And I did. I thought a lot of it was really shit but there was

something there. I said "listen, they're playing in Durban and I want to hear them before you release them from their contract". I went there, listened to them, spoke to them and I realised these guys are really on, they have amazing potential. I was working for Gallo at the time. I was really knocked out with them and said "let's get straight into that album". I knew they would be enormous in South Africa. They came up and we recorded "Burning Soul" in two days! It went gold, sold about 35 000 albums. The Dream Merchants were doing about 10 to 12 000, but in those days for a local pop album that wasn't Sounds Electronic – it was enormous!

ANDERSSON: I remember those Sounds Electronic records, with the sexist covers. My Dad used to buy them for us every Christmas. Eventually when we got to Sounds Electronic No. 7, we said "Dad . . . if you want to buy us a record . . .

BEGGS: . . . then buy us something worthwhile." I know, Sounds Electronic became a way of life. It filled a need and that was part of the damage done to the record industry. The acceptance on the consumer level of something quite as crappy as that was frightening; it was really badly done. I accept the principle of medleys because I've got involved with them, but they've got to be done well. They've got to be done fairly accurately whereas those albums were really atrocious. But it's the measure of what the consumer is prepared to accept, that is the really frightening thing. I think consumer training from the record industry side has been really shocking.

ANDERSSON: What do you think's happening that shouldn't be happening, and vice versa?

BEGGS: The main problem is that in this country we don't have a radio station that provides a service to the consumer. It's a law unto itself, the radio. Capital Radio, if they had decent reception in all areas

here, would wipe out every other station in the country. If they are anything like Capital Radio in London. They provide a service to the consumer. Capital Radio in London has a job spot. If you're between 18 and 21, if you're a school-leaver and you haven't got a job, they help you find a job. The DJs on Capital Radio in England know more about the records and the artists' career than I do and I'm in the record industry. They talk about it. They don't say "here is a record by so and so". It's fact and there's no namby pamby. The listener then becomes aware of the band, the band is not just a record or a song. I'll tell you something about the jocks in this country. **On Radio 5 I don't think there is one jock who's seen Clout live!** And Clout is surely the most significant thing that's happened in this country in terms of export? Being a DJ is a job like any other job. It's a service. You must know about the record industry, you must know about those artists you play, you must read everything. It's a job, for Chrissake. Radio 5 don't have job slots, they don't look after the youth. The most incredible thing is that their income is solely derived from the fact that they attract listeners because of music. It's the only reason they have advertisers, right? So where's their money coming from? It's coming from music right. So what do they do? They buy fucking rally cars and promote rally cars. What's that got to do with the people who are listening to the radio? They should run free music shows. That's getting back to the public, that's a service to the consumer. But rally cars? For Chrissake! I get so annoyed, it's absolutely ridiculous. A bunch of amateurs doing a bungling job, that's really the beginning and end of it. Ford Escorts. Big news. Why don't they give free concerts, pay the bands and put something back into music? You're not going to get the consumer to go and see bands and support bands until you have it at that level from the

media. I've heard a bit on Capital and those jocks are really good. The difference between Capital and Radio 5 is the Capital jocks really try. The other guys are nine to fivers. Capital are approaching it the right way, they don't view the record companies as an antagonistic force who are looking for favours. They view them as partners. Without that fucking music the stations don't exist. If Radio 5 had to record its own music for 18 hours broadcasting every day they couldn't afford it. They're making money out of the record companies so there should be some co-operation and when they reject something they should know why they reject it. And they should know something about music, and have the decency to know something about the artists involved.

ANDERSSON: D'you know that once I turned on Radio 5 in time to hear a jock say: "*Well, he's an expert on African music. He plays all the traditional African instruments. It's become a great hobby of his.*" Because that was part of my research, I was fascinated and phoned up Radio 5. I spoke to the jock, Gordon Hofmeyer, and said "*Who was the expert you were talking about just now?*" So there was this embarrassed silence, then Hofmeyer said: "*Umm, it was Demis Roussos*". Imagine that. Telling everyone Demis Roussos is an expert on traditional African music. I said to him: "*How can you say that?*" and he said that Demis mentioned once he liked the sound of the bongos, or some such thing.

BEGGS: I can believe it! I can believe it! It's like I wouldn't let a bicycle mechanic come and service my car. It's impossible. They've got bicycle mechanics servicing cars on Radio 5. Go ask Radio 5 why they don't recognise crossover music, why they don't recognise black music. They don't recognise anything because they don't **know**. It's crazy. So therefore their listeners know nothing, have no appreciation of

music. It's become a vicious circle.

ANDERSSON: Do you think it's solely up to radio to encourage an appreciation?

BEGGS: No. Another significant point about South Africa is that this must be one of the few so-called Western nations in the world that doesn't have music appreciation as a compulsory subject at school. You go to America and their high school bands are playing jazz and complicated music on complicated instruments like our professional session musicians in this country. You've got to start at that level. Music should be a vital part of the curriculum. Look at sport in this country. That's compulsory, so why not music? So now what happens, you get someone saying: "*What a nice tune*" and "*Let's go bop*" instead of "*Hey, listen to what that guy is doing with his guitar.*" So the kids here go out and buy what they hear on radio and what they hear in supermarkets.

ANDERSSON: How do you think this attitude to music has affected musicians who want to play original music, and what sort of effect has it had on someone like you, as a producer?

BEGGS: There was a whole thing starting with original bands, and it got knocked on the head straightaway. I tried to do something with Circus, and the same thing. No support whatsoever, so what do you do? I was spending money, I was losing money and I was prepared to go on doing it because I believed in them. I would have, but the band broke up. That's the first thing. Then you start questioning things a bit further, you look at it and say: "*Hold on, I can sell more records in one or two days in Europe than I do here in a whole year*".

ANDERSSON: So the obsession with Overseas the industry has is purely a financial thing . . .

BEGGS: No. It's this. Why do I concern myself with what Radio 5 and the media feels or thinks? It's a question, once again, of

commitment. A band can sell records overseas, and they can be appreciated. This is my home, I'm South African, and I should really be concerned. But if I voice my concern in any way, talk to people on Radio 5 or talk to anyone in an area of responsibility, they suddenly become aggressive because a little knowledge is dangerous and they only have a little knowledge. I must be a threat because I know what's going on overseas. I've done it, I've spent the last 15 years on it and every time I go over I learn something new. But I must be a threat because I'm achieving things. And they shouldn't view me as a threat. If they'd listen to me I'd assist them to make a better radio station and then it'd be better for everybody. The vitality and possibility for this country is just enormous. But the way it's structured now . . . it's impossible. I don't need the frustration of dealing with the kind of mentality and the amateurs I have to deal with now. Amateurs who can't get things done. I've been sick from severe stress, and I've decided I am not prepared to get involved with these amateurs. I can't afford to. I actually want to keep on living.

I've always been in the position where anyone can knock on my door and ask advice. It's always been like that, but now I feel as if people think I'm out of reach. Like David Gresham came to find out what's happening overseas, so I told him, half of it. I could very easily have told him the other half, but he rushed off thinking that was the whole thing. This is a very South African attitude. South Africans, when they've got something they hold on to it because they think someone's going to steal it! Someone can walk in and say: "*How'd you get that sound on the guitar?*" and I'd explain. I see it as a duty to share that knowledge. Okay, this lack of sharing, this mentality in the record industry, is the next

biggest problem. We've spoken about schools, and about radio and now . . .

ANDERSSON: I just want to interrupt at this point, and say please comment on the buying of overseas labels, attitudes to local music, and attitudes to marketing . . . also the story of your success with Clout.

BEGGS: Right. What we've got here is a highly competitive industry. Dog eats dog in terms of the companies against each other. That's frightening. There's no liaison. They all try to outbid each other for labels and they just inflate the price. It's guaranteed income for them. If they get a good label they know the label's got a track record and they're going to sell so many albums; whereas with local music they've actually got to put their money where their mouths are and spend some money making the record. It's infinitely more difficult, which is why so little white pop music works in this country and why they don't make a lot of records. They've got to spend money, that's the thing. So with overseas records they outbid each other, inflate the price and then to recoup their advances they've got to sell more records from the label they've just bought. So they apportion more budget and more time to promote it. It's a kind of circle, a rat race. They go round chasing their tails.

As far as overseas goes, no one knows actually how to deal with those overseas people and get the best promotional results. Anyone can go over and talk a deal and get an advance because it's standard procedure throughout the world. It's no different. But it's the follow-through that's important, and no one wants to follow things through. They want to make a quick buck then duck because they think they're not going to come up with anything to follow what they've just sold. The attitude is look-after-the-pocket-and-run, instead of saying *"this is a three-year projection, that's where we're going to aim"*, talking to

the overseas company and getting them committed to promoting and marketing the band properly.

What happened with Clout was not a miracle. It was well thought out and well planned. When the company over there got interested because Chris Kritzinger played them the record I said: *"Okay, we're interested too. We're working on an album and I'll get it all together first and then I'll come over."* And that's what I did. I went over, I said: *"That's the plan, that's how the band's got to be marketed, that's what they look like, that's the music they play,"* and it wasn't a problem. No miracle, and it was looking further than making some quick bucks, or just one record. It will be the same for the Rag Dolls. And everyone will be surprised; they'll say *"That's Rudi singing, but he can't sing!"* That's the mentality here.

And then Gresham puts down a Stringray album, a lovely album, but a couple of years late. That Boston thing's gone.

Because something good has come out of South Africa, Clout having succeeded, the people overseas are keen to listen to things from South Africa. He goes in and does a heavy deal with a couple of acts, but doesn't follow it through. He sits back and waits for the results to come home to him and that doesn't work. You've got to be like a terrier with a rat. You just don't let go, and **that** is why the Rag Dolls will succeed.

At present the structure of the industry is crazy. There are a few sane people working towards progress and change, but mostly it's made up of people who are the same as those DJs on Radio 5 who'll wind up eventually on one of the regional stations when they're 50 and still know fuck-all about their craft. That's Joe Nofal and people like that. They don't sit down and say: *"What can I learn about this, what ideas must I embrace to improve the structure of the industry"*. They think instead:

"I've got to shift records today, and I've got to shift records tomorrow. I've been shifting records for 50 years in this way, and I'll carry on." That's it.

ANDERSSON: When you started producing, what were the trends in the industry? You've said there were no producers. But what about the bands? What music was doing well on the white side (I know that on the black side things have remained pretty much the same: mbaqanga always a good seller)? What sort of bands were around? Also, why did you quit the big companies and go independent?

BEGGS: The Dream Merchants were significant. But the only thing that really sold were Afrikaans albums – tickeydraai – and Sounds Electronic. Okay, so I've mentioned some of the bands I was involved with at Gallo. I was what Gallo regarded as a big success: in other words, I sold a lot of records. Everything was running nicely. Then I came up against management, top level management, and their inability to look further than the year ahead of them. I wasn't going to become a Phil Goldblatt or a Joe Nofal, so I left.

I went to work for a company that was primarily owned by Mervyn John and Don Hughes, who thought they recognised a good thing. I had equity in the company, which was called A&R. I was to look around for new bands and start making records for them and we'd sell them, release them to different record companies. Robin Taylor introduced me to a guy who'd just come to this country who couldn't get a job here. Nobody figured he had any talent. Terry Dempsey. I organised a situation where he came into the company. At the same time Four Jacks and a Jill had a record in the Top Twenty in America with *"Master Jack"*. Mervyn John was convinced that the next important thing to do was sign them and take them to America and do something with them; which we did. I took them to America. It was a very

unhealthy relationship. They took their personal manager with them and I went . . . representing **the company**, and feeling that I shouldn't record them over there because they were absolutely useless. They ended up with an American producer who tore his hair out, then decided it wasn't working and so they sold the contract back to the band – who kept their personal manager, made a bum album and bombed out. In the interim Terry had left this company because it had the same mentality as I'd been dealing with at Gallos, when I came back – I was about 22 – I realised that too, and left.

ANDERSSON: And then you started Sunshine Records?

BEGGS: No, I was on the bones of my arse. I had no money. So I went to work for Gerald McGraff at Teal and started producing there. Then I took over the publishing company as general manager and learnt quite a lot in 21 months but once again didn't like the way he operated. He was very much into buying overseas labels and expending effort on that and it was contrary to what I felt was needed in this country. So then I thought I'd leave and go on my own, which I did in '71, and I built it from there. Breakaway Music and Sunshine Records. At the time I recorded "*Mammy Blue*". It was on the charts at number one for 12 weeks, sold in the region of 100 000. I recorded it with a three-piece session band called Charisma. Then I recorded Rising Sons and the Peanut Butter Conspiracy and they all had a lot of gold records.

ANDERSSON: If you committed yourself to local music why did you, at that particular time – I'm not referring to acts you took on **before** Sunshine – agree to be the distributors for Abba in South Africa. Didn't you find yourself spending a lot of money on them?

BEGGS: No, I didn't. I didn't buy at all. I met this group of people and liked them, recognised their talent, though they'd been rejected by other countries. That was '73. No one was aware of

clout

them at that time, and that's why the relationship has gone on for so long. They appreciate that while everyone else was doubting them I picked them up and released their records. It's interesting that I haven't picked up on anything else. I've been offered a helluva lot, but I've never heard anything else that I believe in strongly. I'm a total commitment person. There are no grey areas and that's why I haven't picked up on anything else. If I just wanted to make money I would branch out into other business areas, but I'm interested, committed, to music.

ANDERSSON: So Circus was the first major project for Sunshine?

BEGGS: They were the first group I saw that I really liked at that stage. I spent a great deal of time with them, and made a reasonably good album; an experimental album, just to feel where we should go. But at the same time I was recording Pendulum. Glenda Hyam left Pendulum and approached me, wanting to be a solo artist. I said "*Get a band, let's have a look at your band*", and she got together with Lee Tomlinson and Ingi Herbst. Then Glenda said: "*What about an all-girl band?*" and I said "*I've got my reservations, but go ahead and do it.*"

ANDERSSON: What were the reservations, by the way?

BEGGS: I just felt that the band had to be good. The guitar playing had to be aggressive, or it would have no credibility as a band. Anyway, they advertised for a guitarist and Jenny Garson and Cindi Alter both arrived and they took them both and started rehearsing at the Herbst's place and it was diabolical, obviously, but I liked Cindi's voice. So I put them in a rehearsal studio knowing I could get a song together and we'd make a record one way or the other. I'd had "*Substitute*" for some time, and when they were ready, we recorded it.

ANDERSSON: There's something I'd like to clear up once and for all. The rumour was that Clout didn't actually play on the single. That Circus actually made it. So it wasn't an all-girls single. Is that true?

BEGGS: Yes, it is. Cindi sung, the girls did harmonies and Ingi did some drum overdubs, but the basic rhythm section was done by Circus. At that stage I wanted to get some of the musicians from Circus in (I wanted Bones and Sandy) but there were a few personal problems about splitting up the bands. It was originally Glenda's idea – though she isn't in Clout now – to have an all-girl group. I'm only interested in a group that is good, that works hard, exceptionally hard, and has credibility.



The Rag Dolls

PS...

Shortly after this interview, the Rag Dolls broke their contract with Grahame, to be followed soon by Clout. The Rag Dolls disbanded (they later regrouped as Leatherette) and lead vocalist Rudi Fröhling issued the following statement: "I found Grahame to be rather disappointing. He really is such a charming person and maybe it was because of that that we were misled. We were convinced we'd at last found a South African record industry person who cared about his *"Product"*. Alas, it seems that we were only product in the end and we were competing with Grahame's frequent overseas visits, his deathrow attempts to produce another Clout hit, his cruising yacht (the chartering kind with videos, stinkwood toilet holders etc.) and of course the golden calf Abba. Abba and the yacht won.

"We'd been promised relocation to an overseas territory accompanied with international single and album releases. Well, that was December '79 and 1980 just

dragged on while we waited for 'the right time'. A friend who has links with an overseas company confirmed that they'd wanted to go on the band – so we were wondering what kind of weather made it 'the right time'.

"At the end of 1980, Grahame up and left for the Seychelles to join his yacht Breakaway (basking in the Sunshine of Abba's Christmas sales) without letting his company know in advance, or mentioning the fact to the two bands in his stable – Clout and the Rag Dolls. I could understand it in our case. We were just a street band that Grahame had bought out of EMI for a reasonable sum, but I couldn't understand why he left Clout in the lurch.

"I suppose that newly acquired wealth needs time to be used in the "proper" way. I believe Grahame had talent as a producer, that he had a good ear for songs and a lot of potential. But I also believe that whatever talent you have must be used for the benefit of others, and when you stop that you lose your

magic. Grahame lost his magic for me.

"This is a very personal opinion about Grahame Beggs 1980, shared by numerous others. Before that his track record speaks for itself, what with the Flames and 'Substitute' all being big contributions to our musical heritage.

"This country doesn't have a music union to speak of so we artists are actually powerless against the smooth-talking business tycoons. I'm sure Grahame sees himself like that – breaking away to the island, cracking the tropical sun, BMW 635, house in Surrey, England, one in Randburg, South Africa, the yacht, constant jet lag . . . oh, the list goes on.

"Music aside, Grahame Beggs is rich. The members of Clout are not, and the Rag Dolls are decidedly poor. Let's look at South African producers . . . there are people like Mutt Lange and Phil Ramone, and there are the 'also rans'. So far it looks like Grahame's going to have to settle for an 'also ran'."

The Champagne Producer

Patric van Blerk speaks out

The first record I bought was 'Green Door'. Remember 'Green Door'? My God, it ages us. I was living in Bloemfontein at that stage during the whole LM trip, and that record led to my being a collector at an incredibly early age. I went from Pat Boone to Little Richard through to my first major milestone, which of course was Elvis Presley.

At that stage it was just a fan thing. All I wanted to do was to be in movies. I used to adore reading those Hollywood and screen magazines. Strangely enough, I went yesterday with Charlie and my mother to see the Sonja Herholdt movie "Sing vir die Harlekyn." I played her manager in it. You've GOT to see it, tell me what you think. Anyway, at that stage music was just a fun thing for me.

Then after my father died – we were living in Pretoria – I remember distinctly thinking, realising, a wave passing through me: "I can be in the movie industry or the music industry if that's what I want." Milestone 2. I was still pursuing the theatrical side. We had an acting group called The Acts and we used to write plays and produce them.

At that stage the whole Beatle boom had started. I consider myself lucky to have grown up then. Being part of the sixties explosion of music was a phenomenally exciting thing for me. I then went through a series of these horrific bands where I was the singer and the bass player. The Floaters, then the

Howling Wolves (named after Howling Wolf, very progressive in those days). My biggest triumph as a rock musician was at the Oscar cinema in Sunnyside at a band competition, beating the hot Pretoria band Dieter and the Raves – which featured both the Schroeder brothers, Robert and Earnest who are both in the industry now. I was voted best singer, and there was almost gang warfare after that.

Anyway, we got into sessions though we were such a terrible band – we must go down as the worst ever in South Africa – and once at a Church hall session for some bizarre reason the whole of Pretoria arrived and our manager was virtually beaten up. They threw fish-paste sandwiches and Smarties at us. It was a TOTAL disaster.

After that I refused to go to school for about two weeks. I just lay at home cowering. Anyway, I slowly came out of that and decided maybe I wasn't cut out to be a rock 'n roll musician even though I desperately wanted to be. So from that time on I got more involved with the writing side. I used to make the monumental pilgrimage once a week by Putco bus to Johannesburg. . . I know it sounds like the traditional New York story. I remember going to terrifying meetings with Matt Mann and Dan Hill who were god-like figures in those days and very good friends of mine today. Obviously during this whole period I'd been a devoted music fan. I'd been president of the

Chubby Checker fan club. I used to get my copies of **NME** airmail every week. I could memorise chart positions – how they moved up, peaked, and went down. I was into the Stones, Animals etc, but also another side to my personality – Roy Orbison and Dusty Springfield.

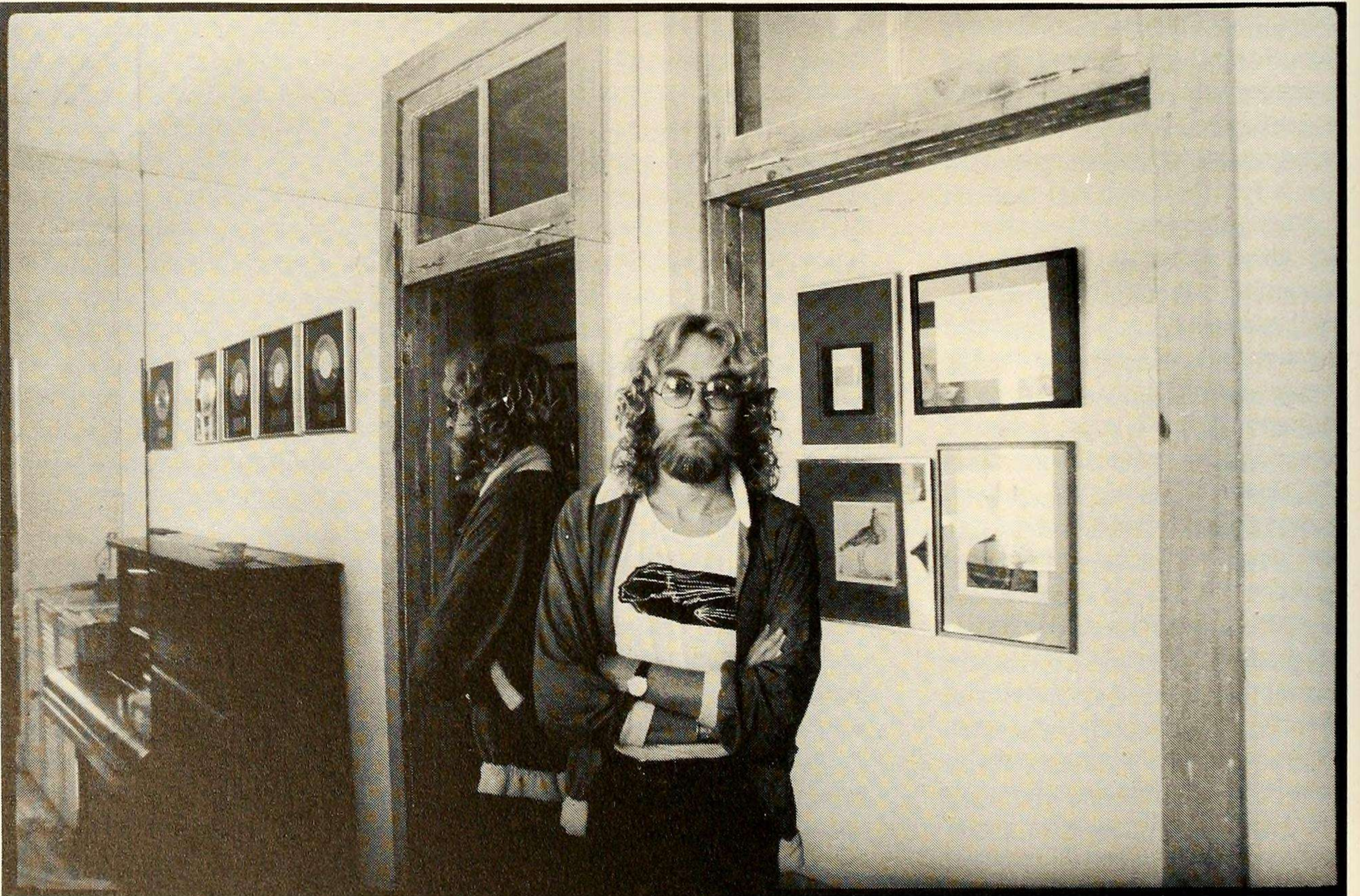
I had this intense period where I was completely absorbed by this whole thing, obsessed with the prospect of breaking into the music business. Then army came, and the whole Hendrix thing began to break. I got into him too, but the element of drugs was missing. I was an officer in the army, very straitlaced and having guys **arrested** for drugs! Then I had this terrible car crash just shortly after I'd got commissioned, and while lying in the officer's ward at Voortrekker Hoogte I did a lot of reading and a lot of listening. Beatles at that stage had "All you need is love", it was San Francisco, flower power, hippies. . . It intrigued me, though I couldn't relate to it.

While I was lying there they were trying to talk me into joining the permanent force, promising me instant captain's rank and so on. But the first weekend out I went and bought the new Beatles' album, "Sgt. Pepper's", and then the whole thing just started exploding for me. I knew I could never stay in the army. Milestone number three!

I got out the army and was wheeling and dealing round Pretoria, worked for 23 days for the SA Perm, and for six months for the **Pretoria News**. I used to review movies, records and so on.

Roy Evans, A&R manager of Gallo, asked me to review a Gé Korsten concert. I made it clear that I'd certainly be there but I wanted to talk to him about other things. I gave Gé a review and then I drove Evans **insane** for the next six months till he finally agreed to give me a job. I thought I'd be whisking into Gallos as a new junior executive vice president whizz kid, with stars

Paul Weinberg



Patric van Blerk

all around me. Instead, they stuck me in stores, telling me it was just to get a feel of the catalogue, and I eventually stayed there for six months in a little white coat, packing records and dispatching them.

Then they put me on the road as a rep in the Free State, Western Cape and Transvaal. I had shoulder length hair at that stage, freaked out people in those funny little towns. But because of my enthusiasm I soon became shit hot. Also there was a novelty factor because of my long hair so when I came to town it was a buzz. Everyone used to turn out to see me. I did well, and in a short space of time they brought me into town over the heads of the more senior reps.

Two things happened in the interim. I'd met Terry Dempsey and was really impressed by him, his whole independent crusade, and I was punting for him. Gallo was distributing his label. At that stage he'd had "*Butchers and Bakers*" by the Staccatos. Big in the market place at that stage were Gé Korsten, Min Shaw, Lance James . . .

The other thing was I'd got into dope. I got turned on by my famous writing partner Fransua Roos who came to my flat in Pretoria one night when I was typing record reviews. He waltzed in wearing a pair of sunglasses the size of television sets, going: "*Hey wow man*", and laid some cool Brazilian jazz on me. After about 12 hours he talked me into getting stoned, persuading me I wouldn't die or go mad or whatever.

Anyway, I really got into it with Terry and he started getting very successful with people like Dave Mills, Tidal Wave, John Edmund. He finally offered me a position and we put together a company called MAP – Management, Agents and Promotion – which was going to be an alternative label. We had Lauren Copley and the group Lincoln, and did a deal with GRC. That was when I had my first composition recorded,

"*Long Days and Lonely Nights*". It was recorded by Lincoln and it went to number two with a lot of hustling, but everyone was very good to me. I was sort of the new boy, under Terry's wing and all that.

During that period with Terry he had an amazing string of successes – 20 successive top twenty hits – so a lot of money was made. And we started getting into Jaguars, spending more and more time going to gym and drinking gin at the Sunnyside Park Hotel, just getting more and more into the jawl of it and slowly and surely letting everything else slide to the extent where things got pretty bum and we finally phased the whole thing out and split up.

At that point there was no way I could go back and join a major record company in a staff position.

I'd also taken over Grahame Beggs's beautiful cottage in Honeydew. At that stage I was living with Di and getting very spaced out. Wandering round the farm getting really stoned, wearing a caftan contemplating my navel and the plants, all that sort of thing. Writing absolutely junk songs. I was writing with Fransua and at that stage we'd formed the Flying Dutchman but nothing was really coming together. Di was supporting me at that stage.

Then I got involved with the two Alans, Alan Gein and Alan Goldberg, who had the little Auvico studios in Athol – at that stage two two-track Revoxes and a tiny mixing desk. A friend of mine called Aubrey who owns some record bars on the West Rand and who I knew when I was a rep at Gallo kept saying to me: "*Do 'Locomotive Breath'*." Because the whole of the West Rand used to romp into his shop on Saturday morning and say they "*really*" loved it, but why was there no single from it? Also it got no airplay because of things like "*Gideon's bible*" and "*got him by the balls*" and "*woman and his best friend in bed and having fun*".

I honestly didn't see the worth in the song but Aubrey was so insistent about it I eventually said: "*Okay, if you'll pay for it, I'll do it.*" At that stage there were a whole spate of rock festivals. Clive Calder and Ralph Simon had thrown one at the Out of Town club and Hawk topped the bill. And I went along one freeeeeeeeeeezing day to see this festival. The support act to Hawk was a three-piece group called Conglomeration, which was the next major milestone, turning-point, for me. Because I knew instantly, it was like an electric shock: this was the thing!

It wasn't even a case of having to work yourself up, or to start thinking or guessing. I just knew. The very next day I called Trevor Rabin. He was a lightie, a baby. I mean he was 16 or 17 or something, BEAUTIFUL, with long hair to his shoulders. And I called him in and gave him his very first session work.

In any event, Aubrey said he would finance the local version of "*Locomotive Breath*" and I got hold of Fransua to do the arrangement and I got Trevor, Ronnie Robot's brother Errol Friedman, and Cedric Sampson. We went into Auvica and did it. We cleaned up the lyrics. Instead of "*got him by the balls*" we said "*got him by the hand*" and removed all the offensive bits and deballed the song completely, but it had a funky little vibe to it and it cost R148. Stuningly enough, it became a hit.

That was another significant turning point. At that stage another amazing thing had happened. I entered a Tokyo Song Festival with a song written by Fransua and I, "*Daydream Girl*" and I sung it because no one else would. It won the entry. Then when I tried to get someone else to sing it for the festival, the Japanese officials said: "*No no no, the voice on the tape has to perform,*" which was me, so I entered myself as Valiant V Vanguard. Sounds very new wave, doesn't it? I couldn't take it seriously as Patric van Blerk

singing. I mean, I used to struggle to get two notes in tune. So off we trotted to Tokyo. There we were competing against people like Neil Sedaka and two guys called Benny and Bjorn who were in fact the two Bs from Abba. The other two people hadn't joined them yet. They did a song at that festival called 'Santa Rosa' and I signed it up for South Africa, 'cos we got friendly. I was the first person to publish an Abba song in South Africa. Anyway, we didn't win the festival but we did very well. Of the 42 countries we were one of the three asked to stay back and record in Japan.

I'm the only artist in the world who can say they've recorded one single and had a number one, even if it was only on Swazi music. But it knocked off Barry White's "Love you just a Little Bit More Babe". All that time I was going through changes with Diana. We decided we weren't going to live together any more, and I went from Tokyo to England and due to the help of a lot of people – among them Grahame Beggs – I got to the first Midem. (The world's largest music trade fair). After that I went to London to track down the publishers for "Locomotive Breath."

So I walk into Chrysalis one day about to announce myself as a Joe Bloggs from South Africa, and as I walked into the office, lying on the desk are the LM radio hit parades with "Locomotive Breath" in the top ten. So I got **completely** hysterical; I started screaming and shouting. I said: "Hey, that's my record." And they were all so stunned because no one expected a cover version of Jethro Tull to get into the SA top ten. They couldn't believe it, till I hauled the record out of the bag and showed it to them, and showed them my name. In any event that was quite an exciting point, starting point, to my independent business thing because I hustled terribly hard for the publishing of Chrysalis in South Africa. Eventually I succeeded. I think

the thing that sold them was that one of the Chrysalis artists was David Bowie. He'd just gone to number one with "Rebel Rebel" and particularly with the bisexual thing I persuaded them there was no one better in South Africa to sell Bowie than me. So after a lot of persuasion they agreed, and the day we did the handshake I went to a gay club and was introduced to Bowie, who popped a kiss on my cheek to wish me luck with his records.

The deal didn't turn out well because there were business confusions. They wanted to involve Grahame Beggs, which pissed me off. So one night at an industry party I went up to Grahame and said I'd rather bow out of it completely. He looked quite stunned, but I said: "No bad vibes. I either have the whole Chrysalis thing or no part of it." But that decision was simultaneous with yet another turning point because after all those months of negotiation I decided I would **never** rely on an international product again. From then on 100 percent of my energy would go into local product. And I've certainly never backed down on that.

In Midem I'd met Robin Taylor who told me he was forming a new company called Satbel and that I should get in touch with him. I'd already formed Jo'burg Records and when I met Robin I quickly decided that more than any other executive in the industry I could work with him. At that stage everyone was prophesying doom for Satbel, saying it wouldn't last longer than six months. As it happened it lasted longer, but still sadly ended in a heap. But then started the most exciting phase in my career. I became, after a year or so, the in-house producer. The first act I tackled was Margaret Singana. Funny the way I got to meet her. I'd planned a Soweto label and one day in Satbel I saw a label saying Soweto and totally freaked out.

Anyway, I picked it up and the producer was Claridge Bayville Matiwane and the song was

"Good Feeling" and the artist Margaret M'cingana and the Symbols. I listened to the record and freaked. It was wrong key, bad production but it was like seeing Conglomeration for the first time. I just knew this was it. I screamed into the MD's office, Al Constansa, and said: "Who's this person, I've gotta record her", and he said: "Jesus, I'm so delighted." He'd been trying to get everyone to produce her and no one would.

Anyway, I met her and the magic was just instantly compounded. I talked Satbel into giving me what was then a very big budget for an album. I decided not to use any of the big studios because I'd been lucky at Auvico and so went back there. I changed her name from M'cingana to Singana, which I think was legitimate. That was the start of one of the most exciting years of my life.

Margaret and I travelled overseas. We recorded and filmed in London, went to Cannes and in everything I did there I decided to include her. So if I was going to a gay club, if I was getting out of it, if I went to a rock concert or whatever, Margaret came along with me and we had an incredible time.

But the number one priority at that time was to break her in South Africa. That was an absolutely mammoth thing because although at this stage I had a good relationship with all the radio people, when I walked in with her record to the old SABC in Commissioner Street I was actually told by one person: "Radio Bantu's next door". I said: "You don't understand." I said: "Just for once listen to the voice, listen to the song, listen to the production, listen to the whole idea". I said: "I cannot for one second understand why I have to go and offer this record next door". I said: "I will certainly offer it next door, but I want to offer it here as well."

"No, but she's a black artist. You must take her to radio Bantu."

"But," I said, "that's

completely insane. What about Sammy Davis, what about Shirley Bassey, what about Diana Ross and the Supremes ...?"

"They're international."

Anyway, it staggered me. It INFURIATED me. I tried to keep calm. I realised it's pointless antagonising people in those positions because it just makes them harder.

So I went next door and offered it to Radio Bantu, and strangely enough there I got an equally luke-warm reception. Because this time it was considered too **white or international**. So we actually fell right in the fucking crack. It really freaked me out.

Anyway, one lucky break was with Bob Whitfield who was then head compiler LM Radio. He just loved it. In those days LM was still a little maverick station and Bill . . .er. . .Bob started to play the record. It went to number two on the Radio 5. . .er. . .the LM radio hit parade, and it gave me a base at which to start working.

I didn't stop with white radio. I kept going and I kept going, and I kept going and I could see I was getting people into terribly embarrassing situations. They used to see me coming and they'd say: "Oh Jesus, here comes that mother with Margaret Singana," and they used to duck and dodge and dive. And I also UNDERSTAND (though I've never been able to discover this officially) that there was some sort of memo to the effect that it was not cool to play a black South African act on Springbok Radio. I've never seen it, and as I say I've never been told about it officially. But I was aware that the personnel were being put under some sort of pressure as regards local black acts.

Nevertheless I kept going back. I kept going. Likewise with the black radio I kept going and kept going. And slowly but surely I'd find the odd person who'd be brave and say: "Okay, I'll give it a punt." At radio they were very clever to ensure that it got played

even if it was only once. That if it ever broke in the press they could not be accused of point-blank refusing to play a black South African act 'cos they'd say: "Oh yes we did." It was really uphill, it was terrible, but eventually certain people started to get touched by the magic of Singana, simple as that. Slowly but surely. Very slowly, because I was not prepared to get into any payola situation whatsoever with Singana.

So then we pulled a stunt which I think was unique here. I believe we were the first people ever to throw a massive non-racial record promotion party. We did it in grand style. We hired the main dining room at the President Hotel and invited everybody, black and white from press, radio – there was no television then – but even the unofficial black mayor of Soweto. It was really a stunning event, cost thousands. Satbel financed.

At this thing we presented Margaret with her first gold record "Good Feeling" which I'd re-recorded as Margaret Singana. We were also about to leave for England for filming and recording, so we gave a big schpieel, and at that thing I really made a pitch at "Let Margaret Singana be the first black artist to succeed within the borders of this country."

It was a conglomeration of black and white media people, and because it was such a hooaha event, everyone arrived. But I might add that everyone was also very uncomfortable. You had senior white radio people and junior black radio people and because it was non-racial we'd had to apply for this special permit, and there was a really tense kind of vibe. . .this was November/December '73.

I said: "Let this person who has a voice comparable to the greatest anywhere in the world (I believed that passionately then and I still do today), let her make it from **within**." I said: "Don't turn her into a bitter exile like the Makebas and the

Masekelas." I said: "There's no reason why she can't." I appealed on these levels. I said here was the chance of breaking a hero, number one, and, number two, here was someone who **deserved** to be a hero. I think that really got through to people.

However I must add that round about this time someone very prominent – whose name I cannot mention – took me to lunch and tipped me off that I should actually pull out of radio completely because I'd pushed so hard and so long on Margaret that I'd actually become an embarrassment and a liability to a lot of people. Okay, I'll say it – that's when I heard about the memo, right? I realised through the status of the person I was speaking to, and the sincerity of the tip-off, that if I was to push on I would only do Margaret damage. So I withdrew for about six months, and we were overseas for about three-four of that. When we came back I just played it very low key. But during that period another really weird thing had happened. A record Margaret had made before this whole launch, a number which was a complete and utter STIFF had suddenly exploded because the Government had decided to allow blacks to play to white audiences. That was Ipi Tombi. It just exploded white; it never sold one record to a black because they just considered it a rip-off and a travesty. But the whites went completely crazy and out of this came "Mama Tembu's Wedding". Coincidentally Margaret was the lead voice on the Ipi Tombi record.

So this rode on the back of all the ground work I'd done and actually got so big that there was no way that Springbok Radio could not acknowledge that it was big enough to qualify as a Top 20 record. And in fact it went to number four or five and so in a sense we were through.

I continued to throw non-racial parties at Satbel, but less formal situations where I'd invite the jocks and say that they



Patric van Blerk and Charlie Coetzee

weren't giving her the breaks she deserved. Slowly it started getting through. Any hint of payola I rejected with complete and utter contempt. I embarrassed those people completely, labelling them as complete sell-outs. So slowly but surely the thing started to break through and with each album and each single Singana got stronger and stronger . . .

So everything I said worked. She was getting international recognition. At the end of '78 she was not only on the same label as Donna Summer, she was even at one point on the same record . . . the *"Get Down and Boogie"* compilation. Singana opened side two, Summer opened side one.

So everything had worked, and she'd done it from inside the borders. Then came the Saries. In terms of achievement, success, gratification – but mainly her success – it was ludicrous that she didn't win. But in fairness to Sonja, before and after the Saries she made it quite clear publicly that she thought Margaret should have won.

Margaret had also just had a gigantic record, *"I've Never Loved a Man"*, which went well over a 100 000 units, so it was really crazy. But in complete

fairness I must say that I don't know how the whole system works. I know there are the judges, and I know that to a certain extent there's a public vote but I don't know how much weight it carries. I cannot believe that the judges would not have given it to her, no matter who they were or how verkrampt they were. But I can believe that the public vote could swing it.

You mustn't forget that the people voting for Saries are 100 percent Springbok Radio listeners, and for those people from the country platteland areas, Sonja Herholdt is their *"chick"*, you know. And I don't know how much of their vote was counted but it was an embarrassment for everybody. We don't know if the judges' vote counts for 80 percent and the listeners' for 20 percent. To the very best of my knowledge no one knows that. The judges are known publicly, but no one knows how or why the final decision is reached. I've heard that there's even talk of the record industry taking the Saries back, but I don't know. That's where the word comes from. S-A-R-I, the South African Record Industry. When SABC took over they added the E, but if

it had been the SARI awards that year instead of the SARIE, Margaret would unquestionably have won. Whatever.

At this point in time all I can say is that she's had a long and hard road, but Singana is now finally treated with the respect she deserves. Joy have had an easy ride. Margaret took all the blows, along with people like Richard Jon Smith and Lionel Peterson, although they had it fractionally easier than Margaret because they were supposedly *"Coloured"*. SABC makes that differentiation. They allowed him to be played on white radio some time before Margaret and their reasoning was that Margaret, being black, had a specifically black radio station whereas in Richard's case there was no *"coloured"* station.

I can honestly say that I have never encountered one iota of anti-Joy sentiment because of their colour. When I go in to make a record I don't think in terms of a section of people or any group of people or whatever. I tend to think the world. It'd be insane of me to think that I'm making a record – this will be specially for the people of Bloemfontein, or I want the people of Sweden to get off on this. I want as many people as is humanly possible to listen to the music and dip into their pockets and buy the record. I'm not just talking money, and I'm not just talking entertainment either, when I say I think internationally, it's in terms of crossover.

As I indicated earlier my life was changed enormously – ENORMOUSLY – in a social and lifestyle way by the Beatles, Hendrix, people like that, and on a political level by people like Dylan. And Singana. She herself is not political in that her own personal beliefs are not revolutionary. Also she's not a songwriter. But think about her environment. She was black in a white dominated society and had to get through that **on the vehicle of entertainment**. Merely in terms of her achievements under these conditions Singana is

politically inspiring. She made it in South Africa, for fuck's sake. She and I had songs banned, and that taught us a lot. One of my favourite songs was *"Light up the Light"*, that one with the line *"there's a spark"*. I should actually bring it back again now in this born-again era with Dylan and so on! Anyway, it was a personal, emotional and spiritual kind of statement I was making and we recorded it. But there was a line in it about children and lighting up the light to show the way. This was interpreted as some sort of political anthem and it was banned.

It's absolutely insane, the banning. I'd say it's an inspirational song. I mean I wrote it, so you'd think I'd know. But Margaret always sings it live. It's a standard in her repertoire and it's come to mean quite a lot in the townships. Like *"Paradise Road"*. Jesus, imagine if they ban **that!**

Okay. What else shall we speak about? As far as radio goes you'll probably find I'm in opposition to everyone else in this country. I do feel that in the entertainment sphere one has a duty to educate, and I think Radio 5 are very often guilty of not doing that. Now to talk on a strictly **musical** level – because if we speak on any other level this becomes another matter completely because then we'd be talking about dismantling an entire political structure – I have to say in fairness that what Radio 5 plays and whether or not it is acceptable is PURELY AND UTTERLY a question of taste. I agree that there is a duty to listeners that should be observed, and that this responsibility might sometimes be in direct conflict with their taste, and that individual taste would have to be overruled sometimes.

You know what I mean. The time comes when you have to say to yourself: *"Millions of people around the world are getting high on this band. I personally hate it, but I have a duty to those listeners out there."* It's a question of balance, where taste

meets responsibility. But it's difficult to knock a radio station on the question of taste. Just imagine if you played on radio everything you wanted to play. It'd be a fucking nightmare!

Okay: the record industry. In terms of their vision of South Africa in the world market place, and creatively, the record industry here is a complete and utter wank off. You're going to get, to that sort of criticism, all the record company bosses saying: *"Ja, but our function is to bring international music to South Africa. Imagine how we'd be criticised if we weren't, if we were only concentrating on local music."* What I object to violently is the complete and utter lack of vision on a creative level, on a financial level, on a pride level, of making any kind of major record (to break overseas). Obviously there are the independents, and they are trying to do it and some have got through, like Grahame Beggs got through with Clout. Gresham appears to be making a breakthrough with Stingray, got on the edge of the British charts at number 88 within two weeks of release with *"Better the Devil you Know"*.

Dempsey got a number one. There are independents working towards it and I'd like to consider myself one of the most active, but it is very difficult for an independent record producer from an isolated little planet like South Africa to really make a concerted world effort. We got close to it at Satbel with Rabbitt and Margaret Singana and Julian Laxton. I believe had Rabbitt not broken up and had Margaret not got ill, we would have succeeded.

But the big fish, the MDs. I don't think they give two fucking seconds of thought to: *"Wouldn't it be wonderful for South Africa to have an Abba as Sweden does, or a Bee Gees or Olivia Newton John as Australia does?"* If those two countries can have superstars and Greece can have Demis Roussos... Even France has broken acts internationally,

Francois Hardy and Charles Aznavour and all this kind of thing. I don't think the guys who actually have the muscle to do it give a fuck about: *"Will South Africa have a monster superstar?"* That's left to the independents.

Grahame got close to it, but while I'm not negating his success at all, Clout had one hit single throughout Europe and England which nibbled at the American market, but there was no way you could even call Clout an international megamonster act. But without the independents throughout the world I couldn't see the record industry continuing, quite honestly.

The independents have been responsible for the real creative breakthroughs.

The South African MDs don't even know who their acts are, in most cases. Never ever do you see them at any live venue, and there's no excuse. What difference is there between a concert at the Market Theatre or Wits Great Hall to going to Hurrahs or CBGBs in New York or the Troubadour in LA? Where do you see, in a newspaper article, a record company president in South Africa standing up and saying: *"This band is gonna be a this and a that, and we're gonna break down the world."* It's always the producer or the manager or independent who says that. There is no executive commitment in this country to the local creative status.

How in God's earth short of a minor miracle are we going to create a Beatles, or a Bee Gees or an Abba when it is a mammoth task for someone like me to persuade MDs to part with some of their precious money to promote a local act? Whoever the company is, whoever the MD is, whoever the act is. It's a mammoth task.

Satbel was a different bag. When they started as a local company they had no labels, and when they started getting labels they were getting funny little

ones that didn't carry much weight. So whether they liked it or not they had to make a commitment locally. And in fairness to Robin Taylor and Al Constanza, they were both good executives within the South African syndrome. Constanza was totally committed to Singana and Taylor was totally committed to Rabbitt and they backed me in whatever I wanted to do.

I believe I have a nickname, "the champagne producer". I suppose that means productions I do are horrifically expensive and I tend to buy champagne and get pissed at sessions. Ever since I was at Satbel I've had thrown at me: "Don't tell us about your Rabbitt success or anything because the company went bankrupt." It was not because of my division. My division made a profit, and the artists made a profit. Everyone thought that I spent multi-millions but it's horseshit. The first Rabbitt album "Boys will be Boys" cost R5 000, as opposed to the first Joy album (released on Patric's Cafe Society label through RPM) which cost R15 000. As opposed to the first Stingray album (released through David Gresham) which cost, I believe, R25 000.

Okay, costs have escalated. But on the promotion of "Boys will be Boys" I'm prepared to say that we spent not a cent more than R3 000, and an advance which was recoupable to the company, R2 000 to Rabbitt for extra equipment. The opening Rabbitt gamble was ten grand.

What our critics couldn't understand was why we had press ad nauseum. After Doug Gordon's raves in the **Sunday Times**, the other papers started catching on. Both black and white papers, English and Afrikaans. The band were a good name, the records were sensational. We had a hit with "Charlie" and the whole thing snowballed. We weren't paying Doug Gordon, we weren't paying the **Sunday Times**, or the radio or the other papers. It was free,

but the record industry thinks it cost multi-millions. In South Africa, not counting international sales, that album brought into the company well in excess of R100 000. The statement that Rabbitt never made its money back is complete and utter bullshit, it is an excuse by others for never being able to achieve the same sort of thing. Rabbitt made an enormous amount of money.

The second album I admit I went a little crazy on. I spent R15 000 on production which at the time was an outrageous amount of money. With promotion, the total outlay was about R40 000. That album, "A Croak and a Grunt", brought back into the company R180 000 for purely local sales.

Singana's profit areas, I might add, were even wider. The production costs were lower. The promotion costs slightly lower – we didn't do bus shelters and all that nonsense for Margaret – but long term the sales were bigger so it stands to reason the profits were higher.

It's a popular myth in the industry that Rabbitt lost money, and I put it down to pure jealousy because no one has ever beaten them. Not Clout, not anybody. Not even I've equalled it. I'm not saying we made more money than any other artist, but no company has equalled the overall impact on the general South African market that we had with Rabbitt and Singana. No other acts have affected or changed people's lives as we did. Suddenly this buzz around town, four talented, pretty, exciting people. Street buzz is already there, vibe gets around town that an incredible album has been made; meeting all four Rabbitts in those days, the up days, was like shooting up, it was such a high you **had** to get turned on. Doug Gordon didn't singlehandedly turn the nation onto Rabbitt, it wasn't a hype. He was wildly excited, genuinely moved. I imagine it'd be like the person who brought the first rock 'n roll records to Alan Freed.

The record industry here is its own worst enemy in terms of local talent. There's no consciousness. Sooner or later somebody (and I certainly believe it'll be me) is going to turn in a massive success and then all of a sudden these people are gonna scratch their heads: "Jesus Christ, we may really see monster money start to roll in." Then everyone is going to scramble over their bloody feet to do the same thing.

Look at how exciting the Australian record industry is at the moment. They've passed their Rolf Harris stage and now they're really going for it – Air Supply, Jo Jo Zep and the Falcons and so on.

I don't agree with their system of playing a certain percentage of local music on radio. Often it just doesn't merit it. Radio 5 rejected "Paradise Road" three times and I could have said "oh well", but it was a case of commitment and I could not give up. I lunched these guys, you name it. I did everything it was legal to do to get time on the air.

South African artists have an almost self destructive thing about them – I think it comes from being classed as second class citizens. Artists here are never made to feel what I made Rabbitt feel. I ingrained in the Rabbitts that they were stars. There was a star consciousness in their brains, that's why it was so infectious. Artists have got to believe they're on a very special mission. That there's only one of them and millions of other people.

The South African record industry doesn't make its artists feel special, they feel second rate. Therefore it's a bum deal and it's a hard road and they get depressed. They're not earning enough money and they fight with each other and the whole thing turns sour, and they think it'd be far better to be a nurse, teacher or whatever. I have never met a South African artist who understands or is able to measure success. They are selfish, greedy, ungrateful

people. Before they're successful, and I only wish I could have a video to prove how many times this has happened, it's "Oh make me a star, take anything you want, just make me a star." Right? Zoom, a year or two ahead. Now they're stars: "You're taking my money away. I bought you your BMW." That's what happens. That's how idiotic they are.

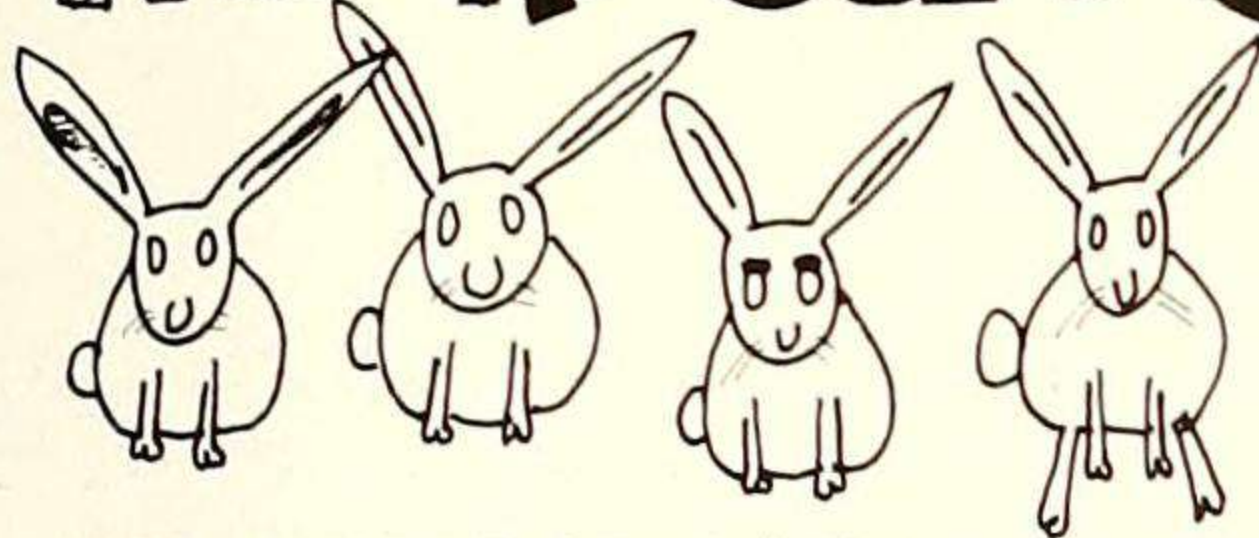
There are few artists in this world who've been intelligent

enough to accept success with grace, Elvis Presley being one. He never moved away from Col. Tom Parker. Never, and look what happened. I'm not saying that there aren't some terrible rip-offs and con people in showbiz. There are, but maybe I'm being biased towards myself when I say that if one artist I've worked with in the last ten years can show me where I've unfairly taken a bean, let them stand up

and do so. Do you know Joy are insane? They are the hottest act in the country at present, and they say on the radio that they don't like disco or "Ain't Gonna Stop". Well why did they record it then, or take royalties?

The sad thing is that artists that do understand and would never get into all that shit are the artists that don't have the talent to deliver the goods. It's the artists with talent that turn out to be impossible.

THE RABBITTS



WERE THE FIRST, AND ONLY, BIG TEENY-BOP IDOLS IN THE COUNTRY. THEY WERE COMPARED TO THE BAY CITY ROLLERS

BUT THEIR FANS MADE IT QUITE FLAIN THEY WEREN'T REALLY IN THE SAME LEAGUE



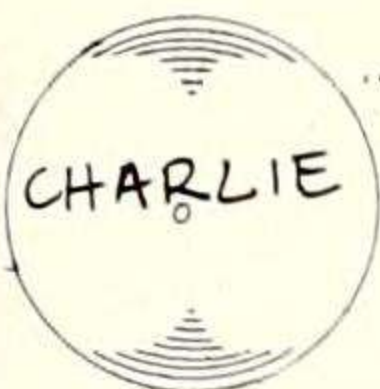
THE RABBITTS HAD A VERY CAMP VIBE AS CAN BE SEEN BY THEIR RECORD COVERS AND T-SHIRTS THEY USED TO WEAR

THE RABBITTS WERE:

- TREVOR RABIN
LEAD GUITAR, VOCALS
- DUNCAN FAURE
GUITAR, KEYBOARD, VOCALS
- NEIL CLOUD
DRUMS
- RONNIE ROBOT
BASS



THEIR FIRST BIG HIT WAS...



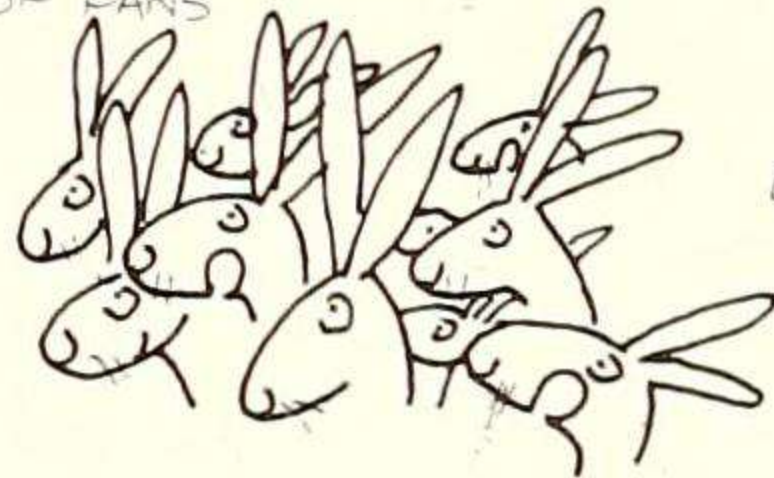
...WRITTEN BY PATRIC VAN BLERK ABOUT HIS LOVER CHARLIE

BUT THE FANS NEVER KNEW THAT!

BUT THE RABBITTS WERE ALL VERY MACHO AND STRAIGHT AND THE CAMP IMAGE WAS DREAMED UP BY PATRIC VAN BLERK

THEN IN 1976...

BESIDES PICKING UP HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF FANS



AND MORE PRESS COVERAGE THAN ANY BAND HAS RECEIVED TO DATE



THEY GOT THE SARGE AWARD FOR THE BEST CONTEMPORARY POP GROUP IN THE COUNTRY

AND PATRIC VAN BLERK GOT BEST PRODUCER AWARD: TREVOR RABIN - BEST ARRANGER AND JULIAN LAXTON - BEST ENGINEER.

ALL FOR THEIR WORK ON RABBITTS' "BOYS WILL BE BOYS" LP.



THEN SUDDENLY THEY SPLIT UP WITH ACCUSATIONS FLYING LEFT AND RIGHT - ALL TOO DULL TO GO INTO NOW



THEIR MANAGER, MIKE FULLER, WHO WITH PATRIC STEERED THEM TO FAME, WAS OUT OF A JOB

TREVOR WENT SOLO, AND IS NOW WRITING/PRODUCING/SINGING/PLAYING IN ENGLAND; DUNCAN JOINED THE BAY CITY ROLLERS; NEIL WENT TO AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY TO STUDY MUSIC. RONNIE GOT MARRIED, HAD A BABY AND BECAME A BICYCLE SALESPERSON





Dave Marks

Lennon taught Marks

Dave Marks on aspects of production.

On his own background:

I was a miner when I left school. I wrote *"Mountains of Men"* and the beginnings of *"Master Jack"* in the mines. They're dated now, and corny, but the ideas are okay I suppose. I had my first rock band in Witbank where I was at high school. My folks lived on a mine in Johannesburg (my dad was an engineer) and my mother was ostracised by her community because she had a Miriam Makeba record. These types of things really baffled me, even though I understood the black and white situation as much as you can when you're that age.

I always wanted to reconcile what we were playing as a rock 'n roll band 20 years ago with the music I used to love as a kid. When I was small in Jo'burg I used to be really turned on by the kwela groups. I used to stand and watch them playing outside, say the post office in Jeppe Street, and could never understand why they'd suddenly disappear. I'd see the kwela van come by, and I'd know exactly where the group had gone to – to the old Bazaars in Pritchard Street, opposite the City Hall – so I'd run after them. I used to love watching these little bands play, just follow them around. So when I got older, and into rock 'n roll, I always wanted to combine the two.

The reason I got into the music business or game or whatever they call it was not my choice. I would have loved to have continued playing – be a star or

whatever it is young boys want to be – but I had to become involved because I saw so many gaps. I resigned from the mines in '67 to become professional. I was involved with the folk thing, and then through a series of circumstances I got to America and worked for a company there, touring and doing festivals and finding out how it was done. My very first live mixing gig was that John Lennon concert in Toronto.

On the folkie scene:

I started playing with the folkies in '64/'65. I was totally zapped by Dylan, and was introduced to a folk club where I saw Des Lindberg and Ian Lawrence. I couldn't believe that a guy could take one guitar and sit up there and sing songs without a microphone. So weekends I used to come to Jo'burg from whichever mine I was on, and just sing my own songs at the Troubadour or the Nightbeat. And I found that whenever I did original stuff people listened, no matter how badly I sang.

It hadn't been like that with the rock bands. All the original material we tried to write didn't go down. You could throw something in, but mostly you had to copy The Shadows or whoever there was at the time. So suddenly there was a new vehicle for my songs.

Also, I couldn't play guitar. I was a bass player, but I made do with three or four chords and folk was a real outlet. At that time I wrote a song called *"When*

Jeppe was a Two-Way Street" which related to the whole kwela thing, the pennywhistlers vanishing whenever the police vans came. . .the idea was that when Jeppe was a two-way street it was easy for the cats to run either way.

At that time I had two faces, because I also used to play for a rock band called The Privilege with Harry Poulis and Dave James.

On the house that *"Master Jack"* built:

Harry Poulis was playing for Four Jacks and a Jill, and he was into this whole Hammond organ trip and once again my songs just didn't fit. But when he heard *"Master Jack,"* he said: *"This is quite a step from 'House with the White-Washed Gables,'"* which they'd just had a hit with.

In those days I thought Four Jacks and a Jill were entertaining – they served their purpose. I used to drink in those days, so I suppose. . .but as sweet as saccharine as they were, they were one of the few bands at the time who did their own material. When they recorded that song in '67 it was already three years old, and it was a bit suspect in my books, especially the melody which was terribly corny, I thought.

"Master Jack" was about Verwoerd, or at least that's how it evolved. I sincerely believed Verwoerd was an idiot, and he was Master Jack. At first it was structured differently – it started with the verse. Then on the day my first record got recorded and released (*"Mountains of Men"*, recorded by Des Lindberg and Ian Lawrence), September 26, 1966, Verwoerd got done in. That day the folk festival ended too, and I also had more work than I'd had in something like three years. I stayed at the folk festival that night, and when I heard the news I just sat down and finished writing *"Master Jack"*. I firmly believed that John Vorster, who was then minister of police, killed Verwoerd so that he could take over and this would be the end.

Clacky Mackay (then on LM radio) was the first one to play "Master Jack". He was also the first to play "Mountains of Men" which got to number 17.

"Master Jack" was the B-side of the Four Jacks and a Jill single. At the time Teal didn't want to use the number, not even on an album. They thought it was silly and folkly. Eventually I signed away the publishing for five years because I needed the money, and was told I'd be able to make some money out of "Master Jack" because the A-side, "I Look Back", was going to be huge.

It's the usual old story, the rags to riches crap, and Clacky flipped it against orders from Teal. He said he didn't like the A-side. It became a big hit, and that's why Third Ear's called "the house that 'Master Jack' built". In mechanical royalties I got about R3 500 and the song sold half a million copies. It's the only locally produced, written and recorded song to have attained the heights it has anywhere in the world. Clout's big hit wasn't locally written. A lot of other South Africans have done better, but they're out of the country.

I always mention that not for any ego inflation or whatever, it's just that it puts South Africa in a terrible light that nothing has happened in 12 years. I think, and hope, that Steve Kekana can pip "Master Jack".

On radio:

I believe the SABC has had a lot to do with the downfall of music. And yet, in 1980 when the industry met with Radio 5, only three companies stood up and said anything. Those three were me, WEA and RPM. Matt Mann (MD, RPM) really put them on the line. He said: "Why're we wasting our time at this meeting if you're not going to take our advice or listen to our ideas?"

I once went to Springbok with Amagugu S'Manje tapes and said, "why can't you play this? You play French music, you play German." They insist that 25% of the content on Radio Bantu is

white music, Afrikaans and English – yet on Springbok they won't play one note of black music. We'd taken a band from Zimbabwe called the Rusiki Brothers. Five brothers who do a rip-off of the Jacksons, but they're really dynamic. They do this lovely routine with their white suits and all this kind of thing. So we take their stuff to Springbok, and Tinus Esterhuizen says "oh no, they're too black". But Spirits Rejoice are black and the same sort of bag and they've just had a big hit. Where's the connection? I'm not going to drop my pants for them or anything, but this situation is so contradictory, because 75% of the music Radio 5 plays is black.

Roy Clarke wrote a song which Patric van Blerk wanted Margaret Singana to record. For some reason Patric phoned Yvonne Huskisson at the SABC to ask if the lyrics would get through.

The chorus is:

I stand for love and understanding

I stand for peace for my brothers and sisters

I stand for hope that things gonna be much better

You gotta believe it, please believe it.

Now according to Patric, Huskisson said this wasn't acceptable. She said that "I stand for love and understanding" is a radical statement. "I stand for peace for my brothers and sisters" prompted her to ask Patric how there can be peace when we're not at war? And we couldn't say "I stand for hope that things gonna be much better" because it implied that things were bad.

I don't know how Patric decided to change it. He said he thought someone had been in touch with me and got permission for the changes. I was totally shocked. You can't just go and change a whole song like that. Then I got a phonecall to say that what I'm doing is I'm stopping a good 75 000 sale record. But then why don't they

go write a new song? Roy is flabbergasted, he can't believe it. Roy's the ordinary middle of the road type bench songwriter. He works at his songs. He doesn't write radical or protest songs, he just writes pop songs.

I intend to get all the independents to take some action against the SABC. I've been trying to lobby them and see what they think about all this. Patric's attitude appears to be that we shouldn't get into the whole thing politically. But his credibility... the SABC's the one that should be scared, not him.

On the question of Radio 5's dampening effect on original bands:

In '60 and '61 Mickey Most was copying Chuck Berry of course, but Johnny Congos was writing all his own material. So was Hank Squires and Manfred Mann. In those days the record companies hadn't helped to smother the scene. Radio in those days pushed the big people like Elvis and Pat Boone in large doses, but someone like Little Richard wasn't that big. I never heard him via radio, it was more word of mouth. But in the whole LM Radio era prior to Radio 5 there were certainly plenty of original groups around – the Bats, Freedom's Children and so on.

On the famous Marks collection of tapes:

From '64 I've recorded whoever I could. A Jabulani amphitheatre concert, Mel Miller's jokes, Ian Lawrence's sketches. I have the Durban military tattoo on tape. I have John Vorster. I believe if it moves, record it. So Third Ear became something of a focal point for musicians and lots of great links were formed this way.

That's how Abstract Truth was formed. The kind of information we have on tape on a small scale, a good radio station should have. These tapes have become very important. From them, came the joining of Malombo and Freedom's Children in the Valley of a

Thousand Hills in 1972. Malombo was the first true crossover band. White people started noticing indigenous music, because SABC was supporting the theory of that boom, boom, boom stuff. At that time Malombo had to play behind the curtain because they were black, and then the white band members had to wear masks because it was a black concert. It's one of the big problems, that musicians have put up with things like that.

In '68 we had a folk festival at Sandton and I wanted to put a black guy on and there was no way they'd allow permission for this cat. So I devised a plan where he'd come on just before interval with a broom. And if anyone asked him, his story would have been that he was supposed to be sweeping the stage. That's how bizarre it got, but I didn't have guts to say to the guy "*come on stage with a broom.*"

On the role he sees for Third Ear Music:

Third Ear started officially in '69 when I was in America. It was started by Ben Segal and Aubrey Smith, who I took over from. Ben was one of the first people to record Malombo. We thought that we'd start a publishing company to protect or exploit indigenous words and music. By promoting indigenous music and concerts we've been trying to fill the gaps in the industry. The rest of the industry people think I'm a total idiot. I've been referred to as Mad Marks – they think I'm insane. But I think personally that we don't do enough. I must admit I have been concentrating on white music. Not by choice, purely by the way it's gone.

I feel damn cheated because I know that if the lines of communication were open, the township thing would be a natural force like the kwela thing. So many groups come through Third Ear first – Spirits Rejoice, Juluka, Malombo – but I haven't got the bread so it's difficult for me to offer them the

kind of things that other record companies would offer them and I don't have a contract, unless I've done something for them. There's this group Tou, who're amazing and who desperately want to record with us. I told them that if they want to record they must go to one of the majors like EMI or Gallo. The way they work with me is that for six months I try to collect 20 grand so I can pay them a retainer; take them off the road for six months so they can get an act together without appearing in these silly little festivals.

On the importance of the gig:

The record industry in South Africa believes somehow that it's because of records that there's music. Not the other way around, so the bands also believe that to make it in music you've got to make a record, and really, there shouldn't be any hurry for it. Colin Shamley's just made a record after playing for 13 years. He's still been living, and he's been eating, performing **his** music in **his** way. And as many people as put him down, twice that many take out their money and support him. There are a lot of artists who don't ever record. In fact with the new wave thing – and this is the nice part about it – a lot of those bands believe that making a record is a sacrilege, because it isn't rock 'n roll. I believe that too.

A record isn't art, it's a memento. That contact is important. Despite how bourgeois **Rolling Stone** magazine has become, it still says that the concert is the thing. Which brings up another problem: here we don't have any journals, we don't have information by radio. When we read anything interesting it comes from a glossy overseas magazine, and that's how we relate even to local music. For example, Roger Lucey's "*Half Alive*" record is terrible if you compare it to this production and that production – but without comparison it's fantastic. It's recorded on a two-track machine, under terrible

conditions, and there's no reason for it's being made better or worse. If Jethro Butow played his guitar too loudly, or too softly, that's the way he played. The live thing breaks down all barriers. Rock 'n Roll – and I use the term to mean all popular music – is a big party. How do you get it across to people who aren't at the party?

The live gig is where we the writers always made do during the folk era. And this is where a lot of what has come out of the guys who are writing has been missed commercially, or has been dismissed as cliquey, specialist, avant garde and communist by the record companies. Free People's concerts (a once-yearly event, usually held on the Wits University campus) originated in Durban on the beach, because there was no other legit outlet for people who were writing their own material. So we took a generator, and we took a sound system, went out to the beach and had a 36 hour bash. Just smoking it up and freaking out and getting into the music. That was such a success that when I got back to Jo'burg in '71 we put on the first Free People's concert and had one every year until it was banned in '75. They were organised so that they looked informal and all sorts of people used to come: people jumping up screaming "*you communists!*", others "*you rightwing fascists!*", and then of course groups like the Hare Krishnas would pitch up.

At one of these concerts we put on Amagugu S'Manje, a 14-piece tribal band that would put Alice Cooper to shame. People didn't believe what they'd heard. They played absolutely well, even though they didn't have a drum pedal.

Hawk, the great white group that flew to freedom the following year, refused to lend Amagugu's drummer a bass drum pedal. They said he would break it – but it wasn't that. It was because he was black.

Anyway, it didn't bother him.

MOUNTAINS OF MEN

This land was barren, the lion's domain
He was king, over all he reigned
Then came our fathers to dig from the ground
Black men and white men to see what they found
 They stand in our country, we see them and then
 We say it's just dust, but it's not . . . it's mountains of men.

Many more riches were soon to be seen
Men stayed and died to build us a dream
Those men in the mines – they're off the earth's crust
These mountains are priceless all be they of dust.
 They stand in our country, we see them and then
 We say it's just dust, but it's not . . . it's mountains of men.

They used to work here, young men and old
Black men and white men to dig out the gold
Some made their fortunes, others just died . . .
But they left us something to remember them by
 They stand in our country, we see them and then
 We say it's just dust, but it's not . . . it's mountains of men.

DAVE MARKS

Any white group would have said: *"If we haven't got a bass drum we're pissing off."* He kicked his drum with his foot, and they played an amazing concert – despite having to use really fucked up guitars and a really distorted sound from a 12 volt battery amplifier. EMI had been terrified to put them on. But typical record company logic, the applause had hardly died down when their manager says: *"We've got to have a meeting. These boys are going overseas . . . those 10 000 kids were really grooving on them."*

So they had a meeting and decided to groom Amagugu for international conquest. They planned to buy them new suits, new guitars and a new drum pedal. I was so enraged when I heard this that I phoned EMI and said: *"Are you mad? I don't want to perpetuate that tribal thing or anything, but this is how the band is. By changing their instruments and their ways, you're just putting them into the category Harari are in. Part of their charm is that they're rural people"*.

Black people have a totally different concept of performance. When you go to a black concert there's never even a fist-fight – provided the show is well-handled and the sound is good. At white pop festivals you can't keep count of the fights: mainly because they're not there for the music, they're there to see who they can pick up.

On the record industry:

The record companies are wholesalers. They wholesale product. Patric van Blerk told me he once went to a convention in the Gallo building, and in this whole three hour convention they never mentioned the word music once. Just product. The closest they came to mentioning music was material. It's like a shoe convention not mentioning feet. That's the problem with the industry, that they do liken music to any other industry – whereas music is so unlike any other industry in the world. It's something so insecure and

ideological all along the way. You can make a bad record: technically, and lyrically it can be bad, but somehow there's a musical thing that seems to come through.

The main thing wrong with the industry is the attitudes of people. Everyone says local is bad, and it's hard to prove this but there are more South Africans in the British and American music industries than any other foreigner. Just look at A&M, EMI, VIRGIN, Warner Brothers on the west coast and WEA on the east coast – there are so many South Africans in there.

The reason is that in South Africa they all had to know a little bit about everything just to survive – so they're quite impressive with their general knowledge. Here people in the industry just sort of stand in the middle and wait to see which way the money falls. If it's going to be on the side of the industry, that's the hat they'll wear. If it's going to be on the side of the musician, that's the hat they'll wear.

God only knows what the record companies see in music

... they certainly don't hear. The answers are all tied up in that awards thing (in 1980, RPM became the first record company to ever win the State Award for Export Achievement). Those are the kind of people who run the industry. How in that type of environment can music or radio even begin to survive, man?

Take radio. They use it as an outlet for sales, but it doesn't inform, entertain or educate as far as music goes. Why aren't they compelled to sink some of that money into research? The tobacco industry gives money to cancer research, man. What does the record industry do? Absolutely nothing. They should send engineers overseas to see what's happening. They do it sometimes, very rarely, and usually with the wrong person who never comes back. They should really try to recycle people and gather information.

What freaks me out the most is that their attitude is a short term profit motive. And these people are still in the industry. You'd expect them to get rooted out. In any other industry they wouldn't

survive. Bill Fraser (EMI) told me that the entire industry had a turnover of R50-m in 1979. And to think that's one third of what Robert Stigwood (the Bee Gees etc.) earns in his personal capacity as profit. Or even less than a third. That year he made R250-m, I think.

Gerald McGrath once called in a young executive. I won't mention his name, he came up the ranks like all execs in South Africa – with accounting, university, all that sort of thing behind him. He loved music, like they all do. They all start out with a lot of good intentions and a lot of good will I'm sure. What happened was he'd never been to a concert or a jazz concert in Soweto. So we started befriending him and inviting him to these places. His whole attitude started changing. McGrath pulled him in one day and said: "*You are mixing with bad elements.*" This person said: "*Whaddyamean?*" and McGrath said: "*You're mixing with musicians.*" Now here's the fucking A&R who's been told by his boss not to mix with musicians. . . ■



Cocky '2-bull' Thlothalemaje

Chapter 3 **ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL**

WE know that 49 Broederbond members (the secret right-wing organisation which has as its aim ultimate Afrikaner domination in South Africa) are the power behind the SABC. The most important jobs at the SABC belong to Broeders:

- Prof Wynand Mouton, Chairperson of the SABC.
- Piet Meyer, Broederbond chairperson from 1960 to 1972, had also been chairperson of the SABC from 1958-80. Meyer also sat on the nine-strong SABC Board, chaired the so-called Bantu Programme Advisory Board, and was on the "Viewers watchdog", the Television Programme Advisory Board.
- In addition to him, three people on the SABC Board were Broeders – W A Maree, S J Terreblanche and H O Mönnig.
- Along with Meyer on the six-person Bantu Programme Advisory Board was E F Potgieter. Incidentally, only one black person, R N Gugushe, sat on this board.
- A former director of education in Natal and also a former member of the Broeder's executive council, PRT Nel was on the Television Programme Advisory Board with Meyer.

Other Broeders include/d:

- Director General J N Swanepoel
- The present Director General, Steve M de Villiers.
- Director General of TV and

Radio Programmes J H T Schutte.

- Director of Bantu and External Services T van Heerden.
- Southern Transvaal Regional Manager J P Ludick.
- Namibian Regional Manager P J Venter.
- Orange Free State Head B J Steyn. Prior to this appointment he was head of the Nguni services (the seven African language services are broken up into Nguni and Sotho services).
- Head of Television News and Current Affairs J J L Hamman.
- Deputy Director of Management Services Gert Yssel.
- Director of TV 1 Hennie Human.
- Director of Foreign and Nguni Services Manie Lubbe.
- Head of Stores and Supplies E van H E Mischke.

According to Wilkins and Strydom in **The Superafrikaners**: "*as the older ones retire, the younger Broeders will take over and even under another government, the Broederbond will be firmly in control of the country's radio and television services.*"

We know that the Broadcasting Act is a Broederbond sanctioned piece of legislation, and that the SABC has long been used to feed propaganda into the homes of South Africans. During the war years venomous anti-

British and anti-Jewish talks in Afrikaans were broadcast on SABC from Zeesen in Germany. The Broederbond has made no secret of the fact that the SABC is its voicepiece.

Piet Meyer is reported as having said that radio listeners did not have the right to prescribe the policy of the SABC any more than newspaper readers had the right to prescribe the policy of a newspaper. However, as Wilkins and Strydom point out, "*what he failed to mention was that the SABC had a monopolistic position entrenched by the law and people simply had to listen to the radio. Newspapers, on the other hand, were involved in serious circulation battles and people had a wide choice.*"

In its secret document "*Masterplan for a white country: the strategy*", drafted in the wake of the 1976 disturbances, the Broederbond made its sinister plan of action quite plain. It talked about implementing Dr Verwoerd's original Bantustan policy to its logical conclusion and discussed how to combat "radical" ideas: "*Just as youth is currently being encouraged to resist discipline, parental authority, school authority etc., so too they can be brought into revolt against what is decadent and destructive . . .*"

"*. . . the positive side of the counter action is to spread reliable and relevant information continuously and to disseminate it through the mass media.*"

"*. . . just as for the white*"

“Masterplan for a white country: the strategy”, explains the importance of having broeders in control of the so-called bantu services. The masterplan calls for the use of organisations including the SABC and its Bantu Services and the planned Black TV Service, to “compel” compliance with the plan whose main purpose is to see that overwhelming numbers of the black population live and work in their own homelands, or Bantustans, as soon as possible.

From **“THE SUPER AFRIKANERS”** by Hans Strydom and Ivor Wilkins.

country, a central body must be established for every homeland to help form public opinion in favour of the policy. The national leaders and the public media, particularly the radio, will play an important role in this regard.

“... the separate radio services for the black nations and the coming television service must play an enormous role here. A public opinion sympathetic with the homelands must be built up. Cultural organisations and social services must be stimulated on this basis ...”

Sieg Heil! Little wonder, after instructions like that, that the SABC annual report to education minister Piet Koornhof (also a listed Broederbond member) does everything possible to assure the minister that there have been no deviations from the masterplan.

In all there are seven black services – Zulu, Xhosa, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Tswana, Venda and Tsonga – each broadcasting in the vernacular and until 1979 known collectively as Radio Bantu. These services have been going for 20 years. The stations are now broken up into the Nguni services (Zulu and Xhosa) and the Sotho Services, both headed by Broeders.

Apart from R N Gugushe on the so-called Bantu Programme Advisory Board, a handful of disc jocks and PRO Justus Tshungu, no blacks have positions of importance on the black services. In keeping with Broederbond policy, these services have a “develop along your own lines” attitude, which encourages cultural identification with the “homelands”.

The 1977 SABC annual report, the first after the publication of the masterplan, claims that the black services’ daily listenership is 4,7 million adults (negligible really, when you consider that there are more than 20 million black people in the country) and that a total of 996 original works were broadcast in the seven services during the year: 122 plays, 68 serials, 149 documentaries, 445 praise songs

and 212 legends.

Get this: the praise songs and legends, pushing the tribal line, account for nearly two-thirds of the 996 original works the report boasts of. The plays are mostly set in the homelands, while practically every interview and every documentary is about the homelands.

Here, from the report, are some of the documentaries broadcast: “*The Herdsman*”, “*A promise fulfilled, an ideal realised – a series on the development of Bophutha Tswana into an independent state*”; “*The Fhumani Gold Mine*”; “*Our Homeland and its People*” and “*A Year After Independence – a programme on Transkei*”.

Talks serials broadcast include “*Homeland Events*”, “*The Dangers of Communism*” and “*Communism in Africa*”. According to the report, “*A large variety of themes included detective stories and traditional tales*”, as well as a host of religious programmes. The youth programmes include the singing of traditional songs and the playing of traditional games.

The first six items listed in the section “*South African and World Affairs: Important events dealt with*” give you an idea of the propaganda pushed out on the black services: “... *discussions between the Homeland leaders and the Prime Minister; tributes on the death of both the first and second Commissioners General of the North Sotho People, Dr W W M Eiselen and Mr GPC Bezuidenhout; the taking over of the Department of Health and Welfare by the Venda Government and the appointment of Chief C A Nelwamondo as Minister of Health; the sessions of the Legislative Assemblies of the Various Homelands, the inauguration of a department of Information for the Venda Government and the publication of their own newspaper; the general election in Bophutha Tswana on the eve of its proposed independence and all*

the preparations associated with it . . ."

On Radio Bantu "world affairs" do not exist beyond the borders of S.A.

An area where the propaganda machine works incredibly efficiently is in music. There are two committees – one for the Nguni-related and one for the Sotho-related languages – which decide whether or not a record is to have airplay.

The Nguni committee sits in Durban. The Sotho committee sits in Johannesburg. The Sotho committee has two separate meetings – one for records in Sotho-related languages, and one for records in English.

Lyric sheets have to be submitted with every record handed in for possible airplay on the Sotho services. The same applies to Springbok which we'll discuss later.

The committees decide what is and what isn't suitable for airplay on the black services. And that doesn't mean musically or technically suitable. As mentioned in the chapter on the music industry, a record containing township slang is rejected.

Howard Ipp gives the example of a song containing the word "jawler" being rejected in a Zulu song. "They also won't play a record if there's English and the vernacular mixed because of the so-called purity aspect." More likely, to prevent any identification with the urban areas and to encourage "homeland" bonds.

Because of what it costs the record companies to re-record should a record be rejected, the utmost care is taken with lyrics. Black groups too make a conscious effort to write for the SABC.

Joseph Shabalala, leader of South Africa's top mbube group, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, said in reply to a question about why the group's lyrics were so restricted to religious and love themes; "We keep the radio in mind when we compose. If something is contentious they

don't play it, and then it wouldn't be known to the public anyway."

Consequently almost all mbube and mbaqanga music heard on the black services is "clean": it is either religious or concerns itself heavily with tribal customs, spiritual ancestry and usually has a "be careful of the big bad city", tone to it. In some cases it is unbelievably sexist and reactionary. Examples are Abafana Basqhudeni's "Basetsana" ("Girls"). The message is, "Girls, don't turn yourselves into boys by wearing pants, do you know why you don't get married? Because you don't respect men." and their "Poo Ke Nna" ("I'm the Bull", i.e. the boss of the house). Yet Abafana are considered one of the top groups in the country and win one award after another from SABC's Black Services.

Their merry way of dealing with migrant labour (an example is "Mekoting ya Ganta", a sort of "here we go to the gold mines, the gold mines, the gold mines" treatment) can only have endeared this group to the SABC committee.

So too Ladysmith Black Mambazo, who despite their incredible talent confine themselves to numbers like "Ikhaya Likababa (My Father's Home)" and "Izinkomo Zikababa ("My Father's Cows").

Billy Forrest, one of the whites who produces black music says he usually insists on banal lyrics, as near to traditional ideas as possible. Laughingly, he says that on one song he produced recently the lyric was: "How come every time I get home there are stubbed out cigarettes in the ashtray".

"I won't let my groups do political songs, because of having to hand lyric sheets to the SABC." Yet Billy reckons that despite SABC's efforts to control what is listened to by blacks, the records that really do well are those with a political content, in many cases restricted from airplay on the black services.

Examples are: "The road to

THE SABC was now covertly becoming a propaganda medium for both local and outside consumption as a result of being placed under the control of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Information, the Black Sash said yesterday.

Its national president, Mrs Joyce Harris, said the Black Sash believed the most significant and disturbing feature of the Prime Minister's Cabinet reshuffle was the inclusion of the SABC in the Foreign Affairs/Information portfolio.

"Even while the SABC remained in the more or less neutral portfolio of Posts and Telegraphs, it was guilty of operating as an extension of Government, as an information and propaganda service for Government policy," she said.

"Now it is to be placed under the control of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Information, thus quite covertly becoming a Government propaganda medium for both internal and external consumption.

"By and large, what it dishes out for home consumption is hardly likely to appeal to the broad spectrum of external SABC watchers, while what the outside world would like to hear from South Africa is not likely to coincide with the Government's present policy which it unashamedly plugs through the SABC."

Rand Daily Mail report.

Shangala" ("*Shangala*" is supposed to mean the same as uhuru – freedom); "*Have you ever seen the rain?*" (believed to be about the revolution: "*it's been coming for some time/there's calm before the storm*"); Singana's "*Light up the Light*"; John Lennon's "*Imagine*" (the Beatles were banned for eight years on SABC after Lennon's remark that they were more popular than Jesus. After his death, an SABC "*tribute*" ironically featured a Paul McCartney song performed by Nick Taylor); The Minerals' "*Sweet Soweto*". Richard Jon Smith's "*Zimbabwe*", Chris de Burgh's "*Spanish Train*"; Norman Greenbaum's "*Spirit in the Sky*"; Peter Gabriel's "*Biko*", Marianne Faithfull's "*Broken English*" and Pink Floyd's "*The Wall*".

The Floyd record was banned on the black services, but went to number one on Radio 5. Only **after** the album "*The Wall*" from which the single was taken had become "*far and away the biggest selling album this country has known in the last few years*," according to GRC's Noel Galloway; only **after** boycotting black students around the country had taken up the chorus: "*We don't need no education*" in their struggle against gutter education; only after these things was the record banned outright. Not only the single, but the album too. SABC had clearly made a botch-up. It recognised that the record might incite initially, and therefore held it from the black services. But in allowing it airplay on the conservative "*white*" Radio 5, it didn't take into account that more than half of this station's listeners are, in fact, black.

The thinking, in Broederbond terms, of allowing it on "*white*" radio was probably that school-going whites would be too complacent to become aroused by the number.

Either that, or the thought controllers who decide what people should listen to did not realise and/or understand the lyrics of this number before publicity in the schools boycott

drew attention to it. Then, when they listened closely to the album overall, they probably decided it was dangerous for white youth too.

Bearing in mind that many of Radio 5's programmes are designed specially for the boys on the border, it's easy to understand just why an album which includes songs about repressive education, parent child relationships, the nuclear threat, confused adolescent sexuality, teenage alienation and depression, drug usage, war, The National Front in Britain and so on, should receive a blanket ban.

Why, in Broederbond terms it would be exactly an album like "*The Wall*" which breeds "*radicalism*", encouraging the youth to "*resist discipline, parental authority, school authority . . .*", as mentioned in the "*Masterplan*" document.

The Broederbond has always shown great interest in pop music and its alleged link with communism. In his last year as chairperson of the Broederbond SABC chairperson Piet Meyer reported back to the Broeder National Congress on a number of issues that had been "*investigated*" by the Broederbond during 1972.

Among issues like "*South Africa's Capital Requirements in the Coming Years*", "*The Influence of Foreign Investment in South Africa*", "*Labour Integration*" and "*Sport and the Current Campaign against South Africa*" was the item "*Pop music and the South African Broadcasting Corporation*".

Until Capital Radio and Channel 702 started (the former on December 26 1979, the latter in about May 1980), Radio 5 was the only all-day pop station in the country. Radio 5 took over from LM Radio, beamed from Mozambique, prior to Mozambiquan independence. When LM Radio was going strong, pumping out different types of music, there were a number of original white rock bands: Abstract Truth, Freedom's Children, Wakefort

Hart, Hammak. . .

When LM became Radio 5, the format changed to disco music and musak. Suddenly there was no one to listen to those original rock bands. Brainwashed kids demanded from musicians exactly what they heard on Radio 5, and hundreds of cover-version "*club*" bands sprung up from nowhere, bands like Ballyhoo and Copperfield who made their living expertly recreating the hit parade live.

Radio 5 actually murdered rock 'n roll in South Africa. It became impossible for "*concert*" bands (that is, bands that didn't only do cover versions of the hit parade to club audiences) to survive, unless they managed to get a record contract (and then, anyway, they were conditioned into writing Radio 5-style "*hit*" material). It was only with the advent of the new wave that rock 'n roll started taking off again in South Africa.

Now, why did Radio 5 want to kill rock 'n roll? Why was the only music it would play musak?

Radio 5 chief Pieter Human, the person responsible for every record that is played or rejected on Radio 5, said it was because he knows the market. Meaning, of course "*I am the market*", which he was before competition from 702 and 604.

As proof that he "*knows*" the market, Human – who openly admits he can't stand pop music anyway, and only listens to classical at home – cites figures that show listenership has gone up enormously since the LM days. "*We have a formula that works!*" he claims. And indeed, it looks as though it does (though naturally increased listenership has to take into account an increased population and accessibility of a particular station on the radio). Until you examine the figures more closely, that is.

Radio 5 is supposedly a white station, yet whites only account for a third of the total listenership. But **of course** the total listenership is going to be bigger than it was in the LM

days, since in the LM polls only the white listenership was taken into account. If only the white listenership figures for Radio 5 were taken into account, the listenership would be on par with the LM days, give or take a few hundred every month.

I suspect there is a more sinister reason for the type of music Radio 5 has persisted in playing. Disco music is the music of a hedonistic, consumer society. It is supposedly fun music, but there are countless examples to illustrate just how disco reinforces the ideals of a capitalist economy. Spend spend spend, get down to the disco; buy buy buy . . . capitalism has never had it so good. A music which is propaganda!

No wonder America and South Africa went so crazy over *"Saturday Night Fever"*, *"Grease"* and the rest. No wonder John Travolta in his white three-piece Pierre Cardin was allowed to become an idol. His aspirations were right. He was clean. He was no threat in any way, a law abiding conservative.

Is it strange that the teenage white youth, bred on a diet of Radio 5 and disco, are so complacent and straight?

The creation of conservative white youth in South Africa fits in with the second part of the Masterplan statement: *"Just as youth is currently being encouraged to resist discipline etc . . . so too they can be brought into revolt against what is decadent and destructive . . ."* A clean cut Nazi-type youth, disciplined, anti-drugs . . . that's what the Broederbond was setting out to achieve – and it virtually has.

It stands to reason that music, being as strong a force as it is, has been used as an ideological weapon to encourage reactionary behaviour. Watching people dancing mechanically like robots in a disco makes more sense, too, of the anti-riot machine reportedly invented after the 1976 Soweto riots . . . the disco music machine. Its

object is to be driven into troubled townships and blast musak into the open; it's believed that the disco music will calm people down (make them start dancing, maybe?). Interesting that disco music has been chosen for the purpose, in direct contrast to rock music – which was blasted into the streets of Santiago when the generals took over in Chile. If Rosselson's assertion is accurate, that rock in Chile was really *"cultural violence reflecting political and economic violence"*, then what does Radio 5-style musak in Soweto mean?

Radio 5 has had much criticism thrown at it. Mainly, as Grahame Beggs points out, on the grounds that the jocks are amateurs and that Radio 5 does not provide a service. Then too, there is the fact that it gives practically no support to local musicians. As Billy Forrest puts it: *"The most patriotic biltong-eating nation in the world doesn't support its own artists. What a ridiculous situation. If you go into the LM charts 15 years ago you find in no period in a year under four South African acts in the top twenty."*

"Now that doesn't happen anymore. It's very unhealthy. Pieter Human is in control, the most uncreative, badly informed person around. I find it puzzling that this radio station gets away with what it does."

Guitarist Kenny Henson continues in the same vein: *"We are being brainwashed every day to be patriotic to this country and yet they don't push local musical talent. It doesn't make sense."* Kenny was saying this after the umpteenth record he'd recorded with singing/songwriting partner Brian Finch was refused airplay (even though the records were getting simultaneous releases in places like Australia and Japan and Brian and Kenny have a huge following in South Africa).

Well, it actually does make sense. Radio 5 has learnt to dictate, and dictators don't let the natives speak for themselves, right?

NEWS COMMENTARY FOR THE RADIO SERVICES IN BANTU LANGUAGES.

These talks were used to promote peaceful co-existence in a year when unrest was boiling just under the surface and in fact broke out on occasions. Where misunderstanding could spark off unrest, attempts were made to smother the fire with facts. Where agitators tried to disrupt community services, the view was put forward that these were the very services which could be used to uplift the community; revolution was weighed against evolution, and confrontation against conciliation and co-existence. Overall, the SABC held the view that self-determination was fundamental.

QUOTE FROM THE SABC ANNUAL REPORT, 1977.

The Tremeloes had a hit called "Too Late (To Be Saved)". In those days we had the Radio Record Club on Springbok and we (GRC) used to programme our records the week before. This one particular time we were programming and Johnny Odendaal said to me: "I am afraid you're going to have to re-record this programme." I asked why.

He said: "Do you ever read your bible. You obviously don't, because if you did you'd realise that it's never too late to be saved."

That was the sort of mentality we were dealing with in the '60s.

ALLAN McINNIS, A&R.

Patrick Lee, writing about Radio 5's announcement that it would broadcast news (to bring it into line with the format proposed by Capital Radio), can't contain his jeers: *"Radio 5 has always been so downright arrogant about what they play and what 'the people' (some imaginary mass of agreeable souls out there) want . . . they are going to start transmitting news because Capital are going to be transmitting news. What a joke. So Radio 5 didn't know everything the people wanted after all. Some admission, that. I wonder what other improvements will be wrought on the bleak Radio 5 programming landscape now that they're actually going to have to attract listeners instead of dictating to them.*

"If the Radio 5 boys think that copying the odd idea from Capital is going to make them a better station, they're in for a disappointment. The problem with Radio 5 is that the fundamental thinking is wrong, and no amount of exterior paintwork is going to improve that. The sort of music that the SABC has chosen to play in the past has virtually been forced on the public as a denomination of taste. When the kids realise that there is actually something else out there, new rules are going to be drawn."

Most of the criticism aimed at Radio 5 comes because the music it plays is actually musak, faceless product. To quote Chris May, *"Musak is . . . the 'zenith' of the spectacular; insinuating itself into the mind and inducing a pre-planned mood (of control) without the listener being aware of what's going on. Threats to 'normal' behaviour are contained, reality is distorted. Musak is an invaluable tool of late 20th century social engineering – we's all happy here yassuh boss. Musak is the generic term for what is usually described by its peddlers as 'functional background music'."*

Rosselson sees music of this kind – with a predictable

structure, a mindless idiom, and incapable of laughter or development – as *"fascist, obsessed with the elevation of supergods for the adoration of the passive multitudes."* And the multitudes will stay passive as long as their leisure-time activities (like listening to the radio) are bland and unchallenging. Frith, describing the class perspective on the relationship between capital and labour, says: *"Leisure has three purposes for capital: to refresh labour physically, so that it will be fit to work again the next day; to refresh labour ideologically, so that it will be willing to work again the next day; and to provide a market for the consumption of commodities so that surplus value can be realised . . . Leisure choices can't be determined, but they do have to be limited – the problem is to ensure that workers' leisure activities don't affect their discipline, skill or willingness at work."*

And the tension-free, tame records played by Radio 5 could certainly never be responsible for affecting the discipline, skill or willingness of workers.

The record chiefs spend a great deal of their time telling their opponents that they only release this kind of musak to Radio 5 because it's all Radio 5 will play. It never occurs to them to change things, disrupt the status quo. These companies are often putting as much as R200 a week into Radio 5 for three spins a day – but they could hold back on it and instead spend all that money on something fresh.

If every company only gave good music to Radio 5 it would sell (or certainly would have in the past, before the advent of 604 and 702) because Radio 5 would have to play it – or else close down completely. If only the companies would stop pandering to Radio 5 then Radio 5 would wake up.

Meanwhile it goes on pumping out musak and, despite listenership figures proving that the title *"white"* is a lie,

adhering strictly to its "white music for whites" principle.

A label manager for a record company (I've been asked to mention no names) went to Pieter Human when reggae was just beginning to break in South Africa (mainly in the townships) three years ago. This person asked if it was possible to have a reggae half-hour sponsored by the record companies, an "x-presents" programme similar to "Midnight Soul" which broke soul music in South Africa on LM Radio a few years before.

Radio 5's reply was: "Don't you know blacks have their own radio station?" "I was shattered to the core," said the label manager. "The really hypocritical thing about it is when they give you the listenership figures they include blacks, yet when it comes to programming, they only programme for whites."

Another area in which Radio 5 is knocked by the industry (though in fact this doesn't just apply to Radio 5 but to the whole of SABC and all the independents too) is that since 1965 the industry has lost its rights as far as public performances and broadcasting go: the producer gets no royalties.

Chairperson of the Southern African Recording Tape Distributors Association, Clive Kelly, says his association (and the industry) feels that losing this right is utterly unjustified.

"I think all the radio stations would acknowledge that without the benefit of commercially recorded music they receive free, they would be quite incapable of sustaining their public service.

"What we propose is that equitable remuneration should be paid. If we (the record companies and radio stations) can't agree what that is, then let the minister decide, or a tribunal.

"If we get that right reinstated then according to the principle of the International Federation of Phonogenic and Video producers, this revenue would be shared between the producer and the performer. It's not necessary to

share this income with the composer because (s)he already has the right to composer royalties."

Clive Kelly feels getting this right restored is more important than making sure Radio 5 start giving the records the right amount of airtime. "The more they work together they work against each other," he says. "People have only so much spare time and if there's a radio station playing good music they won't want to put on the gramophone and listen to a record. Over-exposure, you see, can be counter-productive." Big Business speaks.

Kelly is also against the idea – put forward by musicians from time to time – that legislation be introduced so that radio stations have to play a certain percentage of local music. This was the case in Australia, where rock musicians are having a field day.

But no, says Clive Kelly, "I think this is quite wrong. If they have to play a certain percentage then you get second and third rate creeping in because you've got to play the quota."

In some ways Kelly may be right.

On the Afrikaans services, for instance, you don't have to be able to sing more than a few notes to be hauled on to the air and greeted as a star. Obviously, because Afrikaans exists only in South Africa, it would be quite easy for a radio station to run short of musicians very quickly. Ditto playwrights and poets. Consequently, established singers like Sonja Herholdt have unbelievably big followings because they are plugged to death on Afrikaans Radio.

Sonja is a national hero. As is anyone who sings the right songs in Afrikaans. Afrikaans Nationalism thrives on heroes and mysteries.

Anton Goosen is regarded as a bit of a renegade because he sings, from time to time, of squatters in the Cape and about Soweto. No matter. These songs of his are banned outright, so that the volk never get to hear

**First musician: KNOCK
KNOCK**

**Second musician:
WHO'S THERE?**

**First musician: PIETER
Second musician:
PIETER WHO?**

**First musician: NO
WONDER YOU DON'T
GET AIRTIME ON
RADIO 5.**

them anyway, and the ones they do know him for are those with which they identify.

So the music – light, classical and request programmes – gets allocated about quarter of 137 hours a week that Afrikaans Radio is broadcast. The music is heard in between plays like *"Dagboek van 'n Soldaat"* (Written by N P van Wyk Louw, put out in 1977) and *"Bophutha Tswana – land van die Batswana"* (Written by Leon Schuster, and broadcast the evening of the bantustan's so-called independence); in between programmes like *"Events and Controversies of the Day"* (examples given include *"The Rhodesian Question; Matters affecting South West Africa; Terrorist actions both at home and abroad; Bonus bonds and the election; The importance of economic and psychological resistance; Internal planning and safety; The Publications Act and its relation to standards; and The propaganda attack on South Africa"*); in between sports programmes (mainly rugby), youth and women's programmes (among the favourites are the eat-and-buy-South African ones); and in between religious programmes pushing a Christian National line.

The light music is mostly what is known as *"Boeremusiek"* in South Africa. Vastrap style, vamp-chord music mostly with concertinas and accordians. Programmes on Afrikaans radio

vary from the *"Konsertklub"* to piano music of some new composers to *"Afrikaanse Treffers"*, the latest on the Afrikaans record market. What they all have in common is an unswerving loyalty (apparently) to white South Africa.

From time to time the Afrikaans service (and the SABC generally) sends a team to the *"operational area"* to record for broadcasting a series of concerts performed for the benefit of the *"boys on the border"*. Performers like Ge Korsten, Babara Veenemans, Four Jacks and a Jill, and comedian Pip Friedman fall over themselves to *"do their duty"* by performing for these soldiers. Whether the soldiers **want** to see them perform or not is something we don't know.

Groups like Four Jacks and a Jill have brought out a few disgraceful pro-war numbers along the lines of *"it is noble and fitting to die for one's homeland . . . blah blah"*.

The English service devotes about as much time to music as does the Afrikaans service. There is a lot of classical music, as well as light Sinatra-type crooning for the benefit of the country's elderly English-speaking citizens. There are a few programmes on which you do hear current, contemporary music, like *"Audiomix"*, although this is actually a magazine programme and is not devoted to music.

At least the music on the English service is not as blatantly

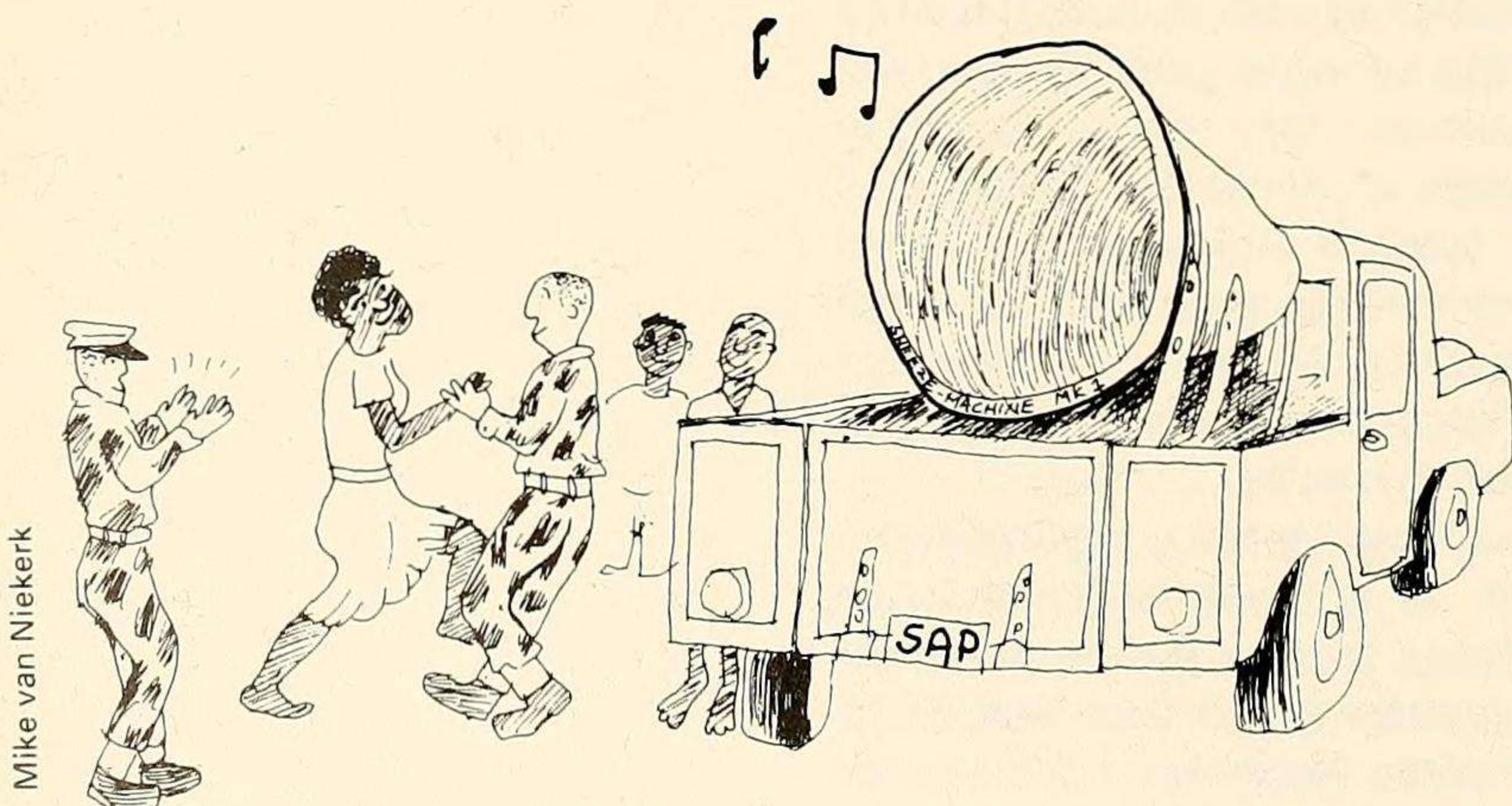
calculated to make certain people think in certain ways. The magazine programmes *"Audiomix"* and *"Radio Today"* are about as honest as you could hope for on the SABC (there's no Broeder in charge here) and at least two music programmes (both of which have been discontinued) stand out as being innovative and exciting: Mike Letellier's *"Mike Till Midnight"* aimed at a broad listenership, and, Chris Prior's *"Where I'm At"*, aimed at the rock 'n roll lovers of South Africa.

The English service is still subject to the dreadful propaganda of the SABC's *"Current Affairs"* editorial, however, and like the other SABC services it takes a very moralistic line. In 1968, the English Service ran a *"Broken Link"* series. In one of these a commentator discussed the connection between pop music and drugs. He cited the tune *"Puff the Magic Dragon"* as being undesirable because it was allegedly about opium smoking, and explained that the Beatles' *"Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds"* could not be given airtime because it was about LSD.

It would be a grave mistake to think that the English service operates without propaganda. I mention those two programmes as examples of the *"better"* or rather *"cleaner"* programmes, although they are delivered by people who seem to think they are doing the colonies a favour . . . and probably received mostly by people who think like that.

Whatever. The English service is the only one that would attempt to get away with (and succeed in doing so) programmes like *"Pirates' Treasure"*, *"Polar Exploration"*, *"The History of Christmas"*, *"Victorian South Africa"* and *"Steamships in South Africa"*. All romantic, good-old-days stuff for the Natalians, what?

But the other stuff slips through. *"The South African Defence Force"*, *"The Annexation of the Transvaal"*,



Mike van Niekerk

lengthy coverage of the so-called homelands and various events taking place there – these all add up to a cosy little service for closed little minds for the forty percenters.

The other major radio station on SABC is Springbok Radio.

The name, in itself, says quite a lot.

Springbok: South Africa's national animal. Springbok: colours to indicate the professional sportsman who will compete for South Africa. Springbok: South Africa's rugby team.

Springbok was the first commercial radio station in South Africa. The inaugural broadcasts were on May 1 1950, and from Springbok the various regional programmes developed.

Joe Nofal was at the inaugural broadcasts on Springbok: *"Bob Lord set it up for SABC. He came from Australia, and with him he brought one of the greatest DJs this country has ever seen – Johnny Walker. We supplied our own records of course, but Springbok was greeted with the same sort of joy as Capital Radio is being greeted now."*

"Until they filled Springbok with too many commercials it wasn't too bad. At that stage the programmes were very separated from each other. The A programme was only English, the B only Afrikaans. Springbok was mainly English in the beginning. It was only much later that they started to introduce Afrikaans."

"Springbok Radio has changed considerably. Any commercial radio station which is run by the government is restricted. A broadcasting station, like the Press, has to be free and unfettered to grow."

In the music industry, Springbok Radio is famous for two things. Firstly, the madcap Tinus Esterhuizen who is musical programmer and who loves any kind of music you care to name and actually does his best to be as non-discriminatory as possible. The Springbok Radio Four-Thirty Special, hosted by

David Gresham, is probably the best (white) youth programme on SABC. Tinus too does his job, though, he insists on lyric sheets and throws out any songs containing swearwords, even mild ones. Secondly, Springbok Radio is famous (or should I say notorious) for the Sarie awards.

When these awards were started they were run by the South African Record Industry and called the SARI awards. SABC took them over in 1968 for reasons no one in the industry can adequately explain. According to Lance James, *"Interest in them was falling off, and SABC wanted to promote local talent. The Saries provided an excellent vehicle."*

When they were run by the industry, a panel – a person from every company – elected the best musicians in the country. Should I say the best white musicians and singers in the country.

In those days there were a large number of categories – more than there are now – and the awards were presented at a dinner-affair at a place like the Wanderers Club.

Now the sections for the Sarie Awards (these are believed to be the South African equivalent of the Grammy awards) include: Best Female Vocalist (I believe the wording has been changed to Most Popular Female Vocalist); Best Male Vocalist (ditto); Most popular Vocal Group; Most Popular English Album of the Year; Most Popular Afrikaans Album of the Year; Pop Band of the Year; Song of the Year; Top 20 artist of the Year; Best Engineer; Best Producer.

The awards are presented towards the end of the year (usually November) at the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg before an elect little gathering. The Sarie Awards are the biggest farce ever.

Firstly, only *"international"* black acts may enter. In other words, what the SABC considers *"classy"* black acts. Acts that sell to whites – Joy, Richard Jon Smith, Harari, Zayn Adams, Al Etto and so on. It is never spelt

**I work all day, I work all day
to pay the bills I have to pay
Ain't it sad
And still there never seems to be
a single penny left for me
That's too bad
In my dreams I have a plan
if I got me a wealthy man
I wouldn't have to work at all
I'd fool around and have a ball
Money, money, money – must be
funny
in a rich man's world
Money, money, money – always
sunny
in a rich man's world
aha, aha
All the things I could do
if I had a little money
it's a rich man's world
A man like that is hard to find
but I can't get him off my mind
Ain't it sad
And if he happened to be free
I bet he wouldn't fancy me
That's too bad
So I must leave, I have to go
to Las Vegas or Monaco
and win a fortune in a game
My life will never be the same
Money, money, money – must be
funny
in a rich man's world
Money, money, money – always
sunny
in a rich man's world
By Benny Andersson and Björn
Ulvaeus
eg. of MUSAK**

"... 'The Band' – using a group of professional coloured musicians as the vehicle, this documentary set out to communicate to a white viewing audience the aspirations and frustrations of coloured youth. Produced by myself, this programme was edited under management sanction after my departure from the SABC, and not in accordance with the initial script and treatment. The programme that was eventually broadcast achieved precisely the opposite objective: stripped of all meaningful content, what resulted was a musical programme showing a happy band of coloured musicians playing their music to coloured fans who were all contented and happy in their position."

Rand Daily Mail, April 25 1981.

FORMER SABC-TV PRODUCER KEVIN HARRIS IN A STATEMENT TO THE STEYN COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE MASS MEDIA.

out that these are the sort of acts that may enter, but groups like Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Abafana Baseqhudeni are noticeably absent. These "local" groups are supposed to enter the "Black Saries" awards, which are just as much a farce.

Then artists nominated for Saries are approved by a committee from the record industry. The more powerful the record company, the more representation it appears to have on this committee. All the companies submit their entries, and this committee whittles down the list until it has between about six and 16 entrants in each section.

The list then goes to the Saries judges. These comprise two people allegedly representing the Press (one from the English and one from the Afrikaans Press) and are generally either the most conservative music writers around or else people who don't even write on music, someone from the industry and a handful of radio people.

How much of the vote comes from the public (there is a public vote in the Saries) and how much from this panel of so-called judges no one knows. **No one** knows. Not even the judges. At certain Saries award ceremonies in the past I've spoken to various judges and said: "*How did so and so win?*"; and they invariably shrug and say, "*I haven't got a clue. I certainly didn't vote for that artist.*"

The press has constantly called for an opening up of the Saries; for someone to stand up and say: "*This is how the Saries run*". But as with every other reform urged by the commercial press, no one takes any notice. There are always accusations about the Saries. But however they are fixed, no one knows and no one can prove anything.

Music critics have asked year after year why Lance James keeps winning awards when he's a Springbok jock, why Margaret Singana did not win the Best Female Vocalist section in 1978 – even though she was nominated

for the Grammy awards that year, and **won** the British Music Week awards for best South African female vocalist – and have speculated that it hasn't got anything to do with what you can do, but who you know. Cynics have suggested that the SARIE awards be renamed the BATTLE awards – the Broederbond Awards for Friends, Followers and Loyalists.

But still the Saries continue to be a joke.

In 1979 Clout, the only act in the Saries nominations to have sold an exceptional amount of records, lost out to Gene Rockwell (a country and western singer) in the Best Album of the Year category.

"*Big 10-4*" (aimed at the CB Good Buddies) was not chosen because it was a superior production or because it had achieved more record sales or anything (in fact the sales were probably less than a quarter of Clout's). The truth is that Clout's album was disqualified from the Saries because the string arrangements on two of the backing tracks were put down overseas.

If you think that's petty, consider that the Best Album award usually goes hand in hand with the Best Producer and Best Engineer awards. This meant that Clout's outstanding producer Grahame Beggs and engineer Ian Martin didn't stand a chance in those categories either.

Incidentally, the person awarded the best Engineer award was Hennie Hartman. When he went up to receive his Saries he was asked: "*This is the third year you've won this, isn't it?*" His reply was: "*Unfortunately, yes*", though he added almost immediately: "*Ummmm... perhaps I should rephrase that.*" It seemed like a good enough comment to me. It **was** rather unfortunate being part of that circus for three years in a row.

That same year Anton Goosen was chosen best male vocalist of the year.

No one would have minded his winning Best Songwriter for his hits "Kruidjie-Roer-My-Nie" and "Boy van die Suburbs", but Best Vocalist! Despite competition from people like Richard Jon Smith and Neville Nash (both blacks).

As one cynic commented later: "Choosing Anton Goosen as best male vocalist is like declaring Bob Dylan tenor of the year."

Anton must have felt vindicated when his born-again hero won the Grammy Awards a few months later in a similar section.

In 1980, Sonja Herholdt – South Africa's Golden Girl – won the Sarie award for the Best Female Vocalist for the sixth time. Despite the fact that there were some excellent singers competing. When she went up to accept the award in 1979 and announced that she had something to say it seemed that for one exciting moment she was going to announce that she wouldn't accept the award, or that she wouldn't stand for the Saries again, or that it was getting just a little bit silly for everyone concerned.

But no. Sonja thanked the people and her Creator.

Well, why not? As long as she sings only in Afrikaans she is singing to a limited audience – so why alienate that audience by saying something offhand?

Other very odd Sarie awards that particular year were those for the Best Singing Group (won by Lance James and Barbara Ray – I'd only ever heard the latter on radio on Lance James' own programme) and a special award for veteran Dan Hill (of Sound Electronic fame).

Some people like Grahame Beggs expressed their disgust openly, but the power of radio is such that his band Clout was entered again in a number of categories in 1980, even though he'd sworn not to have anything to do with them again. Similarly, the more politicised musicians reject the Saries openly. But I have seen more than two artists attending the Sarie awards as

nominees, despite assurances that they would never have anything to do with the racist awards.

One musician, who has up to now managed to persuade his record company **not to** enter his group in the awards, has stated that he's now come up with a better strategy. Enter the awards, win, and then refuse your Sarie. This, he says, would make a great impact on whites in South Africa (the Saries go out live on television and on radio). People would ask each other: "Now what's the point of doing that?" And so start questioning the whole ceremony.

It's the view of an idealist. Most likely he'd be thrown into jail for disturbing the peace. Certainly all his records from then on would be banned by the SABC. Someone could only do something like that if firstly, they planned to leave South Africa and perform to an outside audience; if they had built up a large enough following and could make a living gigging; and if they were pretty hard-arsed and prepared for all the flak that would follow. And, of course, if there was the slightest chance that they would win.

So the SABC's Sarie farce continues as our 'premier' musical recognition. The only way out would be for the independent radio stations to become powerful enough to warrant the record industry's cutting ties with the SABC. At this stage their listenership is not large enough, though the situation may improve with time.

The independent stations are interesting because – in the case of 702 and 604 – it seems as if the government's homeland policy has tripped itself up.

In striving to prove that the so-called homelands of Bophutha Tswana and Transkei are indeed independent countries, it has allowed those puppet governments to negotiate radio stations. The companies involved in setting up the radio stations have – particularly in the case of 604 – made sure that the

Radio Listenership (1977)

SABC

AFRIKAANS SERVICE –

1 025 000 (850 000 whites)

ENGLISH SERVICE –

562 000 (414 000 whites)

SPRINGBOK –

1 664 000 (1 053 000 whites)

REGIONAL SERVICES

1 190 000 (760 000 whites)

Radio Highveld

Radio Good Hope

Radio Port Natal

RADIO 5 –

625 000 (248 000 whites)

RADIO RSA –

the external service .

Listenership not known.

BLACK SERVICES –

The 7 Black Services have a combined listenership of 4 719 000 daily (no breakdown of white / black listenership available)

INDEPENDENT RADIO STATIONS

RADIO SWAZI –

Listenership not known.

CAPITAL RADIO –

Believed to be around 100 000

CHANNEL 702 –

Figures not yet available

"homeland government" may in no way interfere with the news coverage. So the Broederbond has no control of these stations, and they transmit the least biased news in the country. I say least biased, because there is an element of bias in it – most reports come from SAPA, the South African Press Association which observes most of the South African press laws even though these do not affect Capital or 702.

It is interesting that both radios read the news from Johannesburg. The news is then beamed back to the respective "countries" and broadcast simultaneously from there.

It's a crazy set-up, but it's the only way round the South African government's broadcasting laws. Capital Radio and Channel 702 would be illegal as soon as either broadcast directly from Johannesburg.

As far as music goes, both are highly commercial stations. Capital tends to stick to a top 40 format (which admittedly, is revolutionary in comparison to the SABC programming, but tedious when you become familiar with it) while 702's main service is not that far removed from Radio 5 as yet. Probably the reasoning is: don't shock listeners away by being too outrageous at first, woo them slowly and change them as they come. But both services have specialist rock and jazz shows, both play a fairly representative portion of reggae and mbaqanga, and up-tempo folk and both are definitely interested in pushing new wave, or pop, as it now prefers to call itself. Both also feed out items about all the local bands (who sing in English, no matter what the style is). At this stage Capital broadcasts from 6 am to 1 am daily (and till 2 am on the weekends). It attempts to be a national – or at least, Southern African radio station but has had enormous problems with its transmitters and there are constant rumours about its closing down.

Channel 702 broadcasts round

the clock, although it aims only at the Transvaal area. You can hear it as far afield as Botswana, though not clearly, whereas Capital can be heard in almost every country in the sub-continent north of South Africa.

Channel 702 has money from Southern Suns' tycoon Sol Kerzner, as well as capital from the BophutaTswana "government" and all the newspaper houses.

Most of the inspiration for 702 came from the team who started up Radio Swazi (businessperson Izzy Kirsch, programmer Rob Vickers and PRO expert Alexander Gilbert). Radio Swazi is the umbrella name for Radio SR (apparently this means Super Rhythm), Radio Truro (aimed at South Africa's Indian communities) and Paralelo 27 (aimed at the Portuguese community) and the Jewish Sound (a channel on Sunday nights). All programmes are recorded in Johannesburg and sent on a cassette tape to be broadcast from Swaziland (unlike 604 and 702 which are live).

The "SR Sound", which the jocks boast is "the international sound" and "crossover", is predominantly funk and disco, although other music that doesn't make the playlist isn't ignored altogether. They are played on two special slots at the weekends.

In addition, every seventh number played on SR is chosen by the announcer – so even if something isn't accepted for the playlist it still gets airplay. The DJs can play numbers that are 10 years old, provided they still fit in with the SR Sound.

The only records that never make the grade are those considered political or pornographic. Local musicians aren't exactly boosted by the SR jocks either – only about two percent of the playlist is local.

Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela, Harari, Spirits Rejoice, Malombo, Joy, Betty Mthombeni and Thandi Ngono are among the lucky few to get

How Fanzines see radio

Oh Vibe / Bloody Vibe ! ! !

South Africans, HUH ! ! ! A bloody waste of time most of them, always complaining that there is nothing to do, and when they get something, they either neglect, or destroy it, and seldom get around to enjoy it.

On many occasions I've heard the same sentence repeated almost word for word "... but everything is better overseas."

Well so what if it is, the entertainment here (minus a few cuts here & there) could be of the same standard, but because of the lack of support from Joe Public, and our dear RADIO STATIONS, local talent has to suffer because of YOUR selfish hang ups. There is no such entertainment because most groups stay virtually unknown, because our dear Joe Public won't go and see them. (. . . Who are they??? Never heard of them. They couldn't be any good).

Then there is the case of the Joe Public going out to clubs, and are always the first to arrive, and are annoyed that there is no "VIBE" inside. Then there are the Joe's who can't dance unless they have a partner, but become oblivious of their partners once they begin dancing, in any case. A club is a place where people meet, to listen or dance to the music provided, and is certainly not there to sell "VIBES". So next time try to enjoy yourself because you are here and not THERE . . .

FROM "NEU"

airplay.

"Local music is just not up to standard," says jock Willie Moloisi. "If it was, we'd play it, but generally it's nowhere near an international sound."

Adds Cocky "Two Bull" Thlothalemaje, now one of the main jocks on 702: "Local bands are over-keen to get into the studio and record. They're happy just to get something on wax, but they don't really pay much

attention to quality and they usually mess it up."

So far not much has been said about musical coverage on SABC TV – simply because there is nothing much to be said. Music commands no more than four percent of the programme schedule, and more than seven eighths of that time goes to classical music programmes. The light hearted music is predominantly performed by

white South African cabaret artists – Annabelle Linder, Richard Loring or the Afrikaans singers like Goosen and Herholdt who frequently have their own programmes. The youth has to contend with a 12 minute weekly "Pop Shop", presented by Karl Kikillus and produced by Ken Kirsten (who is responsible for most of the light music programmes on SABC TV). It's mainly imported, very white and very tame. ■

THAT WAS A TRACK FROM ABAFANA BASEQUHINI'S LATEST ALBUM. AND NOW A LETTER FROM ONE OF OUR MANY LISTENERS



GOODWILL JOHNSON OF DIEPKLOOF ASKS: "WHAT IS THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL"



WELL, GOODWILL, IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN THIS COUNTRY'S HISTORY FOR YOU AND EVERYBODY ELSE. A GROUP OF SPECIALLY INVITED PEOPLE WILL BE WORKING OUT A BETTER CONSTITUTION ON YOUR BEHALF. AND NOW THE INIMITIBLE MILLIE JACKSON.



Mike van Niekerk

BERTHA EGNOS & GAIL LAKIER'S
IPI-TOMBI
ORIGINAL CAST RECORDING



Chapter 4

SUCH NATURAL RHYTHM

"IPI Tombi exploded white. It never sold one record to a black, because blacks just considered it a complete rip-off and a travesty. But the whites went completely crazy."

(Record producer/songwriter, **Patric van Blerk**)

"When Ipi Tombi came out the black man was really into the traditional and was a little confused by the rhythm and the feel of the thing. It was a little foreign, I guess. By now, 1980, I'm sure black musical taste has caught up with Ipi Tombi."

(Producer of Ipi Tombi's mime music, **Billy Forrest**)

"Musicals like Ipi Tombi are stuck in the 50s . . . All these musicals are reflective of something – mostly white views of African society. They don't reflect the real Africa. They're pretty inaccurate. These people who compose studio African music for blacks to perform – it's sickening. They're just milking it for everything they can."

(Musicologist, **Andrew Tracey**)

"As far as I'm concerned the only true black musical was the first King Kong, with the exception of Gibson Kente's Sikalo, about blacks living in Pimville. It was about the suffering and the struggle of blacks. Most blacks I know don't like Ipi Tombi. Bertha Egnos takes a little bit of what she knows about blacks and puts it in."

(Record producer, **West Nkosi**)

"With unreserved respect for Bertha Egnos, Welcome Msomi and Professor Elizabeth

Sneddon, Ipi Tombi and UmaBatha were gauche and naive ventures." (Article in the Sunday Tribune on June 13 1976, by **Cilla Duff**)

"A performance of the musical Ipi Tombi scheduled in Gaborone tonight has been cancelled after a protest by South African exiles living in Botswana. The exiles described Ipi Tombi as 'a tool of the apartheid policy' and objected to its being shown on the anniversary of the Soweto riots." (Report from the **Star's Africa News Service** in Gaborone)

"Aw these African people are wonderful! They dance so well, and they're so happy. I saw Ipi Tombi and I just cried it made me so happy!" (Entertainer **Chubby Checker**, during a recent visit to South Africa)

If it was just a one-off statement, that notorious "*one thing about the African (native/Bantu/Black/plural/Floppy etc.) . . . he's got such natural rhythm*", it might not be quite as hideous.

As it is, whites and overseas visitors are fed so much propaganda about black people being happy-go-lucky child-like clowns who love to sing and dance (and do it so well, so naturally, never sing out of tune, never miss a beat!!) that it's little wonder all the real issues are obscured.

Practically any day of the week a Johannesburg visitor (or resident) can go along to see the mine-dances. And always that person will come back raving

about the gum-boot dance ("*how high they raise their legs and stamp!*"), about the tribal gear, the skins and beads. Invariably there's a little story about the faction fights ("*these primitives stick to their own tribes, you know*") told by the tour guide.

No one comes back saying anything about the living and working conditions of these miners. No one talks about their long hours of work, the dangers they face underground, the near to poverty wages they are paid. No one mentions the rigorous training these men must undergo to work in the mines, or the health hazards (TB, phthisis and VD are just three of the more common ones) that they are exposed to. There's no discussion about the migrant labour system by visitors to the mines. Nor the fact that the miners, those merry men who dance so well, will be separated from their families for about three-quarters of their lives – so that their families, stuck away in some drought-stricken "*homeland*", will not starve.

Even if they get to see the pathetic all-male dormitories that house the miners, visitors will still come back with a twisted piece of information like "*do you know that they get almost as much free sorghum beer as they want?*". Well, of course they do. Beer knocks the hard edge off life – it's an opiate. It suits the authorities to feed workers beer in the same way as it suits them to encourage faction fights. As long as people are

"The Coon Carnival? I was part of it when I was about 12 . . . it was terrible. But at the time, look when you're 12 your mind isn't working too well. When I was 15 my mind changed and I became politically aware, I started to understand about the Coon Carnival nonsense."
MOGHAMAD ZAYN
SAFIDIN ADAM, singer.

drunken and squabbling among themselves there can be no united action against authorities.

In 1976 I went on a tour of a major gold mine. One member of the touring party asked the guide: *"What about a union . . . don't the black miners have some sort of organisation?"* Naturally the tour guide didn't answer that any such organisation would be instantly broken up by the authorities and its leaders sent back to the homelands, from which labour reserve more desperate and hungry men would be recruited.

Instead he replied: *"What for? They've got no problems. They're looked after . . . food, beer, a roof over their heads, steady work. But we do speak to the representatives from all the different factions . . . the Zulus, The Shangaans, the Tswanas . . ."*

No one asked who elected the *"representatives"*.

Surprisingly, despite the measures taken by the authorities to crush mineworkers' attempts at organisation, there is still resistance which appears to be growing more militant over the years. Apart from the great strike of 1946, and the outbreak of strikes and violence from 1973 to 1976 which resulted in the deaths of nearly 200 miners and the wounding of more than 1 000, there have been very recent demonstrations of resentment against the colour bar, job reservation, the compound system, low wages and the glaring contrast between their conditions and those of the white miners.

In 1979 some 4 500 black miners protested at the Elandsrand gold mine near Carletonville, the day before it was officially opened by Anglo American chairperson, Harry Oppenheimer. Specially in South Africa for the occasion was Deutsche Bank president, Herman Hart. The original demonstration was started by 800 miners, who were later joined by miners who'd come from all over South Africa as

well as neighbouring countries like Lesotho and Mozambique. This time tribal or faction fighting could not be blamed for the unrest. Management asked the workers to select representatives to discuss their grievances, and called in police to quell the demonstration with tear gas and batons.

The 800 miners were sacked and returned to their homes, and the remaining protesters were intimidated into returning to work.

The mine management first pretended that it couldn't understand the reasons for the protest, but as things hotted up and the press became interested, it was later forced to admit that their *"merry miners"* were protesting for very real reasons.

Strikes and stay-aways in other industries also serve to make the ruling class aware that things aren't all *"happy happy"*, yet there are still people who prefer to believe (or at least to make others believe) that the oppressed enjoy their state, that the expression of music is naturally an expression of happiness.

Yvonne Huskisson actually had the gall to print a statement like: *"To sing and dance is as natural to the Bantu of South Africa as breathing. They have an inborn love of music and an inherent musical ability. Talent abounds."*

And so the musicals perpetuate the big lie.

Musicals like Ipi Tombi are about as representative of the real South Africa as are those publicity brochures which proclaim South Africa a land of sunny skies and happiness, or those *"Our Colourful Peoples"* booklets, which lure hundreds of thousands of rich tourists here every year.

These musicals are probably one of the most efficient propaganda tools the government has. Ipi Tombi promotes tribalism, as well as the image of the black person in South Africa as happy, rhythmical and content.

Whatever her personal motives are for getting involved in "African" musicals, Bertha Egnos must be a VIP in the eyes of the government for promoting its homeland policy and for openly coming out in favour of the creation of a black middle-class. The following report comes from the **Star Tonight!**

"Bertha Egnos, who wrote the show with her daughter, Gail Lakier, has told me of her wish that the black players should share meaningfully in the success of the musical. Her special desire was that when the members returned to this country they would have enough capital to be able to set themselves up in businesses and continue to generate capital. Bertha has made a lot of money out of the show and will continue to do so for a long time."

When the show opened at the now defunct Brooke Theatre in 1974, it was meant to be a fill-in until something better came along. The music was made up of carefully chosen traditional material with English lyrics written by Egnos and Lakier, with new arrangements to the score by veteran muso Lofty Schultz. For nine weeks the show lost money, but someone called Dave Levin insisted that it should go on, and invested R100 000 in the musical.

And then, suddenly, it took off. Asked by the **Star** newspaper why he had such faith in Ipi Tombi, Levin said, "Look, I know the African . . . I used to run a concession store." Whatever that is supposed to mean. However, it ran at the Brooke for two years.

Part of the initial success of Ipi Tombi was undoubtedly due to the hit song, "Mama Tembu's wedding", which caused as much of a stir in the courts as it did on the charts.

The fuss started when songwriter Strike Vilakazi claimed responsibility for the song. After a long court case it was discovered that "Mama Tembu's wedding" was, in fact, a traditional Sotho wedding song originally called "Kiloyena",

which Strike Vilakazi had arranged some years before in an instrumental version for recording. According to the copyright laws, if a composer has been dead for 100 years, a new songwriter/arranger may claim copyright on a new arrangement.

So far seven different companies have been formed for Ipi Tombi, and an estimated six million people around the world have seen the show – in Australia, France, the Scandinavian countries, Canada, Israel, Nigeria, the United States and Zimbabwe. The show ran in the West End for more than four years.

The producer of the Ipi Tombi tapes and records, Billy Forrest, had envisaged some minor setbacks when the show was taken to America – he thought that the American Musicians' Union might insist that Ipi Tombi be performed "live": "I don't know what would happen in that case, because Ipi Tombi today is made up of dancers, not singers. All songs are taped and they mime to the tapes."

He needn't have worried. Ipi Tombi won the Las Vegas Best Revue Award for 1980, paving the way for yet more success for its authors, Egnos and Lakier – they've been approached by top New York agencies over the rights to a new musical they've written.

There have been authentic "African" musicals, such as Shimane Solly Mekgoe's Lindiwe, some of the earlier works of Gibson Kente (more recent ones like Mama and the Load tend to be very Broadway inspired) and many other obscure shows.

Ironically, it is never the authentic ones that attract much publicity and strangely – with the exception of Welcome Msomi's UmaBatha – the commercially successful and acclaimed "African" musicals all seem to be produced by well-to-do whites. Yet another example is Meropa (later called Kwa-Zulu) which was produced by Joan Brickhill and Louis Burke.

"The Coons must definitely go." HASSAN HOWA, president of the South African Council of Sport.



King Kong was a different story. Despite the involvement of whites in the 1959 version, it was considered a real black musical. The second time round – in April 1979 – something went horribly wrong, even though R200 000 was put into the show and some very talented people were involved.

One of the three co-producers was Ian Bernhardt, who was very closely involved with the first Kong. Assistant director was Connie Mabaso and assistant musical director was Duku Makasa. Plans to bring Krishna Shah from India to direct King Kong fell through, and American black consciousness academics Joe and Dottie Walker were employed as director and musical director.

Their involvement is generally seen as the reason for the flop of Kong II.

Professor Joe Walker, the winner of a Tony award for his production of *"The River Niger"*, more or less persuaded the people setting up the show that he was the right person for the job by telling them it was nonsense that whites should direct or stage shows dealing with the black experience. The question not raised at the time was whether or not an affluent black American could fully identify with a black South African drama.

After doing some *"creative research"* into the life of the legendary heavyweight boxer Dlamini – on whom the musical was based – Walker re-wrote parts of the original script. He did not like the way Dlamini was portrayed as a tsotsi in the original.

Dottie Walker, whose claim to fame was a BMus from Howard University in 1965 and a number of obscure productions behind her, vamped up Todd Matshikiza's songs in an attempt to up-date the show. The superb jazz band, Spirits Rejoice, was signed up to do the music.

King Kong opened a week later than planned, to savage reviews from the white press and



The "Coons"

an indifferent write up from the mass black circulation newspaper **Post Transvaal**. Most of those who reviewed the show felt that the setting had nothing to do with the Sophiatown in which the original was set, and that the music was incongruous.

Said one theatregoer: *"Take Porgy and Bess. It remains the same whether it is played in New York, London or Johannesburg. Why change our type of music and dance?"*

Esme Shipanga, the widow of Todd Matshikiza, said she was appalled by the way the music was changed in the new version. She gave the show an ultimatum to *"stop this travesty of my husband's work"* or face legal action. And, in the midst of all the controversy surrounding the show, Joe and Dottie Walker resigned and returned to the States. Joe accused the white press of racism, and said that was why the reviews had been so unfavourable.

The producers admitted the show was faulty, and said they'd revamp it and reintroduce Matshikiza's original melodic lines. Connie Mabaso was left to salvage King Kong. He revived the original music, but the show closed within days through poor public support after its crucifixion by the press. Apparently what support it did enjoy was from the black community, though this faded very quickly. But it points to the fact that King Kong has a reputation as an authentic *"African"* musical, which Ipi Tombi does not.

While discussing the myths of black musicality, it is imperative to look at that once yearly event in Cape Town that has become so famous: The Coon Carnival.

From an historical point of view it is not quite accurate to see the Coon Carnival as merely a put on show for the whites, a show which reflects and confirms the subordination of its performers, although that, probably, is its most negative element and one that large numbers of so-called coloureds

have come to resent over the years.

In the light of the Group Areas Act and the mass removals of people from central Cape Town, however, the carnival has become, as Adam Small puts it, a mockery. People who participate in the carnival, he points out, are described by adjectives like *"mirthful"*, *"happy"* and *"spontaneous"* and provide a buffer to the oppression of the others. (CT Jan 6 1975)

The Coons originated, apparently from a visit paid by the black American Minstrels who arrived on a ship during Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1887. The Minstrels paraded the streets of Cape Town strumming their banjos and singing and dancing. Their black/white faces, glad rags and little ditties were an instant hit with the coloured and Malay people.

These people soon started imitating them, painting their faces black with big white circles around their eyes to resemble the raccoon, and parading through the streets of Cape Town at the New Year singing Dixieland melodies and traditional Afrikaans liedjies, or as they are called in the Cape *"moppieliedjies"*.

One of these liedjies was *"Daar kom die Alabama"* which resulted from the capture of the American ship SEABIRD by the Confederate ship ALABAMA some twenty-three years before. That song is one of the most famous in the Coon repertoire.

In some accounts, it was the visit of the ALABAMA to Cape Town in 1863 that started the Carnival. *"As the vessel approached the harbour . . . the SEABIRD, which had desperately sought to avoid the Confederate ship for some time, made its appearance from the opposite direction. It was soon evident to the hundreds of local inhabitants who had by this time lined the waterfront, that the raider was intent on seizing the hapless Union ship. The ALABAMA fired a blank charge*

"The body of Mr Basil Bailey of 2nd Avenue Claremont was pulled from the water at Kalk Bay harbour yesterday afternoon. Onlookers said that he walked into the sea. He was wearing Coon Carnival dress and singing 'Nou sink die Alie-bama'." Report in the "Cape Times", January 8 1970.

at the fugitive, bringing it immediately to bay, and steamed triumphantly into Cape Town with the surrendered ship in tow. Visitors streamed on board the captor and her Captain was the hero of the day . . . the curious American influence on this musical festival may have come from some members of the ALABAMA's crew who were inadvertently left behind when she sailed."

I don't know how reliable this article, ("*Dixie in reverse*" by Quentin Keynes) from the American magazine **Natural History** is, but the author accredits an enormous amount of American influence to the Cape Carnival. "*One of the purely American developments was the minstrel show which originated here in the 19th century – a kind of musical comedy in which negro spirituals and humour were adapted to an altogether new national background. Strange as this may seem, this purely American institution is now being borrowed back by the natives in South Africa – but in reverse. At an annual carnival staged in Cape Town, the Union of South Africa, the Cape negroes smear their mouths with white, Al Jolson style, don American costumes, sing American songs and carry American signs."*

But it is more commonly held that the Minstrels of 1887 were responsible for starting South Africa's most famous festival.

Among many apparently influenced by the Minstrels were a Malay family named Dantu. At their instigation, the first Coon Troupe appeared on January 1st 1888. In 1906, the **Argus** newspaper organised a competition for various troupes with a trophy as first prize at the Green Point track – a venue which has now become the traditional carnival spot along with the Goodwood showgrounds.

In time different rival carnivals were established. Rivalry between various troupes was fierce and members kept secret the colour themes of their

costumes and the titles of the songs they were going to sing until the carnival started.

Although the carnival had started as a time of revelry celebrated within a particularly poor community, the organisation by the **Argus** of the carnival into a formal competition marks the beginnings of white control over the Coons. From then on the carnival became spectator sport, yet another item for the Department of Information's tourist-trapping brochures.

Few people would believe an entry in the South African Encyclopaedia under the heading "*Coloureds*":

" . . . who give expression to their zest for life by their animated dancing and prancing . . . whilst some feel that the Coons are a humiliating aspect of the lives of the coloured people, others believe that they play a vital part in that they provide the participants with an enjoyable and innocent source of interest and amusement."

There seems to be an ambivalence in the attitude of the educated and more politicised people who have risen out of the Cape Town ghettos. The "*moppies*" who still participate in the carnival seem to enjoy it, they identify with it, they see no harm in it whatsoever. The suggestion that it keeps them trapped in their servile status they find quite incomprehensible.

The association of the carnival with good times seems to stem from the fact that in the old days most of the "*coloureds*" were concentrated in District Six and there was an organic community spirit.

But then in 1966 the government proclaimed District Six a white area under the Group Areas Act, and resettled thousands of people to ghetto areas of the Cape Flats like Atlantis and Bonteheuwel.

This raised practical difficulties for the people involved in the carnival – many of the old troupes based in

central Cape Town could not meet up with other members who lived as far as 40km away. More than anything it was this Group Areas Act which turned the carnival into a stratified "*event*". Then in 1976 the Cape Town City Council put a stop to parades through the centre of the city. The Council claimed it was apprehensive about the thousands of people that congregated to watch the parades, the disruption of the traffic flow, occasional violence and the litter left behind. Far more likely however, is that the parades were stopped because 76 was the year of widespread rioting within the oppressed communities of South Africa and stopping the parades linked up with the Riotous Assembly Act's blanket ban on all outdoor gatherings.

Although the number of Coons is dropping every year the competitions go on. Troupes congregate at Green Point track for three days every year – New Years Day, "*Tweede Nuwe Jaar*" and the following Saturday. They compete against each other in various categories such as: Combined Chorus, Comic Song (Adult), Juvenile Comic, Afrikaans Moppie, Adult Sentimental, Juvenile Sentimental, Special Item, Group Song, Adult Coon Song and Juvenile Coon Song. They are also judged by a specially chosen Coon Carnival Board, for the best band, the best dressed troupe, the best march past, best float, best stand display, best queen, best drum majorette (these last two categories only in the last ten years – before that the Coons were a male-only affair).

Musical instruments played include just about anything these days with the exception of synthesisers – anything light enough to carry like banjos, guitars, cellos, tamborines, mandolines, trumpets, saxophones, trombones, mouthorgans and flutes.

The songs vary from traditional moppie numbers and American numbers such as

"Dannie Boy", "Old Man River" and "Moon River" to recent hit tunes off the Top Ten (lyrics often changed to suit the occasion).

Some of the criticism levelled at the Coon Carnival comes from the fact that certain organisers are very conservative. Mr Sonny Lloyd for example, a white who has been organising troupes for 33 years applied for permission to send the Coons to perform for troops on the border.

"If our Coons and other indigenous entertainers are accepted for performance up north they will, I am sure, prove invaluable morale boosters." There are a great many apologists for the Coons, normally establishment figures and writers of letters to the press, An example: *"It is hard to be patient with the view that the show is undignified. Is it more so than any other Mardi Gras or any carnival anywhere in the world where grown up people don a variety of quaint garbs and take to the streets and plazas?"*

What the writer of that letter to the **Cape Times**, fails to comprehend is that elsewhere in the world these "grown up people" are treated as grown up people by others in the society, and furthermore they have the rights of grown up people. They can vote. They are not bulldozed out of their homes like so many rats being destroyed by an extermination service of a City Council.

A similar show need not be

undignified where the participants are not an oppressed people, where the spectators are not a ruling elite or goggle-eyed visitors spell bound by the colour and glitter of it all, and not seeing the harsh reality of people living a breadline existence.

A far more accurate view of the sickness that has come to characterise the carnival is that expressed by George Manuel, **Cape Times** January 13 1973:

"The Coloured people are no longer an integral part of Cape Town. They have no legal status in its all white Group Area confines. They no longer have a stake in it. They have been resettled in the ghetto areas of the Cape Flats. It is from there that the Coon element now springs from mainly. The Coon element that was created on the invitation march gave to me, at least, the impression that they are happy in their new amenity-lacking environment; that they have come back to town in the New Year in their carnival best to give a march which is a measure of gratitude for all that has been done for them, rather than a protest procession of what has been done to the dignity and freedom of coloured people at all social levels. The slaves are happy and so the master class can feel pleased. The whole spectacle of the march on Saturday had an uninspired hollow and anachronistic flavour. I could not help feeling bloody-minded about it." ■

"Children, the core of the troupes, are being educated more and more and they will soon see the present Coon Carnival for what it is – a mockery." ADAM SMALL, poet, philosopher and playwright.

3



Dan Roberts

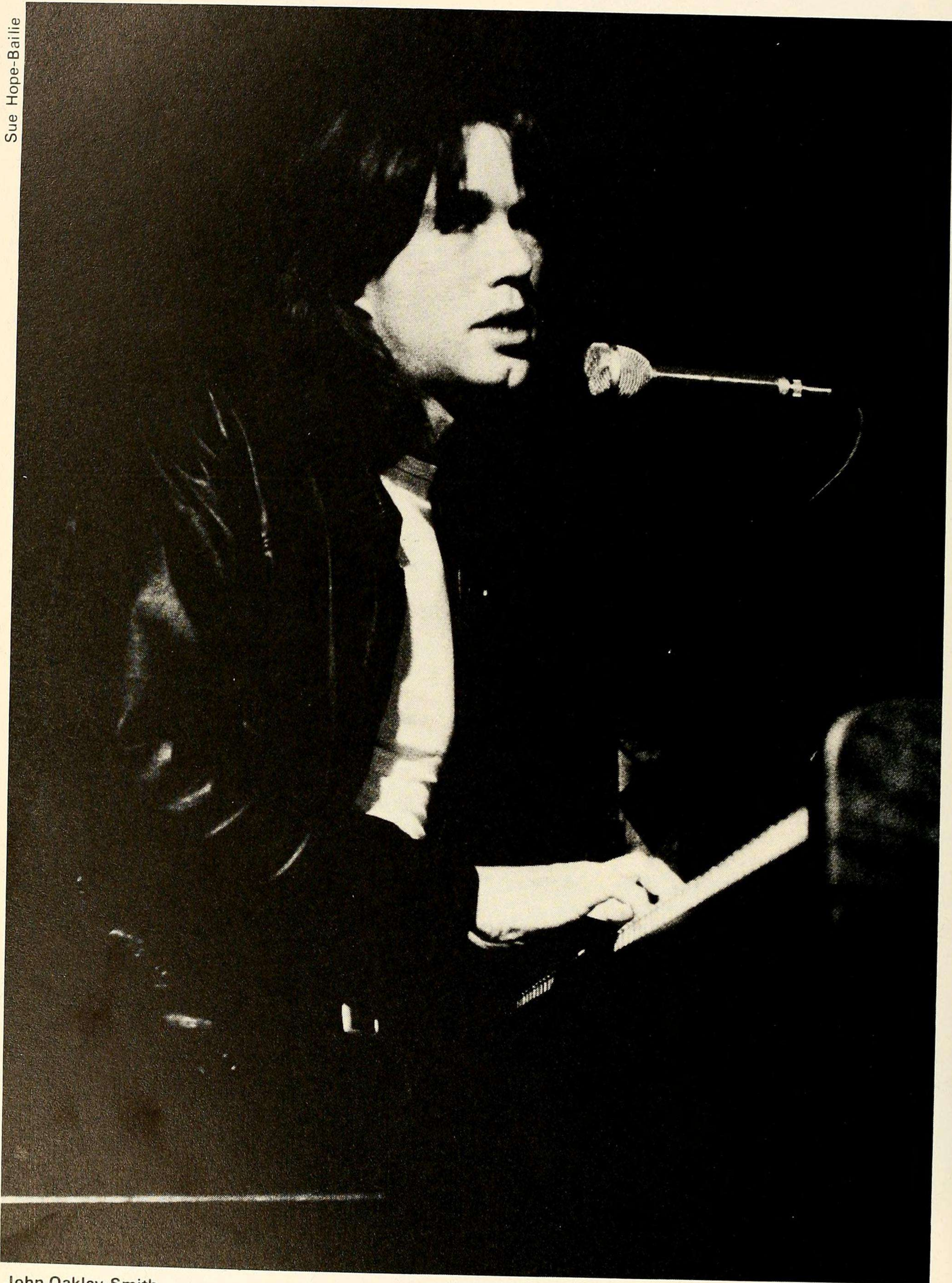
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THREE

REPERCUSSIONS, THE DAMAGE
DONE, AND FUTURE TRENDS

Sue Hope-Bailie



John Oakley-Smith

Chapter 1

TOO MUCH PRESSURE

THERE can be few countries in the world that have produced a range of musical talent like South Africa's.

We have traditional African music, and township jive; American influenced jazz bands, soul singers and groaners; we have solo singers and mbube groups.

We have Afrikaans traditional music, and the so-called Afrikaans new wave; we have our own brand of country and western.

We have English folk, and rock, and reggae, and ska; we have disco and musak.

We have groups that combine African traditional with European folk rock; we have groups that combine township and heavy rock; we have political folk rocksters.

No other country in the world could have produced a "*Jikel' Emaweni*" and a "*Sarie Marais*" and a "*Master Jack*"; a "*Click Song*" and an "*Ag Pleez Deddy*" and a "*Paradise Road*"; an "*Nkosi Sikele' i-Afrika*" and a "*Waterblommetjies*" and a "*Raising My Family*".

And this despite musicians being discouraged at every turn, being denied a proper audience, being blocked by radio and the record industry, being isolated as stars within a particular government-imposed grouping and being forced into a "*political*" mould, just by virtue of being an unwilling part of the whole structure. Yet, though music has come out of South Africa, there is not enough of it;

nor do the people who make the music, survive. Nor does much of the music itself, bar the resistance songs, anthems and a handful of favourites and ever-greens.

Why do bands break up, and why doesn't music from a particular era survive? We've already discussed the big bands of the '40s and '50s, and how the combined pressures of township violence, resentment by the white musicians' union and the arbitrary poaching of their audiences by the record industry conspired to destroy the big bands.

As the industry grew and fickle fashions could dictate the direction of music, so South African musicians began to feel more pressure.

There was the increasing censorship (both moral and political) by the SABC to contend with, and an enforced conservatism and unimaginative approach to popular music that was to come when LM Radio became Radio 5, and which was to give birth to the club bands.

Through the '60s and early '70s, a number of original pop and rock bands came and went – The Staccatos, The Dominoes, The Shangaans, the Dream Merchants, Johnny Kongos and the G-men, the Square Set, the Peanut Butter Conspiracy, the Rising Sons, Dicky Loader and the Blue Jeans, The Bats, Four Jacks and a Jill, The Flames, The Otis Waygood Blues Band, Freedom's Children, Tusk, Hammak, Wakeford Hart, Hawk,

Abstract Truth, Gate, and Suck. All built up large and devoted followings playing music inspired by overseas trends, but written themselves. No other band (except Rabbitt, which had the largest ever teenybop following in South Africa) managed again to build up followings like these until the late '70s, when there was a resurgence of interest in original rock 'n roll, after something like eight years of club bands.

The club bands – like Copperfield, Ballyhoo, Backtrax, Lincoln, Fantasy, Pedigree, Circus, McCully Workshop (not completely like the others in that they played more original material), Wax and Clout – should not be sneered at, since for most of them it was a case of "*adapt or die*". Finding themselves in a country where the only work available was club work where they were forced to play the top thirty to audiences anxious to reproduce the safe sounds of Radio 5, they adapted – rather than starve. Not so the more militant breed of rock 'n rollers who came to the fore a year or so after the Clash first strode across England. From the hard rock and heavy metal influenced groups like Free Ride, Gate, Raven, Powerpak and Baxtop, to the punk/new wave/power pop players, The Radio Rats, Wild Youth, the Rag Dolls, Corporal Punishment, Hogs Norton, Fresh Evidence, Flash Harry, Leopard, Falling Mirror, Permanent Force, the Safari Suits, Butch, Peach, the

"The real Freedom's Children was Kenny Henson, myself, Colin and Jimmy Thompson.

"We used dry ice, tapes and films of monks chanting and bombs dropping and people who came to see us used to freak out. Well, I don't know how many were for real, it became the in thing to have a frothy.

"The place was always crowded and the manager of the hotel was making a fortune. Once some guys from the Dutch Reformed Church, the mayor and the police came to see us and they said we were deranging the minds of our audiences. The manager told us to calm down our show so they wouldn't stop it.

"But at that stage it had become really macabre. People wanted more every night and we all started drinking heavily. The press had created it all; it became ridiculous. We used to do some weird things . . . Colin used to walk in from the back wearing a white sheet and a candle, that's how it would all start.

"Once Grahame Beggs came to record us live, but it didn't work - there was too much noise and it sounded worse than the Sex Pistols.

"Eventually it got to the stage where everyone was against us. If we'd been overseas it would have been all right because the minority there would've been big enough to support us, to make it go on."

RAMSAY MACKAY

Party, Dog, The Other Band, The Asylum Kids, Roger Lucey and the Zub Zub Marauders, the AK47s - they would all have disbanded sooner than "sell out" by playing anything that sounded as if it might have come within a kilometre of the SABC.

Disbanding was what some of them had to do too, lacking as they did the audiences, finance and will to continue.

But the importance of these groups on the South African music scene should not be underestimated. For one thing, they gave most of the existing club bands a great shock, and taught them that there was a lot to be said for originality.

At the same time another club band was enjoying considerable success in Europe: Clout, with "Substitute". So club bands were starting to realise two things: firstly, that being a club band and being a success were not mutually exclusive; secondly, that using the years of experience built up in clubs and studios as session players and combining this with original new material might be the secret to "making it".

Out of the ashes of a few technically brilliant, but **boring** club and session groups, came a new breed of super-groups: Stingray, Morocko, Lastique and City Limits. The militant originals were surprised, but still maintained that none of these groups could stir up a crowd like they could - and to prove it, Peach and the Asylum Kids launched a new offensive, not only going all out on stage but agreeing to record numbers that two years previously would have had the companies running away in terror, but which now had suddenly become "mainstream."

Looking at the pop-rock scene over these two decades, it seems that there hasn't been an enormous amount of development. Oh, no doubt, the groups became more technically skilled, but we lost more than seven-eighths of them along the way. While we can blame radio for killing off a lot of the '60s

talent, we have to blame the audience (or consumer) tastes created by radio for killing off so many of the '70s rock 'n rollers.

Just how conservative those rock audiences can be is incredible. On Krugers Day once in the early '70s, a rock festival at Johannesburg's Milner Park was ruined when a horde of short-haired students from the Rand Afrikaans University started attacking the long-hairs and hippies in the audience, and in many cases dragging them off and cutting their hair.

Incidents like this are not uncommon, and you can be sure that if it's not a group of vigilantes who're causing the trouble, then it's the police. When Jimmy Cliff performed at Orlando Stadium the police were out in force, and didn't hesitate to sjambok fans eagerly clambering onto the stage or pushing onto equipment.

At a festival I attended recently in Pietermaritzburg, the show of force was even more disgusting. Groups lined-up to play were Juluka, Malombo, the AK47s and The Magicians. The show was advertised as being from midmorning to 6 o'clock that evening, and it cost R3 to get in. From 1 o'clock, police started lining up outside the showgrounds with dogs and batons, and at about 2.30 the promoter made an announcement that all dancing had to stop or the police would close the festival.

One person, a black man wearing a green cap, continued to dance and continued to find people to dance with him.

Just before 3 o'clock, the compere took the microphone away from the singer of the group setting up, and said flatly: "Ladies and gentlemen, I've got a very sad announcement to make. We've been instructed to close the show now. This is the final word. Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm sorry for this interruption but the organisers of this show have by mistake only got a permit until 3 o'clock - after that, they are not allowed

to continue the show."

In disbelief, the 200 or so people remained seated. The police – about 30 strong – moved to the left of the crowd, and with the help of the growling dogs and a few menacing shakes of their batons, cleared the field within seconds. As we left the grounds through the police cordon it became obvious that the green-capped dancer was actually from the police too: he was arresting the people he'd incited to dance!

Inviting the attention of the police is one of the hazards of a non-racial musical festival; and not only the police, but the local authorities too. To this day permits are not granted for the non-racial Free People's Concerts, traditionally held on the lawns of an English speaking university. The concerts go on, nevertheless, by being closed to the public but open to students and their guests. Invariably, the police are there and sometimes close the concert in mid-show.

In August 1964, when the Johannesburg City Council ruled that mixed performances would not be allowed at a national jazz festival at Orlando Stadium the following month, most bands took a stand and said they refused to play at a racial festival. Commented a leader of the young jazz set at the time: *"This is the worst thing that could have happened to jazz. God knows that this country is beset with many problems already without us adding more. As I see it, the move will kill jazz."* Flautist Vellie Ngwenya took his protest to **Post** newspaper: *"Of necessity and because of the very nature of the art form, jazz musicians are of one race. Colour has never come into it. After all, we need to exchange ideas for the progress of the music."*

What made the council's decision even harder to bear was the fact that the jazz festival had attracted 20 000 the previous year, when Cape Town's Swinging City Six – led by Ronnie Beer – shared the honours of Best Instrumental Group with Chris MacGregor's Blue Notes. The

Elite Swingsters, led by Zakes Nkosi, won the Mbaqanga category, while the African Jammer Kids walked off with the prize for the Best Vocal Group.

So it was that jazz was made to move off the big stages and into the small clubs. In no time associations like the Soweto Jazz Appreciation Society and the Johannesburg Jazz Club were formed, in more intimate surroundings where jazz could be played and discussed without the intimidating presence of the police. There was yet another factor that made it necessary for jazz to go into the clubs – the popularity of mbaqanga with the black townpeople. Whether or not it was a record company "creation" to start with, the rough and raw mbaqanga sounds attracted thousands more people to festivals than the jazz bands did.

Apart from mbaqanga and jazz, there was a lull in the townships for a while after the heady days of kwela music and "King Kong". Bemoaning this, "Off Key" wrote a letter to **Post** in September 1963, barely days before the Orlando jazz festival: *"Show business in Jo'burg is dead. No more first rate variety shows, no exciting jazz concerts and no stage musicals. I say this is a poor show for a city of this size and calibre. When the Manhattan Brothers ruled the roost there was much criticism. They were conservative and unimaginative, but they swung! They are now in England and showbiz is dead! One cries for those days when the Sophiatown Modern Jazz Club, De Pitch Black Follies and 'Ol' Man' Sentso and his Synco fans were around. In fact, I would have been delighted to get a viewing of the old-time Gay Gaieties and Mad Joe as a substitute for the hash we are being fed with nowadays."*

It did not take long for the township people to become quite attached to the "hash". Set against the background of the Rivonia trial (August 1963), daily bannings and harrassment of

"DRY WINE"

I'm half asleep
I dream in the dark
I'm trusting the locks on the doors
And the dogs morning bark
Outside in the street
A drunkard stumbles and sings
and in the next door flat
A telephone rings and rings
But nothing disturbs
The suburb's quiet
Not the sirens
Or the news of the township riots
And knowing it all
Through the distance of headlines
I express my opinion
With a mouth full of dry wine
A lady with red fingernails
is playing with her diamond
Gazing through the restaurant window
At the lights of Robben Island
Her hair's cut in the latest style
And her eyes are painted blue
And she's probably thinking now
Where in the world
Could I find a better view
And her husband asks the waiter
"Are these prawns from Mocambique"
And the waiter he just nods his head
And he smiles but doesn't speak
And knowing it all
As I watched from the sidelines
My thoughts are my own
As I swallow my dry wine
An old lady in a Seapoint flat
Lives with her dreams and dread
She can hear the disco music
As she lies in her bed
In the servants quarters
She can hear them laugh and sing
And in the next door flat
The telephone rings and rings
Perhaps I'm like a deaf man
Who has seen the lightning flash
Or maybe I'm just like the blind
And I only hear it crash
But knowing it all
From the distance of headlines
I express my opinion
With a mouth full of dry wine
Full of that dry wine
I'm full of that dry wine.
DAVID KRAMER

Des Lindberg . . . Keith Blundell . . . Dawn Silver . . . Zvi Sefer . . . Nick Taylor . . . Piet le Roux . . . Gary Bryden . . . Jeremy Taylor . . . Jill Kirkland . . . Leon Rabinowitz . . . Mike Sonnenberg . . . Barbara Newfield . . . Robert McCutcheon . . . Dave Maynier . . . Ian Lawrence . . . Michael Meyer . . . Johnny Kongos . . . The Sandpipers . . . Mel Miller . . . Mel Green . . . Julian . . . Rod Bolin . . . Ritchie Morris . . . Maureen England . . . The Bluebeats . . . Gail and Ginny . . . The Companions . . . Sean and Maurice . . . Bill Oliff . . . Clive Stramrood . . . Archie Theron . . . Martin Stramrood . . . Beryl Ellin . . . Peter le Roux . . . Mike Dickman . . . Gabrielle Albrect . . . Barbara Thompson . . . Irene Frangs . . . Clive Glover . . . The Three Ravens . . . Edith and Linda Gampel . . . Edi Niederlander . . . Pierre Malherbe . . . Yvonne Raff . . . Eric Solomon . . . Yona Gottesman . . . Brian Bebbington . . . Dave Marks . . . Duccio Alessandri . . . Cornelis Möller . . . Barbara and Andy . . . Father McAleer . . . North Country Replacements . . . Just Us . . . Susan Sklair . . . Bill, Eugene and Peter . . . New Trend . . . Clem Tholet . . . Sue Dambe . . . Henry Jones and Ingrid . . . Vivian Horwitz . . . Hinds Bros . . . Sheilagh O'Shea . . . Rocky Raath . . . Stevie van Kierken . . . Allan Goodwin and John Edmond . . .

In terms of government thinking, these people were furthering the aims of Communism – through folk song!

individuals by the state, the ongoing debate in the entertainment section of the press on Elvis Presley vs Cliff Richard was as sordid as the stories of Christine Keeler in the gossip pages. Still, the twist took off, and groups like the Fabulous Footsteps, the Shyannes, The Diamonds, Johnny Kongos and the G-men, The Jets, The Rebels, the Larks, The Buddies and Ben "Satch" Masinga took their places among the township twisters.

Twist music – like every form of popular music that had gone before – was also regarded in a suspicious light by the authorities. But, to date, no music has been so maligned as the "imported" folk music which was fashionable in white student circles during the mid-60s. Here is an account, straight from the press, of folk music and how it was perceived then:

ARE FOLK SONGS SUBVERSIVE by Oliver Walker **The Star** May 1965: "When John Harris went to the gallows he is said to have sung the theme song of the American Civil Rights Movement 'We Shall Overcome'. Now the Security Branch has been asking around record bars in Johannesburg for copies of this tune."

Its author, Pete Seeger, was apparently booked for a tour of South Africa in '64 but wasn't granted a visa. Walker talks about the song "Blowin in the Wind" and says that that was also under the scrutiny of the security police.

"Johannesburg folksingers will be avoiding these songs (at the Wits festival). But they can hardly ignore the enormous new treasury of American folksongs coming under the heading of 'struggle' and 'protest'.

"There are no records of similar songs written in South Africa since the Nationalists came to power. But it is more than likely that among the Africans there must be a number which are linked with political changes.

"Surely the Africans, who

have a tradition for turning everything from a pick-axe chore in Eloff Street to a marriage feast into song, have produced a whole literature – not yet charted – of songs reflecting the humiliation, dejection and pleasures of their chaotic urban life?

"Our Special Branch has no real need to regard folksongs of the kind I have mentioned as subversive. As one expert pointed out to me, the cult for these songs exists mainly among children of the richer families. They like the tunes. They like the novelty and informality of their presentation . . . but none of the real songs of protest and freedom touches their hearts. Nothing, in fact, is blowing in the wind except a few whiffs of low-lit sentiment which go well with candlelight and a smokey atmosphere."

In the **Sunday Times**, June '65, a report read:

"British immigrant folk singer Mr Alex Malcolm . . . has accused South African folk singers of 'dragging leftist politics into the folk singing movement . . . using folk songs as political propaganda against the government and its policies'. Des Lindberg's reply: 'Politically incriminating statements are invalid generalisations. I know of no single folk singer promoting any political cause.' Comment by Nick Taylor: 'I do not sing protest songs because I do not want to offend anybody.'" (Sure he doesn't. Nick Taylor used to sing on SABC's "Thursday Night" programme: "Thursday night/Thursday night/we reach our deadline on Thursday night/for your edification and your delight/our headline and deadline's on Thursday night").

Under the headline in the **Sunday Times**, July 1965, "Police have killed protest song", there's a story about the number "We Shall Overcome" being banned . . . and folk singers no longer singing 'protest' songs in Hillbrow coffee bars. Comment on "We Shall Overcome" from Ian Lawrence: "I, and most folk singers, refuse to sing it because of its associations." Ra ra, Ian.



Permission Dawn Lindberg

Des and Dawn Lindberg

Important dates for folkies

July 1964: Des Lindberg and Dawn Silver (later to marry), and Keith Blundell organise the Troubadour, the first folk singing club in Johannesburg.

May 1965: South Africa's first national folk song festival, held by the Wits Rag committee and The Troubadour at Wits Great Hall. The festival recorded live, album called "*National Folk Song Festival '65*".

July 1965: The song "*We Shall Overcome*" banned. Folksingers round coffee bars start eliminating "*protest*" songs in their repertoire. Security Branch start visiting record shops asking for "*Protest and freedom*" songs.

October 1965: Des Lindberg wins SARI for South Africa's foremost male singer (at this stage SARIs were still run by the Record Industry, not by SABC); and the SABC brands as communist inspired "*Eve of Destruction*", "*If I had a Hammer*", "*Blowin' in the Wind*", "*A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall*", "*The Times They Are A-changin'*" and "*Masters of War*".

December 1965: Stringalong Folk at the Brooke Theatre. A show with all the major folkies, seen by 28 000, which ran for nine weeks.

June 1966: The SRC of the University of Pretoria declares that folk singers are subversive and communist and bans them from the campus. Their

statement coincides with the 2nd National Folk Festival. A show called What's Folk, Pussycat tours all over South Africa, and goes as far as Windhoek in Namibia.

July 1966: Des and Dawn start doing shows on their own, instead of performing at folk concerts with lots of other artists. They start cutting down on their "*political*" repertoire.

September 1966: They take their "*Folk on Trek*" show to the road. Des mutters: "*Everyone wants funny songs to keep them rolling on the floor,*" but he's not really complaining. His "*Die Gezoem van die Bye*" sells 30 000 and earns him a gold disc, and the show stays on the road until November 1967. During this time the third National Folk song festival takes place, with about 40 performers taking part, and Des and Dawn's "*Folk on Trek*" record is banned by the Publications Control Board on the grounds that its "*irresponsible and blasphemous*". Des and Dawn lose the appeal. They release a tamer version of the album, called "*Folk on Trek on the Banned Wagon*", and shortly thereafter the timid "*Unicorns, Spiders and Things*" for children.

November 1970: Des (29) and Dawn (25) buy a 30-roomed mansion in Houghton and move in. They spent most of the year

working on a satire.

February 1971: The Soiree Society begins, operating from their house. The same year the National Folk Festival takes place at Sandton Civic centre, and Des and Dawn win SARIE award for best vocal group for "*The Seagull's Name was Nelson*". Virtually all the top folk/classical/jazz musicians perform at the soirees. Start having poetry readings and short plays too. After this Des and Dawn started moving out of folk completely and into musicals.

Also in 1971, Dave Marks stages the first Free People's Concert at the University of the Witwatersrand. These become once yearly events, except in

1973: when two concerts are held, one in conjunction with Nusas and the second with the Phoenix Players. They are seen by about 20 000 people.

1976: Applications for multi-racial permits for the Free People's Concert are refused. The organiser, Dave Marks, who has been in the driving seat for seven years says he's scared to push any harder. "*The hassles involved get bigger every year. I'm interested in music, not politics.*"

1980, 1981: After hiding out in small clubs again, folk and indigenous music comes out into the open again at the revived Free People's Concerts.

A few interesting features have emerged from the South African folk music scene. To begin with, it was hailed by the SABC and newspapers as a "movement".

Folk music was seen as the music of communism; long hair and jeans were equated with subversion. At the start of the folkie trend in South Africa practically every newspaper carried a "What is this folk music" feature and no one – with the exception of **The Star** critic Oliver Walker – pinned down exactly the type of people who performed folk music.

Walker accurately stated that the cult for folk songs existed mainly among the children of the richer families.

By the "richer families" he is obviously referring to the white middle class. Walker could have continued his analysis. He could have said that the novelty of folk singing would wane. That the so-called protest singers would eventually settle down in luxurious homes in all white suburbs and perpetuate the very system they claimed initially to be standing against.

Another feature of folk music is that the SABC, through a series of bannings and intimidatory moves, got this music into exactly the form it wanted – an amusing, satirical form of folk with few elements of protest.

A critic in the **Sunday Tribune** marked the changing nature of folk music in December 1967:

"Now they're out to entertain – we're gonna make you laugh, buddy – and their assertion of 'have something to say' is pretty pretentious in this context . . . their songs are mainly satirical and humorous, and the humour operates within an Afrikaner/Englishman, Blacks are Children sphere."

Jeremy Taylor (who was not actually South African, but was probably responsible for starting the "movement" in Johannesburg when he lived there as a teacher/singer prior to the Troubadour days) had one of the biggest hit singles this country

has ever seen with his "Ag Pleez Deddy".

Jeremy was eventually prohibited from returning to South Africa (until the late '70s, when the ban on him was lifted) because he was one of the few musicians who would not conform to the SABC's demands.

The strong point in Jeremy Taylor's favour was that he wrote songs from within his own experience. Ladies who work in lifts in department stores, white teenagers being called up to the army, the champagne and manure set from the Northern suburbs, the poorer whites from the Southern suburbs, township life through the eyes of a migrant labourer, the use of suntan lotion vs. the use of skin-lighteners, bureaucracy . . . all these he sang about, mostly in a witty way. But because he was writing from his own experience, the songs had strength and relevance – and probably this is exactly why the government considered him dangerous enough to ban from re-entering the country once he'd left it.

Most of the other folkies tended to sing songs that they couldn't really identify with. As Des Lindberg pointed out in 1965, "we're all middle-class people living easy lives, so in a way it's strange singing about suffering and oppression."

Of course the logical outcome was that the liberal folkies would eventually go back to the fold . . .

Today Des and Dawn live in Houghton – in a 30-roomed mansion. They vote Prog; they are concerned citizens; they still do a bit of folksinging in the dorps – mostly the humorous, "Die Gezoem van die Bye" type stuff – but these days their efforts go into producing and directing musicals like "Godspell", "Pippin" and "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas".

Mel Miller, also once a concerned folkie, has become a Biltong and Potroast man, including in his repertoire racist and sexist joke-mongering in various shows around South

**Des: "We're not beat
and we're not hippies.
We wash and we eat
with knives and forks".**
REPORT BY ROY CHRISTIE,
DURBAN DAILY NEWS,
December 1967.

Africa. Mike Meyer, Hal Orlandini and Ian Lawrence are all regulars in the SABC soup 'n soap shows.

The last, and most important feature of the 60's folkie scene is that it spawned a whole new breed of musicians in South Africa: musicians who instead of borrowing the protests of American song writers, wrote their own lyrics.

In this category can be placed such singers and performers as Paul Clingman, Ramsay Mackay, Mike Dickman, John Oakley Smith, Andre de Villiers, Brian Finch and Kenny Henson, Colin Shamley, Colin Shapiro, Colin Pratley, Dave Tarr, Roger Lucey, Edi Niederlander, and of course the entire Afrikaans "new wave" music which will be discussed in a separate chapter.

It is obviously completely unsatisfactory to lump these people together as a "category". They all have distinctive styles; they are all originals. But they share a common outlook: a vision for a new and free South Africa. Some, like John Oakley Smith, confine their observations to people moving within the same circles or people/situations viewed at close range. John would notice the stage struck girl in the bar ("*Lady from the Odeon*") and write a magnificent song about it, or about the elderly sisters working in the junk shop under the picture of the Queen, but he would not contemplate a song about people in Soweto simply because that is not something he knows.

His music could be cosmopolitan, but because he draws his images from around him, he is actually writing about a type of people – the old colonials, mostly – that we all know about in Southern Africa.

John Oakley Smith was voted "Newcomer of the Year" in 1976 by **Billboard** magazine for his debut album "*Matinees on Saturdays*" but in South Africa it received no airplay whatsoever.

"It had taken a lot of work and it was met with a shrug, not to mention a summary dismissal

from the SABC," says John. "They didn't want to play '*Lady from the Odeon*' because of the line about the girl drinking alone in a bar – of course they didn't consider it might be a coffee bar or even a health food bar – and the reference to cheap hotels. I'm not really hostile to SABC, just offended they don't play my songs. I believe they're starting to play them now, so it should be all right – as long as the *Vrouefederasie* doesn't write in to complain – you always get these lunatic fringes."

In direct contrast is Paul Clingman, well known for his aggressive Africa-sunset-drums-bones-and-blood type numbers. Paul spells it out: he doesn't leave a concert before every member of the audience realises that he is tormented by the situation in South Africa. One of his best songs is a number written from New York when he heard that his friends Jackie Bosman and Ilona Kleinschmidt had been sent to jail for visiting Winnie Mandela.

Another concerned musician to have risen from the ranks of folkies is Kenny Henson, who mostly plays in partnership with Brian Finch round the club circuit. Kenny's solo album, "*Giving a Little Away*" was brought out under the name Harambee (apparently a North African name meaning the spirit of togetherness). The album didn't sell well and is in parts very peculiar, but it's definitely the first time a South African musician has come out so strongly with a message, spread out over a whole album.

Here, word for word, is a sheet handed out with the record. (Incidentally, I also got a PFP pamphlet with my copy):

"SYNOPSIS

This album is an attempt to convey musically the situation in Southern Africa past, present and future.

SIDE I

1. Prayer to the Young Moon: A traditional Bushman poem set to music. As the Bushmen were the first inhabitants in

June 1966 – Pretoria University's **Perdeby** Magazine announces the formation of a national council against communism and calls for the banning of folk-singing claiming that it furthers the aims of communism. The SRC bans the formation of folk singing groups on campus, because folk singers are 'subversive, communistic and threaten the future of the Afrikaner!' They quote as an example Des Lindberg's "*Ballad of the townships*" which they say 'pokes fun at security police and 180 days and praises banned people.'

PERDEBY ARTICLE REACTION

"A group of students have demonstrated against the article by folk-singing in the student cafeteria." Report in **R.D.M.**, June 13, 1966.

"Devotees of folk are saddened and hurt by a recent protest from Pretoria University that their music is 'not acceptable'." Stoeptalk, **The Star**.

"Keith Blundell: We strongly object to people suggesting that we are not patriotic . . . and that we are communistic and subversive . . . we are not interested in politics." Report by Lionel Attwell, **Sunday Times**, June 19 1966.

Uys Krige, Afrikaans poet and author comments on UP SRC ban on folksinging: "Look out for the guy with the guitar! He's got a bomb in it . . . and his mate will Bolshevise you with a boereballad."

South Africa, this piece quite appropriately opens the album.

2. Overture: *As the name implies, a short instrumental medley of the numbers on the LP. A musical landscape, early Africa, before arrival of white settlers.*
3. Roland the Headless Thompson Gunner: *Re-working of a Warren Zevon number included to bring the listener up to date with the present Africa i.e. mercenaries and so on.*
4. Walk Tall: *A song of pride, inspired by the Soweto riots in 1976.*
5. Midnight in the Jungle: *Depicting the turmoil that could result should the Government continue on its present course of separate development.*

SIDE II

1. Orang-Outang: *The aspirations and frustrations of the blacks in South Africa and the hope for change.*
2. Elegy: *Depicting the sadness and futility should the situation explode here.*

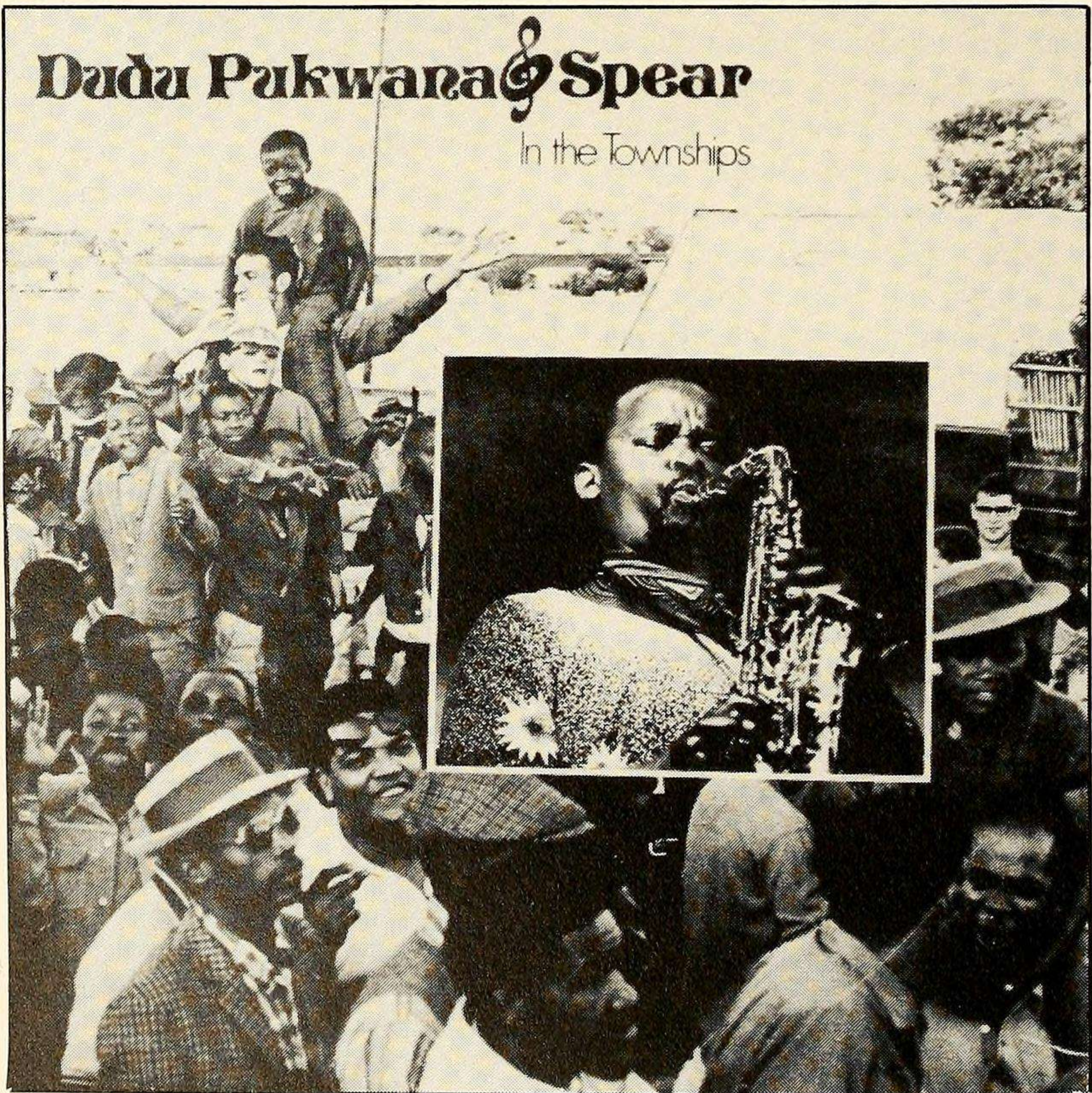
3. Giving a little Away: *A statement of how the above confrontations could be avoided if those in control were prepared to share the gains of the country, i.e. equal opportunities for all races and shared power.*
4. O Fortuna (from Orff's "Carmina Burana"): *A song celebrating such a change, sung in Zulu.*
5. Nkosi Sikelel i' Afrika – *it's up to God and all of us to work to get it together."*

Kenny used musicians like John Oakley Smith, Ramsay Mackay and Colin Pratley to back-up the album. It was considered by most people in the industry to be revolutionary. Certainly it was brave, but the actual message, 'Dialogue before Conflict' is about as revolutionary as the pamphlet that arrived with my copy.

What was extraordinary about the project was that it was an attempt to find a place for a musician in a society where practically every outlet was sealed off by the state and SABC on the one hand, and the music industry on the other. ■

" . . . the cult for these songs exist mainly among children of the richer families. They like the tunes. They like the novelty and informality of their presentation . . . but none of the real songs of protest and freedom touches their hearts. Nothing, in fact, is blowing in the wind except a few whiffs of low-lit sentiment which go well with candlelight and a smokey atmosphere."

OLIVER WALKER The STAR newspaper, 1965



Chapter 2

BAND ON THE RUN

THE list of South African singers and musicians not living in South Africa goes on and on. They've left for many reasons. In the cases of Makeba and Masekela, they are in exile. They were outspoken about apartheid and as a result their records have had little or no airplay on SABC. In other cases people left South Africa because they saw no future here, or because they were ambitious, wanting to be stars (part of the conditioning process of every musician). In most cases these people have declared that they will never return to South Africa until the Nationalist regime is out of power.

Here are just some of the better known people in music who felt that a life outside the country was better than a life inside it. Sometimes no other information than a name and home town is available, and this information must be regarded as a rough sketch.

JULIAN BAHULA: See Dudu Pukwana.

DOLLAR BRAND: the jazz pianist from Cape Town, best known for his marabi-flavoured piece "Mannenbergh" (written about one of the ghettos around Cape Town) is now in self-imposed exile in England. He performs regularly for the ANC, and adds his voice to those of other exiles calling for a democratic South Africa and for the release of Mandela and other leaders.

CLIVE CALDER: A former Johannesburg session musician

and record producer, Clive formed an independent record company with impresario Ralph Simon in 1973. The company, called CCP or Clive Calder Productions, has an entertainment-artist-management arm. Clive and Ralph opened a successful London office from which they now operate. Clive also co-owns a British-based music publishing company called Street Music Limited with Dave Robinson (owner of Stiff Records). Artists contracted to the company include Jona Lewie, Graham Parker, The Rumour, Desmond Dekker, Lene Lovich, Wreckless Eric and the Plasmatics.

HOWARD CARPENDALE: One of West Germany's most popular balladeers, Howard is from Durban.

JEFF CARTIERS: A bass player from Durban, now playing with a big Swedish orchestra.

RONALD CHETTY: The singer from Kimberley now lives and works in Scandinavia.

MARK CILLIERS: Presently the marketing manager of WEA England, Mark is a Capetonian.

MANDY COHEN: See Anton Fig.

PAUL DE VILLIERS: The founder member of the club band Ballyhoo, Paul left South Africa several years ago for Canada. He is now chief sound engineer for Gino Vanelli and in addition he does a bit of freelance music writing.

SIMON DRAPER: Formerly of Durban, he is now managing director of Virgin Records, one of

the most successful but off-beat companies in England (Virgin was the company that most benefitted from the likes of the Sex Pistols and Mike Oldfield). Simon has consistently taken an anti-apartheid stand in interviews and his reasons for leaving the country are pretty obvious.

RICKY FATAAR: The former Flames ("For Your Precious Love" etc) drummer from Durban joined the Beach Boys in 1972. A few years ago he did a BBC TV film and album with The Rutles, the highly successful Monty Python take-off of the Beatles.

DUNCAN FAURE: Apart from making many statements about how South Africa is like a prison camp for a musician, Duncan's made it plain that he's staying away from South Africa for two reasons: money and fame. A highly talented singer/songwriter, guitarist and keyboard player, Duncan left South Africa after Rabbitt broke up to join the Bay City Rollers, now known as the Rollers.

FRANK FENTER: Venter (he changed the spelling when he left South Africa) went to London in the late '50s wanting to be an actor. He is now vice-president of Capricorn Records, the company that handles groups like the Allman Brothers and the Marshall Tucker Band.

ANTON FIG: He used to drum for one of Cape Town's top rock groups, Hammak, in the early '70s. He then toured Europe as Link Wray's drummer, before

drumming for Kiss' Ace Frehley on his solo album. He now has a group called Spyder with former Hammak members Mandy Cohen and Keith Lentin, both also from Cape Town, and has signed to Mike Chapman's Dreamland label (Suzi Quatro is on the same label). The group plays adult orientated new wave – for lack of another suitable title – and is based in New York.

GAMBI GEORGE: The drummer from Durban now lives and works in Sweden.

BARRY GILDER: He left Cape Town, went overseas, and joined the ANC. He is now one of the movement's most prominent songwriters.

JONAS GWANGWA: A trombonist from the old African Jazz and Variety days, now living in Botswana.

BRIAN ISAACS: From Cape Town, now a cabaret singer in Sweden.

HAROLD JAPHTA: Also from Cape Town, he now teaches jazz in central Sweden and has become a popular TV personality in Sweden.

GEORGINA KARVALLAS: A music and fashion photographer, she's now living in Los Angeles where she's been working on a film about entertainment in apartheid South Africa. She also does sleeve designs for albums.

JOHNNY KONGOS: The singer from Brakpan now lives on the Thames in London, where he has his own recording studio called Tapestry. He wrote the music for the feature film *"The Greek Tycoon"*.

MUTT LANGE: Robert John Lange built up a reputation in Johannesburg as a first class musician and studio engineer. His first production, Jessica Jones' *"Sunday, Monday, Tuesday"* sold in excess of 75 000 records in South Africa. After that he signed a production deal with Clive Calder (they still work together in London) and produced, locally, Richard Jon Smith, Ronnie Joyce and Lionel Petersen. He's been living in the UK since 1974. In 1978 he was voted fourth best producer on the

world Top Producer's Chart for his work with the Boomtown Rats, Graham Parker, and the Outlaws.

STEVIE LANGE (formerly Stevie van Kierken): She is also London-based and was, until fairly recently, married to Mutt. Both in South Africa and the UK she's been hugely in demand as a session singer, and she now sings for the rock group Night, with Chris Thompson – who used to be the lead singer for Manfred Mann's Earth Band.

KEITH LENTIN: See under Anton Fig.

CHRIS MACGREGOR: See Dudu Pukwana.

DUNCAN MACKAY: Seven years ago the keyboard player was doing the Jo'burg club circuit and was considered uncommercial because he refused to play *"junk food music"*. Now he's with IOCC. He has cut two solo albums. He's also played on Kate Bush's *"The Kick Inside"* and Alan Parsons' *"Pyramid"*, and before joining IOCC he was with the Baker Gurvitz Army, John Hiseman's Colosseum and Cockney Rebel.

MIRIAM MAKEBA: The Soweto singer from Mofolo first made headlines 20 years ago for her role in *"King Kong"* and later in *"Come Back Africa"*, an American-made documentary on apartheid. Thanks to Harry Belafonte she was admitted easily to the US in 1959 and since then – 24 albums later – she has popularised numbers like *"The Click Song"*, *"Pata Pata"* and *"Westwinds"*. She is an outspoken critic of apartheid and has even addressed United Nations congresses on South Africa, from which she is prohibited. Her records are banned on the SABC. Recently (January 1981) thousands of fans crossed the border to hear her performing with Hugh Masekela in Lesotho.

RIAN MALAN: A Johannesburg musician and journalist, Rian fled the country in 1977 to escape military training. He joined a new wave group briefly in Canada, and became Music

Editor of Los Angeles' largest circulating alternative newspaper, the **LA Weekly**.

MANFRED MANN: He left Johannesburg in 1961. For 19 years he has been making hits. In the early days, numbers like *"Doo Wah Diddy"*, *"Pretty Flamingo"* and *"My Name is Jack"*. More recently, *"Blinded by the Light"*, *"Davy's on the Road Again"* and a reworded version of *"Mighty Quinn"*. Manfred is vehemently anti-apartheid, and on a visit to his parents in 1980 he commented on the fact that all white families in South Africa had *"maids making the food, rushing round after them, cleaning up their dirt. And saying 'sorry' while they do it."*

HUGH MASEKELA: Born in Witbank, Hugh was raised in Soweto. He started piano lessons at the age of nine and later learnt trumpet. Louis Armstrong heard about Hugh's band from Father Trevor Huddleston and sent him a trumpet, which really inspired him. With Makeba, he was in the original *"King Kong"* musical. He left South Africa shortly after the Sharpeville shootings, and his friendship with Cleo Laine led to a musical scholarship in England. Later he won another scholarship to the States set up by Harry Belafonte. There he worked with Belafonte and Makeba, Larry Wilis (Blood, Sweat and Tears) and formed Chisa Records before joining up with Herb Alpert. Hugh is presently setting up a recording studio and music school in Lesotho. He feels that *"the white people of South Africa are more oppressed than the blacks. The people who live in Stellenbosch may be comfortable, but they don't sleep at night. Apartheid's a buffer word like integration. When people talk about apartheid they make you concentrate on the discrimination aspects of it, so that you'll never think about how much money is being made, or who makes the money at the expense of whom."*

BLYTHE MBITJANE: Now lecturing at the Berkeley School

of music, trombone player and multi-instrumentalist Blythe, from Soweto, has been in the States for about seven years.

LETTA MBULU: From a very early age the singer from Orlando performed with the African Jazz and Variety troupe, of which Makeba, Masekela, Semanya were all members. She toured London in her late teens with "King Kong" and did a three-week engagement in New York at the Village Gate in 1964. From then, album followed album. In 1973 Letta won first prize as best performer at the Onda Nueva World Music Festival in Caracas, Venezuela, and toured with Harry Belafonte for the last four years. She is married to Caiphus Semanya, and in July 1980 their son Mosese was told to get out of South Africa. Yet Mosese was only 18 months old – Mbulu and Semanya, now resident in California, sent him to his grandparents in Phokeng, Rustenburg to "get his roots and learn the language and traditions of Africa". The government declared that Mosese was a foreigner.

BRIAN MILLER: The Capetonian is the worldwide agent for Boney M. He started in music 11 years ago, helping his brother Selwyn book and manage acts. They started the elite disco chain Raffles together. Brian booked Boney M into the Middle East in early '78. It was a success and they asked him to represent them worldwide. He agreed, and a month later they had a monster hit with "Rivers of Babylon". Brian also helps James Brown and Charlie Prior.

ERNEST MOTHILE: See Dudu Pukwana.

MIKE NOBLE: Present head of Artists and Repertoire at A&M Records in London; he is supposed to be responsible for discovering Joan Armatrading and for signing the Police and Joe Jackson. He is a Capetonian. In the early '60s he was a bass player with The Settlers, and he went to England in about 1965. There he was offered a position

with Essex Music – a publishing house – and then joined A&M.

VICTOR NTONI: From Benoni, bass player Victor played with the Dave Brubeck Quartet when the jazz musician visited South Africa in 1976. He wrote most of the music for and choreographed "Meropa" (known as "KwaZulu" overseas, a musical in the style of "Ipi Tombi") and is now studying at the Berkeley school of music.

DENNIS PREGNALATO: From Cape Town, Dennis is now manager of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, Albert Hammond and Sonny Bono. At one stage he was handling Sonny and Cher and the Bee Gees. The lead singer of Dennis and The Valiants went to London in the mid-'60s to "crack it". He was offered a job as valet to Sonny and Cher. After a while he flew home to SA, but they decided they liked him and paid his airticket back. When they split, he continued to handle Sonny's affairs.

DUDU PUKWANA: The alto sax player from the Eastern Cape is playing with Jabula, a band enjoying considerable success in London. Other local musicians in the band were Julian Bahula from Mamelodi on African drums, Ernest Mothile (Soweto) on bass guitar and Lucky Ranku (Mamelodi) on guitar. Before Jabula was formed, Dudu played in France with former Cape Town pianist Chris MacGregor and his Blue Notes (a different line-up from the old days).

TREVOR RABIN: The former Rabbitt from Johannesburg is doing a lot of production work in London. He co-produced Manfred Mann's latest album, and Manfred played keyboard on his latest, "Cry Wolf". He recently toured England as Steve Hillage's support act, billed as a "heavy metal guitar hero" whatever the last word is supposed to mean. He is director of artists and repertoire at Blue Chip Records in London – this company is owned by RPM, to which he is signed as a solo artist and producer. He has signed a management deal with Clive

Music is the key. We sing about everything in South Africa, there's nothing we don't sing about. And when we sing, the boere listen. It's the only time they listen.

HUGH MASEKELA

Calder, and has recorded three solo albums and two "Disco Rock Machine" albums. There are rumours of his joining up with Rick Wakeman, and of his signing to Geffen Records.

PHIL RAMONE: Cape Town born Phil produces Billy Joel. He did the Barbara Streisand "Star is Born" album, Chicago's "Hot Streets", the last few solo Paul Simon albums and two of Phoebe Snows. He has also co-produced two of Kenny Loggins' albums.

LUCKY RANKU: See Dudu Pukwana.

LEFIFE TLADI: Presently in Botswana, he was a percussionist with Dashike who fled South Africa after being detained in 1976.

NORMANN SEEFF: A Johannesburg artist who is now considered one of the top album sleeve designers in the world. He lives in Los Angeles, and designs covers for people like Joni Mitchell, James Taylor and Santana.

CAIPHUS SEMENYA: Writer, singer, arranger and producer, Caiphus is also from one of the townships around Johannesburg. He is married to Letta Mbulu for whom he produces regularly.

Caiphus' songs include "Music in the Air" and "Sacred Drums", and all contain the sophisticated, intricate and adventurous rhythms contained in African music.

JOSH SKLAIR: From Johannesburg, Josh (ex-Scandal) spent six months studying at Berkeley in Boston and is now studying jazz guitar at the Guitar Institute of Technology in Hollywood. He's established as a session musician in Los Angeles, and does live gigs with people like Herbie Hancock.

STELLA STARR: Originally from Sophiatown, Stella ran away to get married in London. Her real name is Stella Thomas. Her first break came in a talent contest in London's East End. From then she started singing in clubs and went onto the cabaret circuit. She has toured South Africa with Percy Sledge and George McCrae, and appeared on the "New Faces" talent spotting series on British TV.

DANNY WILLIAMS: Danny left South Africa in the early '60s, after a huge hit with "Moon River" when he was 21. The young black singer from Port Elizabeth married a white model

in London, and was initially afraid to return to South Africa in case this marriage led to his arrest. He demanded a guarantee "in black and white" from the South African government that he would be allowed to leave the country if he returned to sing here.

It's difficult to estimate just how many people connected with music have left South Africa for political, economic or other reasons. But the point is, hundreds have left, leaving the local music scene more impoverished than ever. And hundreds will leave unless:

- they can make a living out of their music/music writing/producing and so on, and they can be given some sort of protection or union membership.
- they can see that their work as musicians is useful and beneficial to the community.
- they are not expected to work in a stratified society, or perform music to only one set of people.
- there is some sort of positive encouragement from the people they play to, the radio stations and the state.■

Chapter 3

CAUGHT IN THE ACT

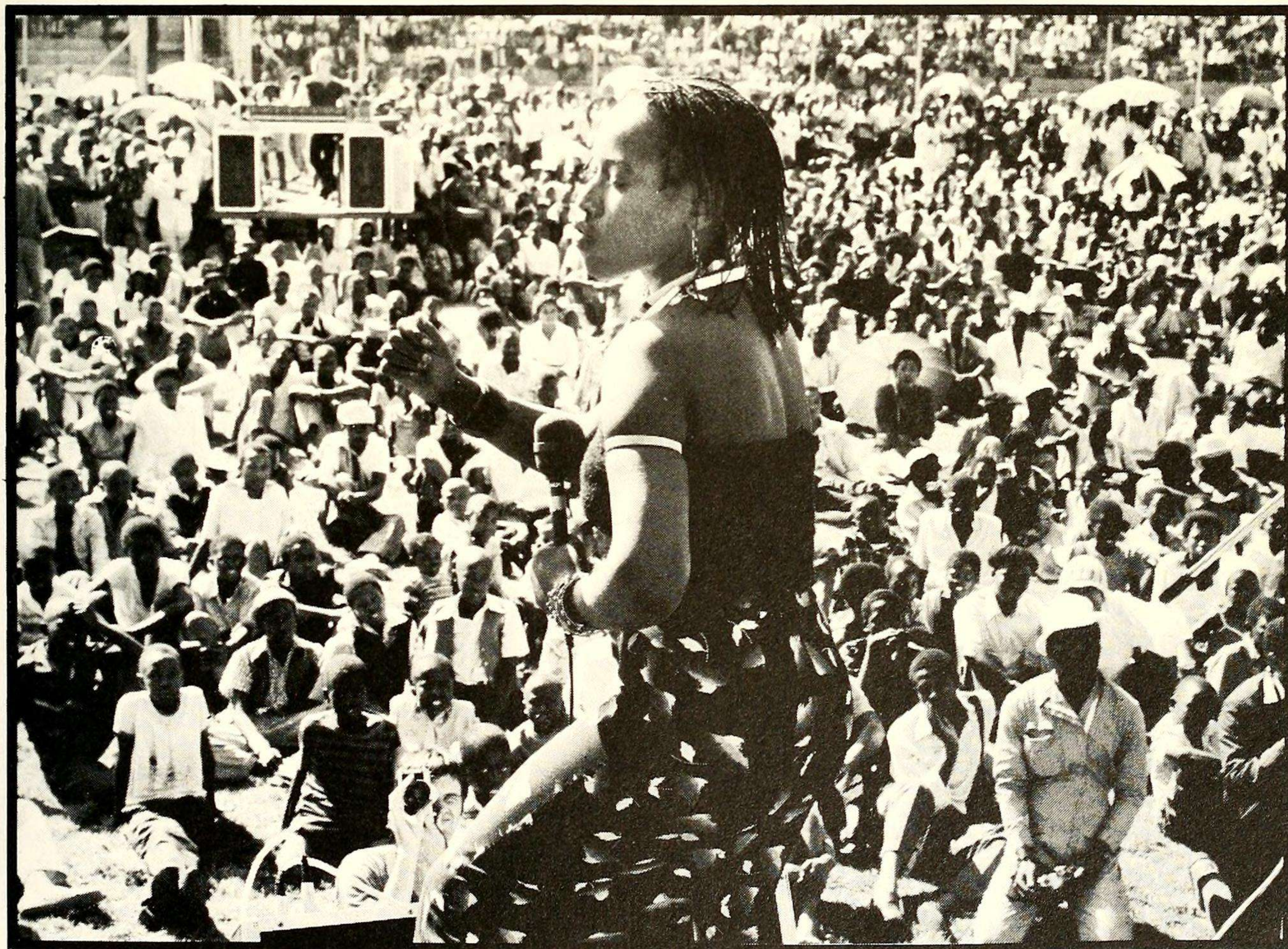
DESPITE all the pressures on musical artists here, the music never stops. Festivals, concerts and soirees take place almost daily – all fairly joyous occasions, all very different yet totally South African.

This chapter contains interviews with the musicians

who perform at all the different types of gigs featuring light contemporary music in this country – a mbaqanga concert; a country and western rally; a rock 'n roll bash; an Afrikaans "new wave" soiree; and an "international" music festival.

It is divided into five sections:

- A. Mbaqanga – the mixture is the message?
- B. Be Thankful there's still a kenfull.
- C. At least they've got short hair.
- D. Musiek en Lyriek.
- E. Crossover . . . at the Crossroads.



Vicky Mhlungu

The medium is the message

There can't be more than 100 people in the Old Snoozer Music Hall, Joubert Park.

The hall seats about 1000, so it *looks* empty, and it could have something to do with the cold, or it could be the fact that this concert wasn't that well advertised, or it could have to do with another concert that's taking place not that far from here . . . Steve Kekana.

Most likely it's to do with the advertising. Steve Kekana might be the most popular male vocalist in South Africa, but Ladysmith Black Mambazo are undisputedly the top mbube group, and Patience Africa is considered one of the top female vocalists. Also on the bill are a lively act called Amaswazi Emvelo and the Pedlars, who have the distinction of being the backing band for the late Mpharanyana.

Jacob "Mpharanyana" Radebe became something of a legend in his time. As a child he lived in Dukathole, a township outside Germiston, and as a teenager formed a group called Katlehong Lucky Stars, which performed on instruments like a tea-box bass and tin guitars.

Mpharanyana got interested in soul/pop and had a hit on the SABC Sotho charts with his first number, "Mary". Later he was backed by the Cannibals from Nelspruit (Raymond Phiri on lead guitar, Ephraim Hlophe on organ, Isaac Mtshali on drums and Richard Shongwe on bass guitar) and with them he enjoyed hit after hit. Their records of "Hlotse" and "Khoto" sold

100000 in three months, and in 1971 Mpharanyana was voted best male vocalist at a battle of the bands at the Jabulani amphitheatre.

He replaced the Cannibals with the Pedlars, and continued to enjoy unbelievable success – and then died suddenly in August 1979, aged 29.

According to the coroner and West Nkosi, he died of TB. West says: "He drank too much. He wasn't careful enough." But other people claim he was poisoned by rivals.

However he died, his memory is dear to mbaqanga fans, and a group like the Pedlars is highly regarded for having once played with him.

Mpharanyana has been replaced by vocalist A. B. Mechudi, a singer with style but not half the versatility of Mpharanyana. On organ is Mac Manthunjwa, the drummer and compere is Godfrey Mginga, on bass in Meshack Mkwana, while the brass section includes Teaspoon Ndilo and Roger Xezu both on alto sax and Tex Nduluka on trumpet.

Two other musicians are playing as well – Albert Khumalo on rhythm and Philip Mothoa on lead – but these are from Amaswazi Emvelo.

The Pedlars are backing everyone. Firstly AB, who does a tortuous version of "I can see clearly now" and some other standards. Tortuous because the sound system is so bad.

Then Amaswazi dance on, looking freezing in their little

Swazi and Zambian printed cloths.

Amaswazi Emvelo are a new mbaqanga outfit. Four people – Mandla Mtalana, Richard Chonco, Siphon Madondo and Albert Mothoa – sing and do the most outrageous dance routines, mostly a send-up of tribal dance. The audience at the Old Snoozer hall seems to like them a lot. People rush up to the stage and throw coins at Amaswazi, and they get called back for three encores. Eventually the compere, Godfrey Mginga, addresses the crowd in Zulu from behind his drums: "Hey listen . . . don't ask them to come back again because there are still so many people to perform. There's Patience Africa. There's Ladysmith Black Mambazo, and the Pedlars again. Then interval, and the Pedlars with A.B. and Amaswazi will come back again, and Patience Africa, and Ladysmith Black Mambazo . . ."

Patience Africa comes on stage and greets everyone politely in two languages, Zulu and Sotho. Then she starts singing an English number, "Precious Lord". She is wearing little plaits and beads in her hair, in the style that was ripped off in a recent Hollywood movie called "10", and the hairstyle is somehow incongruous with her trendy trouser suit with the long drape jacket.

Patience is the "Best Female Vocalist" in South Africa, according to SABC's Radio Bantu in 1977 and its Black Services in 1980. She is from the Witwatersrand area, and tours with the Pedlars, visiting all the major urban and rural areas of South Africa.

At last the Ladysmith Black Mambazo run on. There are only eight of them tonight but the tiny audience goes crazy. Ladysmith perform as if there are 50000 people in the audience, as have all the previous acts. Ladysmith usually performs as a nine-piece, although there are 12 people in the group who take turns. Tonight there are eight on stage – baritone Ben Shabalala, the

youngest in the group, is ill. They're very calm and very pro. Joseph Shabalala, the leader, sings the lead part and the others respond, sometimes repeating what he's just sung and adding a bit, and sometimes humming while only two of them respond. The idiom in which they perform is called "isicatamiya" by the people who don't use the industry jargon "mbube". The word refers to their harmony style that verges on gospel.

On stage tonight, apart from Joseph, are Janulani Mwelase (alto), Albert Mazibuko (tenor), Groomwell Khumalo (baritone), Headman Shabalala (baritone), Jocky Shabalala (baritone), Abednego Mazibuko (baritone), Russell Mthembu (baritone). They are superb.

The Ladysmith Black Mambazo members are originally drawn from two families, the Shabalalas and the Mazibukos. The families speak Zulu, but were originally from Swaziland and now they all live in Natal, mostly based in Claremont, Durban.

Joseph started the group after taking an interest in his father's mbube choir. Originally he was with a group called the Highlanders *"but they weren't so keen on doing their thing and that's why I started Ladysmith in about 1965. At that stage it wasn't a family affair - the family became involved in about 1969. None of them had any idea of singing, but I had lots of talent and I taught them. At first we just fumbled along, but in the right way. No one's had any formal training, and I decide on the clothing and how we're going to dance."*

The songs - lyrics written by Joseph and tunes co-written by the entire group - are mainly religious or tribal in theme. So far they've brought out 13 albums, and sold nearly four million units - more than any other group in the country.

Their biggest selling albums are "Ukusindiswa" (The Saviour), "Amabutho" (The Soldiers), "Amaqhawe" (The



Ladysmith Black Mambazo

Permission Gallo

Warriors) and *Indlela Yasezulwini* (The Way to Heaven). Most of the songs are in Zulu, but there are a few in English and from time to time Ladysmith Black Mambazo get people to translate their songs into Sotho – even though they don't speak it themselves. Their one English record, *Hello my Baby/How long should I wait* got airplay on Radio SR, but generally they are only played on Radio Zulu.

Radio Bantu, as it was then, actually started off Ladysmith Black Mambazo's recording career. Radio Zulu made a tape of them and played it over the air and suddenly there was a demand for their records. Gallo signed them, and they became part of Mavuthela Music, Gallo's black wing headed by West Nkosi.

The name Ladysmith Black Mambazo is simply explained by Joseph Shabalala: *"Ladysmith's our home town. We are black, and an axe is sharp and strong. Lots of people say: 'Why is there a name like Smith in your name; that's a white name?' But we can't do anything about it because Ladysmith is where we were born; it's our home town."*

I asked Joseph whether his group had ever been criticised for the conservative themes in their music. *"We don't know of any criticism,"* he replied. *"We should not be criticised, because we are singing of the true thing. If we make a joke then people understand, they won't be offended."*

Ladysmith Black Mambazo were once described as *"revolutionary"* by a music critic (admittedly a white who probably can't speak a word of Zulu anyway, but who realised the form was similar to resistance music). Questioned on this, Joseph shrugged and said the group tended to leave political songs alone because they wouldn't get airplay.

One of the saddest things about Ladysmith Black Mambazo is that they're being marketed as money spinners.

Producer West Nkosi tells me proudly: *"They own properties, and they all have cars. They earn R700 a night on stage now. They'll probably go overseas soon – to England. The people in England can't believe that there's a group that can sing so well without instruments and still stay in tune."*

"They were asked to go to Israel, but I said no. There's not enough money in Israel!"

Similarly, in the Press release about Ladysmith Black Mambazo their success as performers has been measured in financial terms: *"Forever they present Africa with a fantastic mixture – a mixture that turns everything into gold . . . they have sung before King Sobhuza (of Swaziland) at his kraal, where he slaughtered a beast in their honour. The Ladysmith Black Mambazo have endeared themselves to millions throughout Africa, and daily they continue to spread their influence like the tentacles of an octopus."*

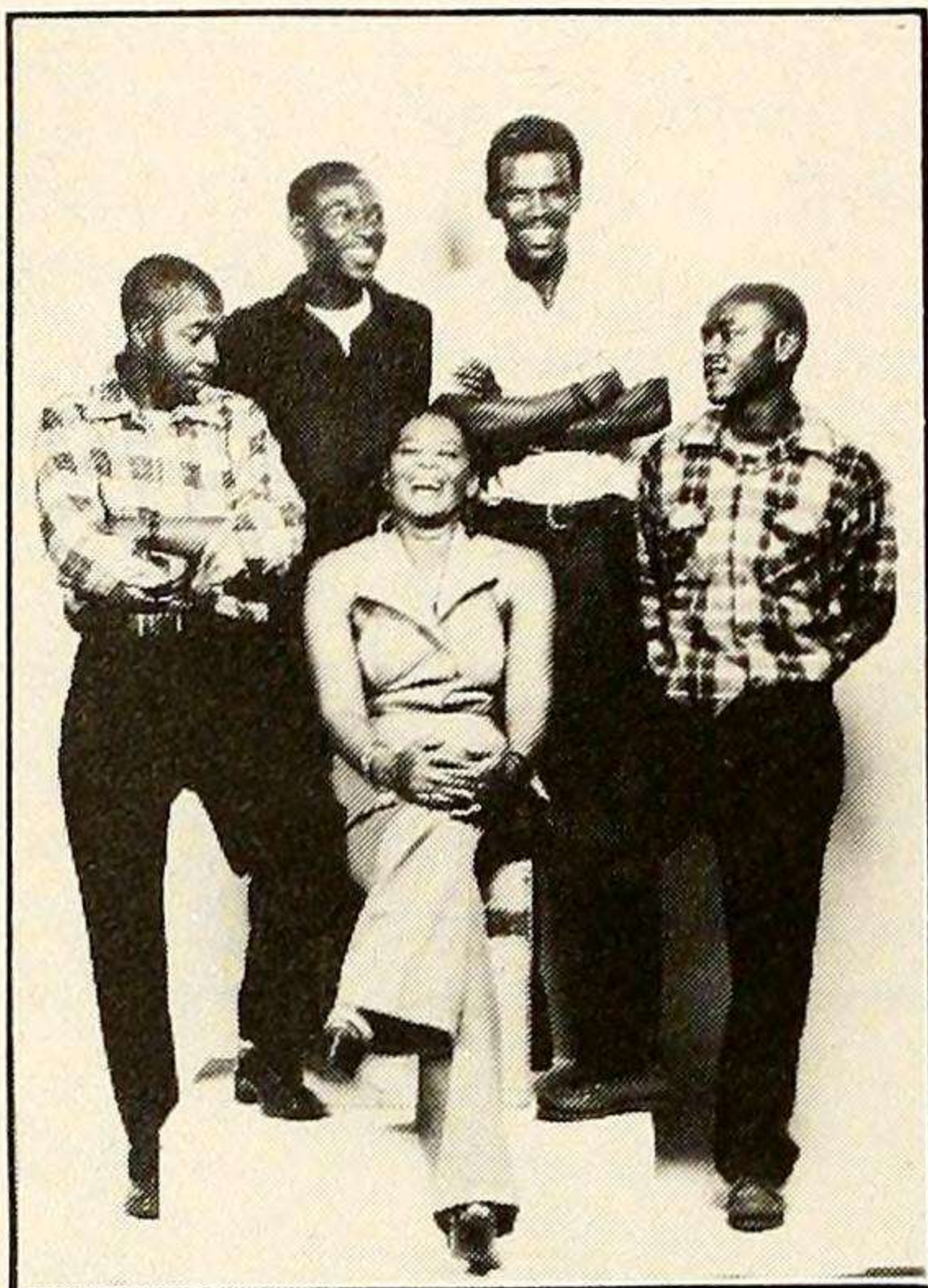
"If pop and soul groups think they are the biggest money spinners, they are mistaken. The Ladysmith Black Mambazos have emerged as messiahs restoring national pride in a shattered heritage, and they earn big. Gone are the days when they used to earn R30 per show for concerts and R80 for festivals."

"For them now it's forever happy smiles all the way to the bank."

Joseph insists, though, that he sings because he loves it. *"I want to do this till I die."* Nevertheless, he's the first to say that he's very happy because he's rich; because he owns two houses – one with 16 rooms and one with nine. The other members of the group, he says, prefer to spend their money on cars.

Joseph sees the cars as a great obstacle as far as rehearsals go: *"I've got difficulty getting them all together. Before they didn't have cars and they'd all get on the bus together and be on time. Now they've got all sorts of excuses like 'it gets a puncture'*

Permission Gallo



Patience Africa and the Cannibals

or 'I got caught in the traffic'." He laughs, and the paternalistic tone of his voice suggests a sort of "oh-they're-like - kids - they - like - to - dress - up - and - play - at - being - real - people" attitude.

Ladysmith have hundreds of imitators, groups who perform sans instrumental backing, but none have been as successful.

One of the groups that look as if they could do very well, at this stage, is the High Jumpers.

The High Jumpers come from Springs and they are all still at school.

The High Jumpers are Theophelus Zwane (leader, who is also composer of all the songs), Lucas Sithole, Merriman Sigqala, Simon Mhlongo, Samuel Buthelezi, William Ngwenya, Norman Mahlangu and Matthews Mabaso.

They have one album, "Ehotela" (At the Hotel) and the picture on the cover shows them all jumping in the air with plates of bread and butter in front of them. The songs, like those of Ladysmith Black Mambazo are concerned with a remarkably limited range of subjects - "Ehotela", "Ugogo" (Grandmother), "Emakholweni" (Christians), "Esontweni" (At the Church) - all typically small town topics.

None of these groups, however, write lyrics as diabolical as those of Abafana Baseqhudeni, probably the top mbaqanga group in the country.

The name Abafana Baseqhudeni means "Boys of the Rooster", a symbol of gratitude to their record company Gallo Records, which has as its logo a rooster.

Abafana have been going since November 1974, and have recorded five albums so far, all of which have gone gold over and over again. They've spent most of their time touring round the country, backing the vocal group Mahotella Queens.

Among the gems Abafana Baseqhudeni have penned are the following: "Maaka le nnete" ("when I'm talking the truth

people don't like me/when I lie they like me/lies and truth are the same"); "Batswadi Baka" ("My Parents" - "I heard that my parents want me/ I received a letter from home/Forgive me my parents I will come home/My parents are crying because of me"); "Meyetlo ya Basotho" ("Customs of the Basotho" - "You don't use those customs now, you're all modern now/doing the Sekgoa (white) things") and then the disgustingly sexist "Mosadi Ona" ("This Woman" - "This woman is a drunkard/when she goes to sleep she's drunk/ when her man comes he has to go to bed hungry/ and in the morning she doesn't cook either/that husband thought he was married/but he put himself in the mouth of the crocodile" - those samples are all from a Sotho album, "Dumelang Morena". Mostly they sing in Zulu, but the fare is pretty much the same. Songs about the "dirty cows" who haven't yet paid lobola, about enemies and lovers, about pretty girls and so on.

Originally Abafana Baseqhudeni's line up was Mbaso Mkhise, the "groaner" of the group, Potatoes Zuma, Joseph Mthinmkhulu, Ray Mkhize, Daniel Nhlapo and Velaphi Radebe, but recently three of the members split to form Abafana Besishingishane, a mbaqanga group similar to Baseqhudeni but placing much more emphasis on a comedy routine. Besishingishane means "fast moving thing" so the name could be interpreted as the Fast Moving Boys.

Abafana Besishingishane dress up in drag on stage, they send up tribalism, they're hilarious to watch . . . but their words are still as restrained as those of any of the groups I've mentioned so far. The SABC has them in its claws.

Nomonde Mabaso, the Tembisa Queens, The Special Five, Mahlatine, Hot Soul Singers, the Shoe-laces, Patience and the U Vees, Muvelasi Nabagqongqozi, Walter and the

"Mbaqanga is purely a question of taste. Like I adore oysters but wouldn't touch kidneys or liver."

PATRIC VAN BLERK



Mpharanyana

Beggars, Olga Mvincane, Lloyd Lelosa, The Movers, Steve Khaniyle, Bra Sello, Sophie Thapedi and the Vaal Express, The Zombies, Moses Mchunu, Irene and the Sweet, Melodians, Raymond Mbele, Basotho Dihoba, Maphoi – the list of people who've had to perform in a certain way, and trim their lyrics accordingly, goes on forever.

The most frightening thing is that most of these groups don't realise that they've absorbed the attitudes the state wants of them. They will continue to sing tribal songs and spend all their money on property in Claremont, claiming to be singing "of the true thing".

Or as Theophilus Zwane from High Jumpers claims: "Music based on realities, things happening in our every day lives."

None of these bands has stopped to question whether tribal issues, religion, and cattle are issues **worth** singing about in 1980. No one's questioned the idea of getting very rich very quickly and buying up property and then sitting back and saying: "I'm all right, Jack and Jill."

But what they have questioned, quite obviously, is their status on SABC. At a ceremony on Thursday August 14 1980 to commemorate the SABC's 20th anniversary of African language services and to present the unnamed awards – supposedly the equivalent of the white Saries – only about 100 guests attended.

According to a report in **Post** newspaper, dated August 16 and titled "Winners shun award show": "Not one of the winners in the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) black music awards attended the presentation ceremony in Auckland Park. The awards for blacks, which are not even named, are the black version of the corporation's Sarie Awards for white outstanding artists on disc. Artists present at the ceremony said the awards were vastly different from their white

counterpart contest, the Sarie Awards.

"They also said the Sarie Awards were televised 'live' while the other was given poor publicity. They believed the unnamed black awards were of an inferior nature. 'It is an embarrassment', said one.

"Another artist who had only attended as an observer to see what actually happened at these ceremonies held by the SABC said: 'It is shameful that a broadcasting corporation with as wide a listenership as the SABC in the black community should reciprocate with such a wanting affair for its artists'."

The winners who didn't show up included Patience Africa for "Siyabonga"; Mpharanyana Radebe for "A Ho Nea Bophelo" (Best Sotho Male Vocalist – the award was posthumous); Steve Kekana (Best Nguni Male Vocalist); the Movers for "Gudla Gudla" (Best Instrumental Group); Joy for "Ain't Gonna Stop" (Best Sotho Vocal Group); and the Soul Brothers for "Dadewethu" (Best Nguni Vocal Group).

Of these, Joy is considered an international act and there are hopes that Steve Kekana will follow suit, following the success of his first English single "Raising My Family". CCP only decided to record Steve in English after he hit the headlines of virtually every newspaper in the country when a number of fans were crushed to death at a concert in Lesotho.

Says Steve: "As far as I'm concerned the tragedy happened because of the stupidity of the police. There were about 3½ thousand people there, about 1 500 in the hall and 2 000 outside – meanwhile the hall only holds 400. Those people were anxious to come in. We were supposed to have three shows on different nights but the people didn't want to listen, they wanted to come in then.

"So when Sweet Three, the support act, were playing the police came and they wanted us to cancel all the shows. They

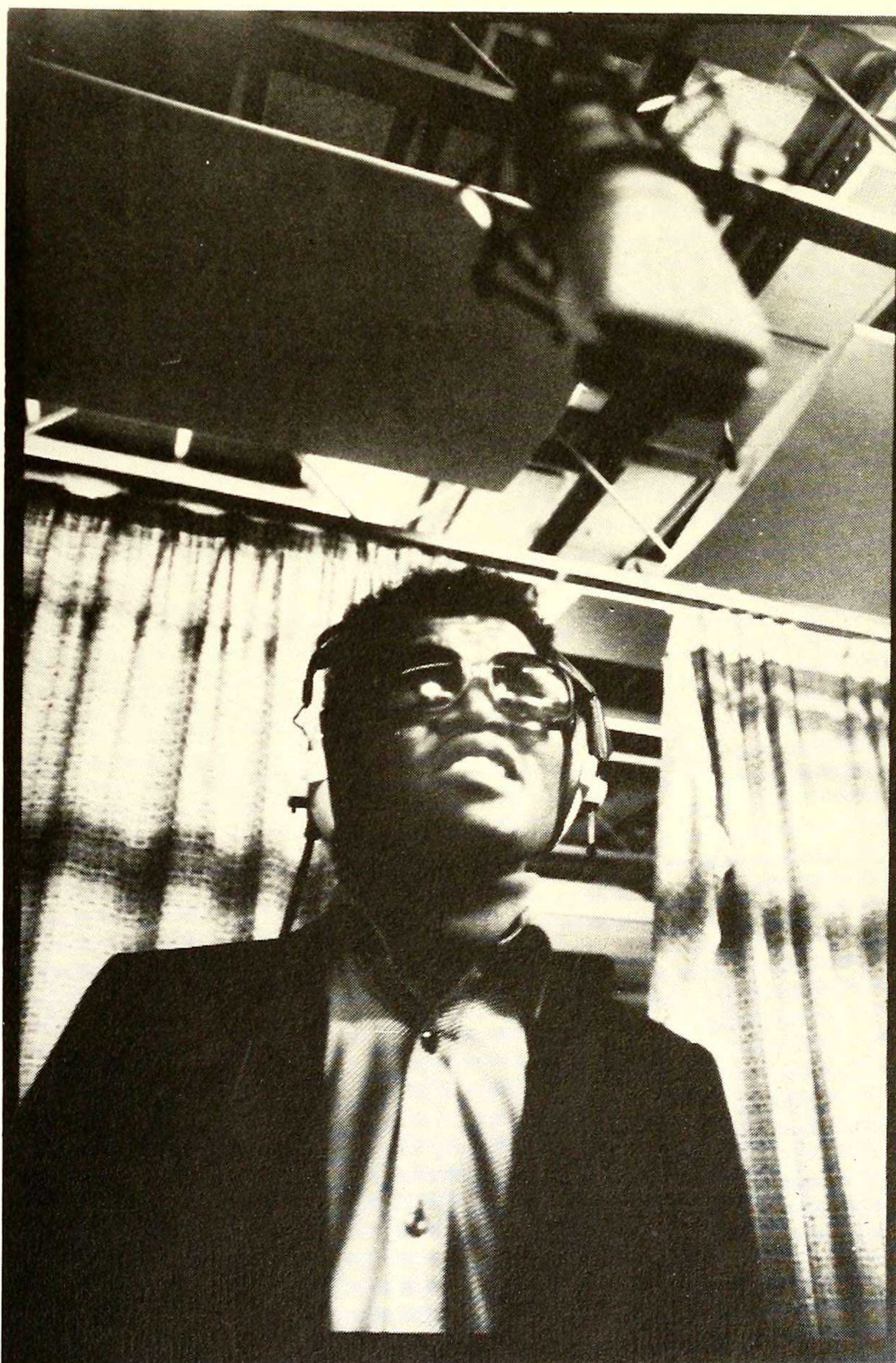
threw this smoke gas – I nearly coughed my lungs out, and it made the people scared so they rushed and then this tragedy happened."

Although Ken Haycock of CCP maintains Steve was due to change direction in his music anyway – *"he'd been at the crest for three years, won the black Sarie for two years, so the thing we decided to do was change direction before the demand for the other stuff faded"* – it seems likely that with all the publicity surrounding the Lesotho incident, CCP suddenly woke up to the fact that they were probably sitting on a real pop star. People crushed in the rush to get in, that's what stardom's about OVERSEAS, né? In addition, Steve's blind – and as anyone in the music business will tell you, blindness is one of the few physical disabilities that actually helps shift records.

Whatever their motives, Steve went into the studio and recorded an excellent single for them – *"Raising my Family"*, a sort of up-tempo reggae-disco number, which was written and produced by Mally Watson, as was the single's B-side, *"Working Man"*. This single has been so successful that CCP is now trying to promote him internationally as well as locally.

Steve says he enjoys singing in English. He attempted it once before, with the Beatle's *"Let It Be"*. It didn't work. Steve: *"I had a problem then. I didn't have the right feeling. That's why I never sing any of my Sotho and Zulu songs in English. Changing the rhythm is no problem, but the feeling is . . ."*

Now Steve wants to do an English album, to take its place alongside his three Zulu and two Sotho albums. He reckons that English songs will take him further, make him more prosperous – but not in the money sense: *"By prosperity I mean a person must develop on their path. Like if you're a constable, you want to be a sergeant and if you're a sergeant then you want to be . . . maybe*



Paul Weinberg

Steve Kekana

prime minister?" He chuckles, and in answer to the question: "Is this some reference to our police state?" answers quickly: "Well, I must admit I'm not very happy with the police at the moment."

Steve Kekana was born on September 16 1958 at Zebediela near Potgietersrus. He attended Siloe School for the Blind in Pietersburg for seven years and then took a job as a switchboard operator at Ga Rankuwa. "I was there exactly one month and then got very annoyed. I didn't want to smile over wires, it doesn't work. It's better to smile at people."

So in 1977, Steve joined a group called the Hunters in Lydenburg. At that stage he'd been teaching himself guitar for about four years. Tom Vuma, who produces his Sotho and Zulu songs, came to one of his gigs and in March '78 Steve recorded his first record, "Mamsie".

Steve writes mainly love songs, partly he says, because there are "too much" women around him most of the time. Another recurring theme in his songs is the breakdown of family life, one of the results of the migrant labour system. He feels that his major audience is in the urban areas, but people who still have strong links with the rural areas. If this is indeed his audience, it's small wonder his "Working Man" is so popular: "Get up in the morning/get up out of bed/Drink a cup of coffee/to ease my aching head/Got a wife and family/ lots of mouths to feed/ Work all day on the factory line/to buy the things I need'."

In the original version the last lines was "until my fingers bleed",but CCP decided SABC wouldn't play it like that.

The strains of non-stop touring for nearly three years have started taking their toll on Steve. He overstrained his voice recently, and doctors found he had blood on his larynx. "I was on the go for four to six weeks, coming back for a day or two for recordings. I had to change the way I was singing so that there

Sue Hope-Bailie



The Soul Brothers

was less strain, but to the people it had to sound the same. If it didn't they'd complain. When you don't sound like you do on records people don't like you, they say: 'hau, that's not Steve' or 'Steve, are you getting into a cold shower before you sing or what?'"

Despite being South Africa's top black singer, Steve is very modest.

"I don't feel I'm big. I'm a shy guy . . . when you praise me, I look at the ground. When I'm on stage, well people think I'm strange because I don't drink and I don't smoke or take drugs, and when I'm on stage, I tell myself I'm singing to nobody, I try not to think about the audience.

"But really, this success is exhausting. My words of appreciation are lost – really, it's too big for me to comment."

Steve's only living parent, his mother, has only seen him perform twice. "She feels sorry for me, she won't say why. Maybe it's overexcitement because she's getting old and she doesn't expect to see me on stage, I suppose. When she sees me perform she can't hold back her tears."

Nor could I when I saw Steve performing in the rain at Jabulani stadium in Soweto. He was headlining at a mbaqanga festival which also featured the Soul Brothers and Juluka.

There must have been 10 000 people there, and despite an incredible thunderstorm which virtually destroyed the sound system, those people waited for Steve until it was almost night. They chanted "Ke-ka-na" with the same emphasis people chant "A-man-dla" and "So-we-to", and pushed right up to the stage front. It seemed too much to expect a blind person to perform in those conditions. Even the Soul Brothers, who were on just before Steve, cut short their set.

Still, Steve came on. Dressed in a pyjama-style red satin suit, his hair in neat dreadlocks and wearing his customary sunglasses, he walked on to the

wet stage and performed, fearlessly dancing in his quaint, androgenous way. He slipped and nearly fell often, but continued until the rain practically washed Jabulani stadium away.

Steve Kekana is the only singer in South Africa who makes the Soul Brothers jumpy. He's their only real competition.

The Soul Brothers too have been at the crest for about two years . . . in 1978 they were presented with 17 gold discs for sales of "Mshoza", "Dumela", "I feel so Lonely", "Botsotsi" and "Mantombazane". Although a gold disc is given for sales of more than 25 000, in the case of the Soul Brothers this figure would be the minimum amount of units sold on any of the singles off the albums mentioned above. A conservative estimate of sales of 40 000 for each of the seventeen singles off the albums means that the Soul Brothers sold 320 000 units – and as I say, this would be a conservative estimate.

Much more likely is that, taking into account sales for the last three albums, they've sold in the region of five to six million units. Manager/promoter from GRC, Jabu Moses Dlamini says it's impossible to work out their sales exactly – he's estimated that two years ago they'd sold four and a half million records.

It doesn't mean much to the Soul Brothers. As far as they're concerned they're now earning slightly more than they did as workers in a factory in Hammarsdale, Natal, when they first decided to form a band. They realise that they are the victims of exploitation; they spend eight months of every year touring South Africa and they're not even smelling ten per cent of what gets made on record sales.

The four main members of the Soul Brothers each get two per cent of their record takings. The members of the backing band get a lot less. Still, they share every cent they make between the group and as manager Cyril Mchunu points out, "they are in

every sense of the word a team; they are committed to each other."

American Zulu (rhythm guitar and backing vocals), Moses Ngwenya (keyboards), David Masondo (lead vocals) and Zanzela "Israel" Mchunu (bass guitar) all live together in Soweto. They work together and write together.

No one dominates the song writing process, no one claims responsibility for the lyrics or the tunes.

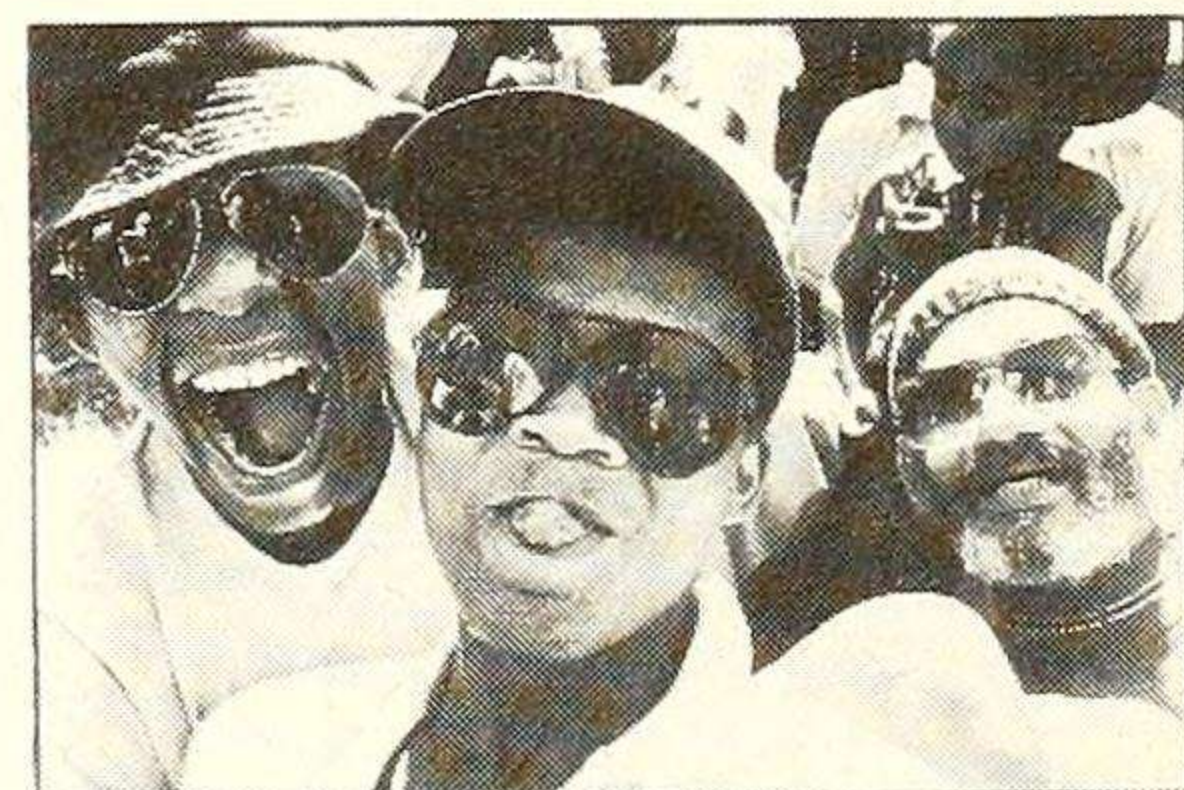
Part of the team are producer Hamilton Nzimande, who has been with them from the beginning, and Lemmy Mabaso (Lemmy Special) on sax, Johannes Mpungose (tenor sax), Nwa Nduweni (alto sax), Bongani Nzele (drums) and Maxwell Mngadi (lead guitar).

The group started with David, Zanzele and the late Tuza Mehethwa at the textile factory in Hammarsdale. Says David: "We grew up together. We were friends and we all had a love for music, mostly mbaqanga. Our early records were soul but as time went by we sort of changed, trying to cope with the present market and moving more and more into mbaqanga. So our name is not really appropriate anymore."

Now why should Steve Kekana make them jumpy?

"Because", winces David, "Steve is very, very good."

But then so are the Soul Brothers.



Paul Weinberg

Be thankful for your kenfull

In America there's Disneyland.

It's only when you've spent a day zooming through space, visiting "Darkest Africa", watching a pirate battle and shaking the hand of one of the countless Micky Mice running around that you begin to understand that everything you read in the comics about middle-class America is **true**; that popcorn, Donald Duck and portable TV sets not only exist but are as essential to the American dream as fish 'n chips and Chinese take-aways are to working class English people.

In South Africa there's Bapsfontein.

It's not the sort of place you'd find on a map. Driving from Johannesburg, past the airport, it takes three-quarters of an hour to get there.

You don't see signposts and you're not even sure you're in the right vicinity until you turn a corner and suddenly there it is: "Welcome to the Bapsfontein Pleasure Resort. Eat, drink and sleep."

Bapsfontein is really just a few stores - bottlestore, butchery, hardware - an hotel with a swimming pool and a restaurant that serves luke warm beers and "pizengravey" or "hembergahs"; and a gaudy funfair with two huge entertainment halls.

Oh, and well-trodden lawns, decorated with armies of concrete "gnomes". Bapsfontein's idea of a garden gnome is a figurine of a black man

gardening. That gives you some idea of the jawlers who hit the scene at Bapsies over the weekend.

This is where the real white South Africa comes to life. After a day at Bapsfontein you understand who it is that buys the **Citizen**, who puts Gene Rockwell on the charts with "My Life's in Good Hands", and where the plastic orange was invented.

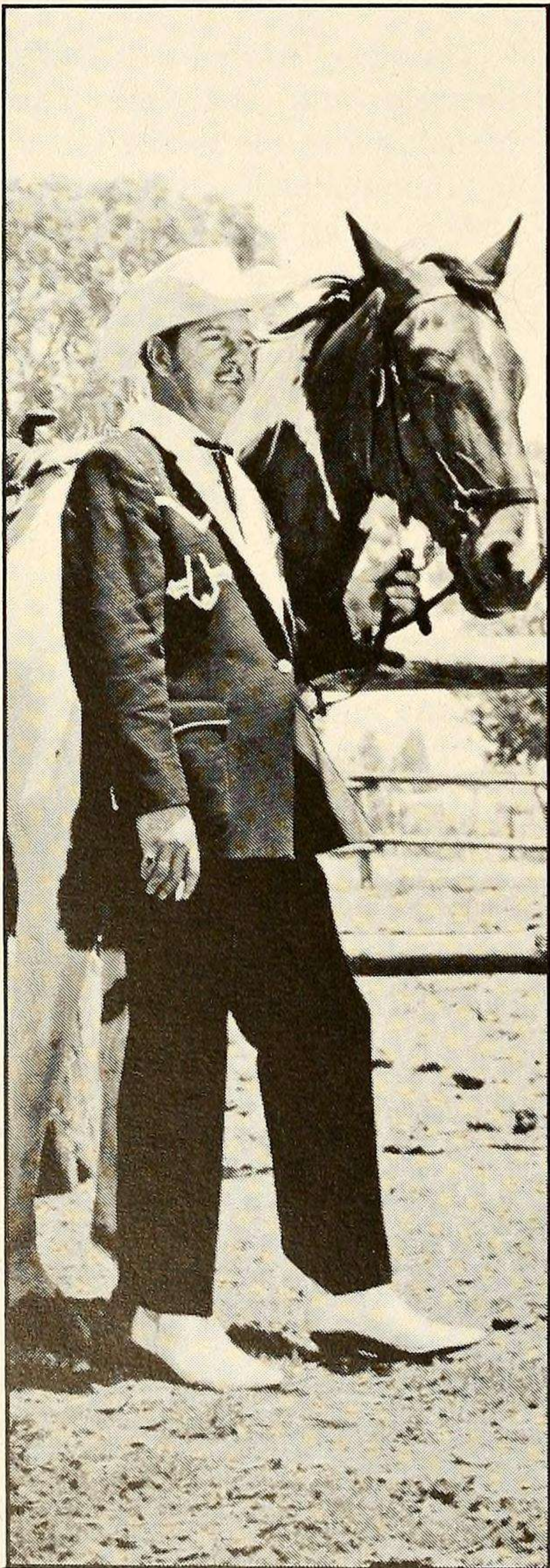
Bapsies is a jawl that none of the country and western freaks would miss out on. Thousands cram into the pool every Sunday, squash each other in the rush for the roundabouts, and squeeze into the halls to see acts like Lance James, Bobby Angel, Barbara Ray or Caroline du Preez.

One particular Sunday I found myself in a crowd of 10 000.

Ma's with podgy, varicose-veined legs bulging out of swim suits; pa's with long black side burns and safari suits; lighties in cowboy costumes and bike boys in black leathers with their cherries, peroxide blondes spilling out of denims: all have willingly parted with the R3,00 entrance free for the "Country and Western Spectacular".

In the first hall, everyone between the ages of 12 and 20 is playing the pinball machines that line the walls.

Those over 20 are milling around, trying to get as close to the stage as possible, and anxiously awaiting the appearance of Bobby Angel or another of their favourite C&W



Charles Jacobie

stars.

The under 12s are on the swings and merry-go-rounds outside, or queueing up for the "Dodge Them Cars", as Bapsies spelling goes. The same pattern is repeated in the other hall, except that instead of the funfair, kids have a swimming pool to keep them amused; and instead of pinball machines, the boppers have a wall to sit where they can swig beer and smoke away from parental eyes.

In the veld between the one hall and the other, dozens of rowdy families, some men wearing only underpants and floppy hats, some of the women clad in as little as decency and their husbands will allow, are indulging themselves in dripping braaied tjops and wors.

"The party's here, I'm telling you, the party's here," grins one sunburnt but striking example of white South African manhood, knocking back a branniencoak and leaning back on his car with a look of total satisfaction at the state of his world.

"Ag nee," protests his lady. "Ek sweer."

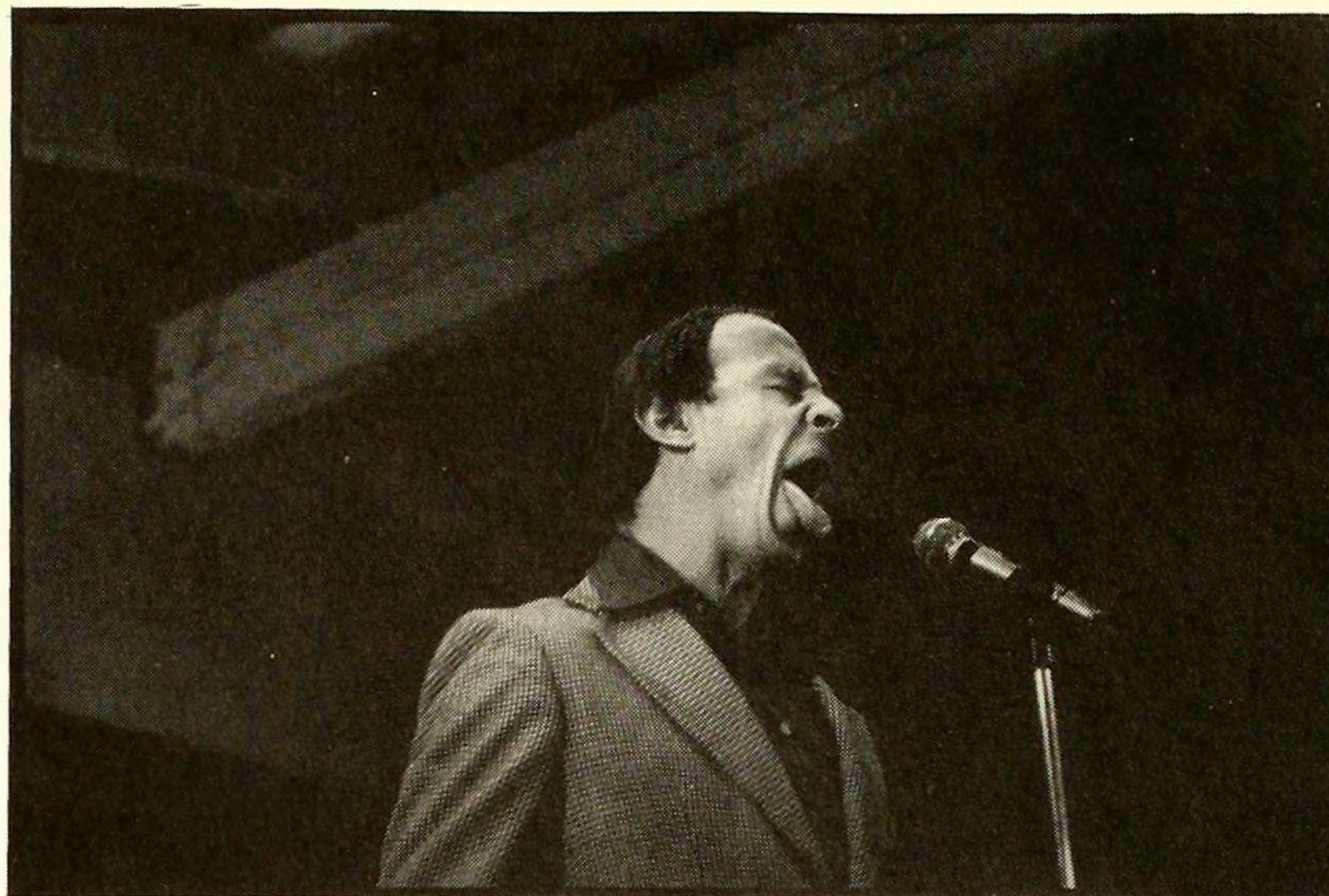
"The party's here, I'm telling you," he continues whilst thumping his hand against his thigh, but then adds, with a distinct change of mind: "So where's the party?"

"Ag nee," mutters his lady again.

After a short discussion, they sort out their priorities, deciding to stay where they are with the booze ("I mean, you can be thankful if there's still a kenfull," quips the sunburnt man, as the last beer is cracked open) because the festival will go on well into the night.

Back in the first hall Lance James, wearing a blue "Keep it Country" T-shirt, is going down a storm. He's recently had a hit with an arch-patriotic song called "I am South Africa". Everytime he announces a number to the sardine-packed hall the sticky thousands go wild. Rabbitt never had it so good.

Record promoter Paul Zamek joins Lance and Mary Oakley for



Paul Weinberg

a few lively numbers, and then buxom, blonde Caroline du Preez – South Africa's answer to Dolly Parton – storms on stage in black and silver.

Judging by the thunderous applause, she is everybody's favourite cowgirl.

Only a handful of Linda Ronstadt fans clap as Caroline belts out Roy Orbison's "Blue Bayou", but the hall explodes as she starts singing "Heidi".

It's hard to imagine a crowd this size getting off on "Heidi" anywhere else in the world, but this is South Africa and these are the people who bought "Heidi" on to the number two slot on the charts.

In the other hall Gene Rockwell is sending it to his thrilled fans.

"Isn't country music amazing?" asks a flushed Lance James later. "Have you ever seen an atmosphere like this?"

Francois Johannes Hatting owns the 58 morgen resort. He's been running Bapsfontein for 29 years and prides himself on having played host to all the country's major C&W artists.

Jeremy Taylor performed at Bapsfontein in his "Ag Pleez Deddy" days. Slim Whitman has appeared there, and when William Smith (Falconetti) visited South Africa on a promotional visit after the phenomenal success of the "Rich Man Poor Man" series on TV, Bapsfontein was one of the priority stops.

"All this, and I've never had a

write-up," complains Hatting. "Someone suggested to P.G. du Plessis he should put me on his television programme, but he never did."

Trilion Video SA (Pty) Ltd once filmed an entire country music festival, but Hatting's never seen that either.

He says he's had his lawyer investigating the possibilities of Bapsfontein's becoming multi-racial. At the moment it's a classified white resort, and the bottle-store and few shops are the only places that tolerate blacks.

"I don't know whether we will admit blacks one day," says Hatting. "I don't say 'yes' and I don't say 'no'. We'll see what happens in the future. The danger with blacks is you don't want to put your foot in it. You see, if blacks come then it might chase away some of the whites. We had trouble with blacks before – a few of them were drunk on the roundabout."

"Admittedly that was eight or nine years ago, but you never know . . ."



Mike van Niekerk

WHY Springs?

If there was going to be a new wave rave why not Durban? At least in Durban there were a number of accredited new wave bands like Wild Youth, The Impact, Dr. Cripplar and the Lasars, and Dead Babies.

Or Cape Town. The Little Freedom Farm outside Hermanus would have been a good venue. And we could have seen the Safari Suits, the Lancaster Band, Permanent Force.

Still, there was something very zany about going to a new wave "battle of the bands" in Springs. Radio Rats, Hogs Norton and Corporal Punishment from Springs were competing against Johannesburg bands Flash Harry, Baxtop, Fresh Evidence and Young, Dumb and Violent for a prize of R500 cash. Two heavy metal bands - Raven, from Pretoria, which had the dubious distinction of being led by Piet Botha, Pik's son, and a band from Germiston called Free Ride - were also taking part; but no one involved in the organisation of the concert was really considering that they might stand a chance. After all, it was 1979 and heavy metal went out with the dinosaurs, didn't it?

Springs is a tiny town, about an hour's drive from Jo'burg.

Passing through the main street on that busy Saturday morning in '79 when everybody from the small-time business man in safari suit and the Blourokkies was out and about shopping, it became obvious why no one in this community has raised an objection to the festival. This is one place where shoulder-length hair and jeans are still considered the insignia of "communist hippie types". That the fashion of long hair and jeans have come and gone is apparent only to a small percentage of Springs youth who are now spikey haired and dressed in black suits with ties or bondage pants. As far as the rest of the town is concerned, the youth has "come right". So it is that the Springs' parents support

At least they've got short hair

the new wave. They'll support any movement, any ideology, provided it keeps their sons' hair short, their clothing conventional. That the new wave might actually be revolutionary compared to hippiedom has never occurred to them.

New wave in South Africa came as quite a surprise for everyone. It wasn't started here by the working classes. There are no new wave bands in Soweto or Mamelodi or Guguletu. Here it was started by frustrated middle-class white youths who'd been reading their copies of **NME** and **Melody Maker** religiously and listening to imported copies of The Clash.

But thinking back on it, the first band that could be called "punk" here came long before anyone had heard of the Sex Pistols. Suck, circa 73, were a group of rock 'n rollers from the outskirts of Johannesburg who were notorious for breaking up practically whatever venue they played in. No doubt they got the idea from The Who, but nevertheless, it was because of Suck that the Johannesburg and Pretoria City Halls refused performances by rock groups for many years.

Suck were prominent at the time of Hawk and Freedom's Children. At first they attracted scores of followers, but after the hall had been torn to shreds and a grand piano destroyed on yet another occasion, a witch-hunt started for members and followers of Suck.

According to EMI's Roddy Quinn: "Eventually the band broke up. If someone said to one

of the guys: 'Didn't you play for Suck?' he'd deny it, because there was such a stigma attached."

In 1977 Rooster, led by the Rag Dolls Rudi Fröhling, appeared on SATV's "Pop Shop" with softly-washed long locks and fancy satin gear and announced that they were a punk band. Or "new wave without the shave" as Rudi put it at the time. They performed a song called "Rock 'n roll, it ain't easy" a diatribe against the SABC for its attempts to kill rock music. "The man at the top don't wanna know my scene/but the kids wanna hear it/ I hear them screaming for more." Wild Youth, in Durban, started at much the same time but weren't recognised till later.

Rudi was much scorned for attempting to climb on the punk band wagon, while at the same time maintaining a pretty boy image, and shortly after that the Radio Rats emerged from Springs, to show us all how punk should be done. The Rats started playing to small Transvaal audiences in 1978, and even though they played short vicious rock 'n roll numbers, looked like standard punks and presented themselves like that, they resisted the tags of "punk" and "new wave" for at least a year.

Only when, by 1979, 20 or more new wave bands around the country had suddenly become a popular alternative to the disco-dominated music scene in South Africa, would the Rats allow Press people to call them "new wave"; and even then,



The Radio Rats

they tried to get the press into using the word "pop" to describe their music.

The new wave here was concerned about the music industry and the toughness of life in the southern suburbs. Wild Youth brought out "Record Companies", a tirade against all the companies that refused to sign them. Young, Dumb and Violent sang about the "Painted Ladies of Rosebank". A few groups wrote songs that were ferocious indictments of life inside the Nationalist regime, like Corporal Punishment's "Darkie's Gonna Get You With A Knife", their "Brain Damage" – a song for Arrie Paulus, General Secretary of the white miners union – and the Rag Dolls "Soweto".

"New wave in South Africa is like new wave in America," Viv Horwitz once said. "It's pimp, it's flash."

But above all, new wave in South Africa was anti-disco.

Nearly every band has an anti-disco song in its repertoire. Examples are Wild Youth's "Radio Youth", Corporal

Punishment's "Turned on my Radio" ("Hey rock 'n roll, where did you go/when the people started moving at the disco/won't you tell me if you're still around/because I'm not going to listen to that factory sound.)

Then, of course, the Rag Dolls "Kill my Radio", a mbaqanga inspired piece:

"Just wanna kill my Radio 'cause that kinda muzak turns me off. Just wanna kill my radio 'cause that kinda muzak turns me off. Hate the muzak now, hate the muzak now./Sometimes I think that we've been had, you know when DJs drive you mad. The Sound they make it hurts my ears, don't want to listen to machines. Hate the muzak now, hate the muzak now./They dance to muzak in a can, they tango just like my old man. You know we've got to play it live, don't need no studio lies. Hate the muzak now, hate the muzak now . . . "

In a letter to the **Sunday Times** (May 1979) Marko Pogo of the Dead Babies from Durban stated: ". . . we are not more into

clothes and pose than issue. We are into MUSIC. Alright, we are not poor, we are not on the dole, etc., but it is the stagnant apathetic South African music scene which we are against. There is no place for bands like us, but we will kick a place in the scene. There are no venues to play (because we don't and won't play these clubs where you have to play the hit parade backwards), no record companies want to know about us and these moron, disco-fed blockheads will not come to watch our concerts. We are on our own."

Wild Youth, who were still in 1980 doing what the Sex Pistols were doing four years ago in England (except that here it's totally incongruous) have a song with the lines: "Don't wanna sing the hit parade/Don't wanna dance to no disco beat/ I don't like your flares and stupid ideas/don't wanna band to put me to sleep. It's all the same/it's all the same/in the RSA."

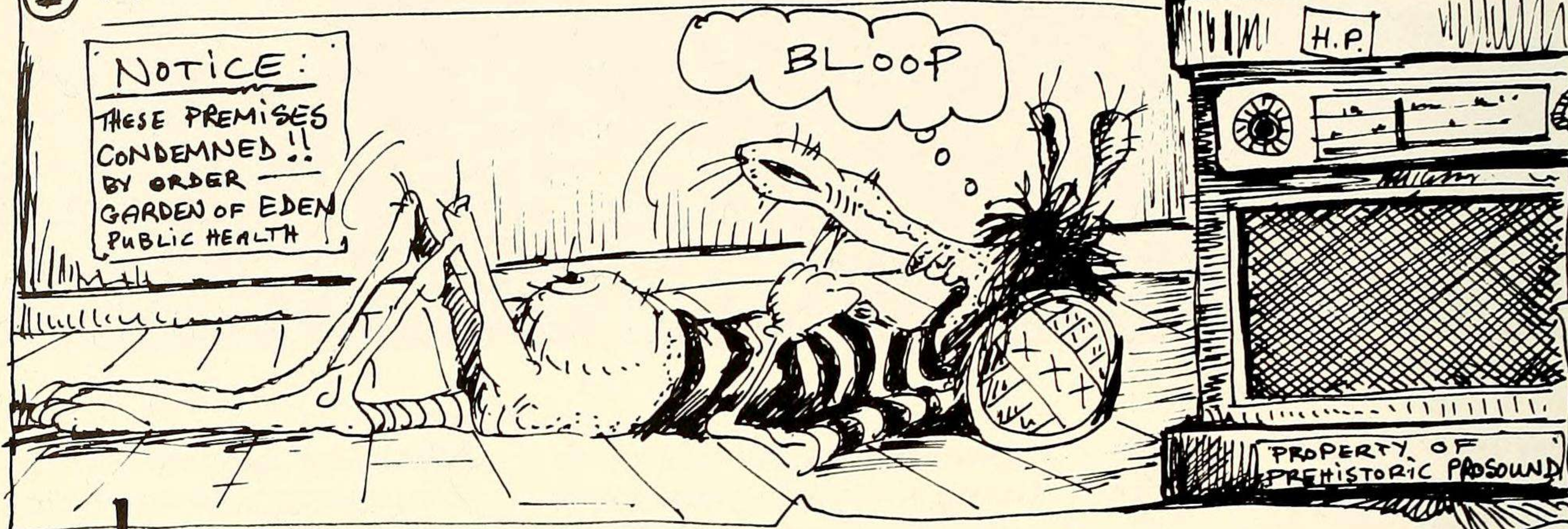
So here we are: The Pam Brink Stadium in Springs, and

THE EVOLUTION OF RADIOMATS

(that Verminous Springs Rock+Death Band)

3 THOUSAND MILLION YEARS AGO (WHEN VERTEBRATES WERE BUT A DARWINIAN DREAM, AND PROTOZOA RULED O.K.) A PECULIAR ROCK N ROLL BEAST JUST LAY ABOUT ALL DAY, LISTENING TO HIS RADIO, DOING NUFFINK!

① RATTUS HORIZONTALIS / PRIMITIVUS (B.C. 3,000,000,000)

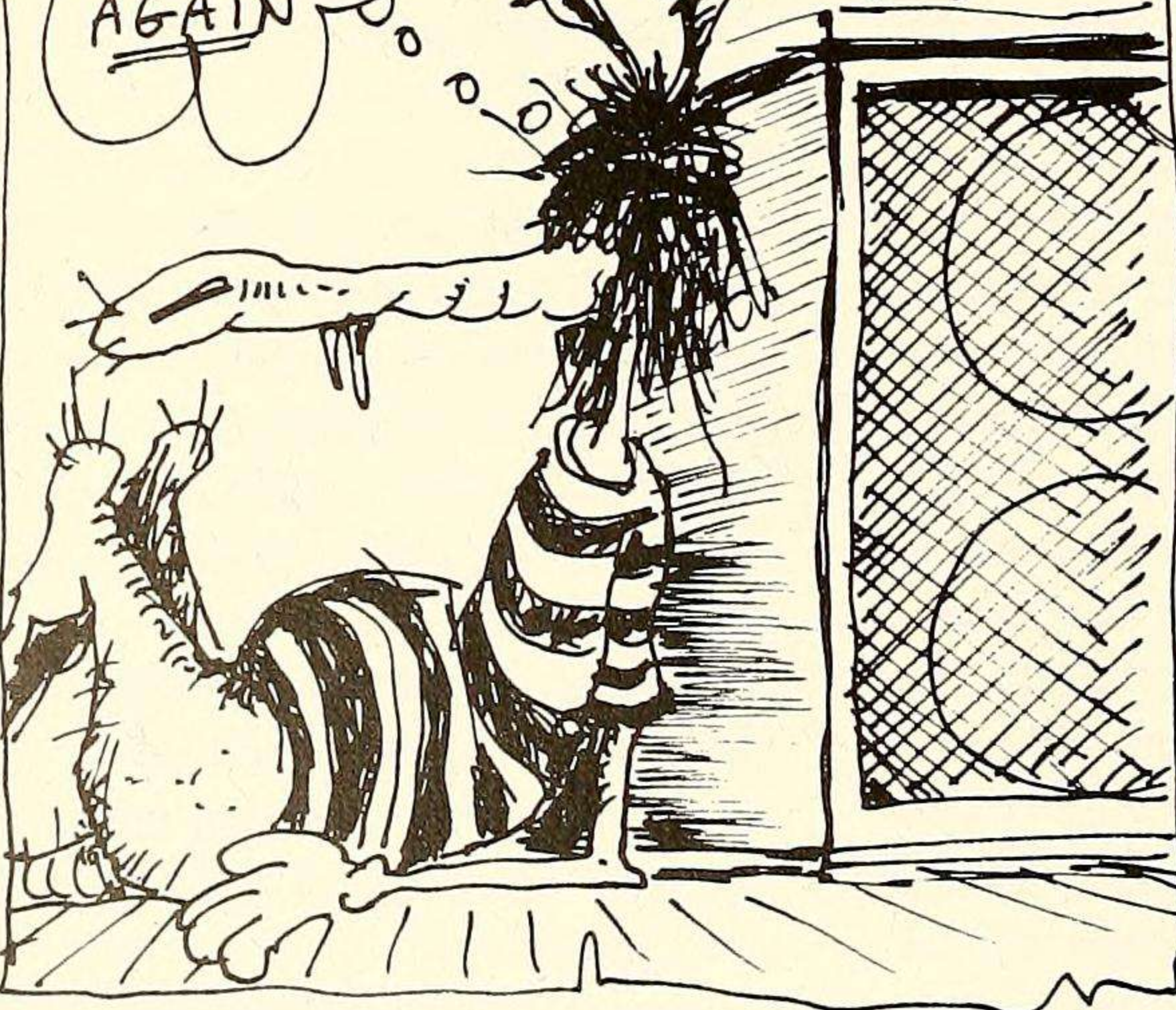


② RATTUS SEMI-ERECTUS / SEMI-COMATOSUS

(A.D. 100 → LISTENING TO THE ROMAN HIT PARADE)

YIPPEE!! JULIUS CAESAR + THE CENTURIANS ARE NO 1 IN GAUL AGAIN

BLARE



③ RATTUS ERECTUS ET MOBILISSIMUS

(A.D. 1981)

US RATS ARE SUCH QUICK LEARNERS

NOISE!



J. HANDLEY 20.3.81

Jonathan Handley

it's 11.30 am on a warm April day.

The SABC camera crew are setting up. They're planning to do a documentary for a youth interest programme and have lined up Radio Rats' leader Jonathan Handley, the Hogs and the Corporals for interviews.

The sound men are fixing up on stage and Jack van Deventer, the organiser of the concert, is wandering around in blue shorts, blue hat, blue bri-nylon shirt and with a big grin all over his red face.

Van Deventer is an engineering planner and the charity steward for the Free Masons. *"My job is to collect as much money as possible. My goal is R5 000 and I thought about having a pop festival because in terms of organisation there's nothing much you have to do. You don't have to pay the bands if you offer a prize of R500 . . . you only have the costs of the sound men."*

"Insurance? We went through about four or five brokers and only one would take it on because we didn't have a malicious damage to property clause."

Jon Ossher, editor of the now defunct **Music Maker**, is doing the interview for Peter Goldsmid's Video 2 magazine programme.

Ossher: *"Do you think the new wave music is thoughtless?"*

Handley: *"It takes a week to write and arrange a song, and about three weeks for the band to practise it before they can play it to people. A great deal of thought goes into it. Is that thoughtless?"*

Ossher: *"What would you say is the main difference between punk and new wave?"*

Handley: *"The spelling."*

Gilbert Calvert, manager of Hogs Norton, editor of the fanzine **Skratch** and son of the late trumpeter Eddie Calvert, wanders over to me after the interview. *"Ossher said I was like Ayn Rand. Who's Ayn Rand?"* Someone says: *"A capitalist, she's into power,"*

Replies Gilbert: *"Ah yes, well that's me. He got it right."*

Gilbert discusses what his band will do with the money when they win the battle of the bands. I suggest that they might not win – that maybe one of the heavy metal bands like Raven will win.

Gilbert: *"Well, they might win the bread but they won't feel very happy about it when they try to leave here and find their cars have stopped working."*

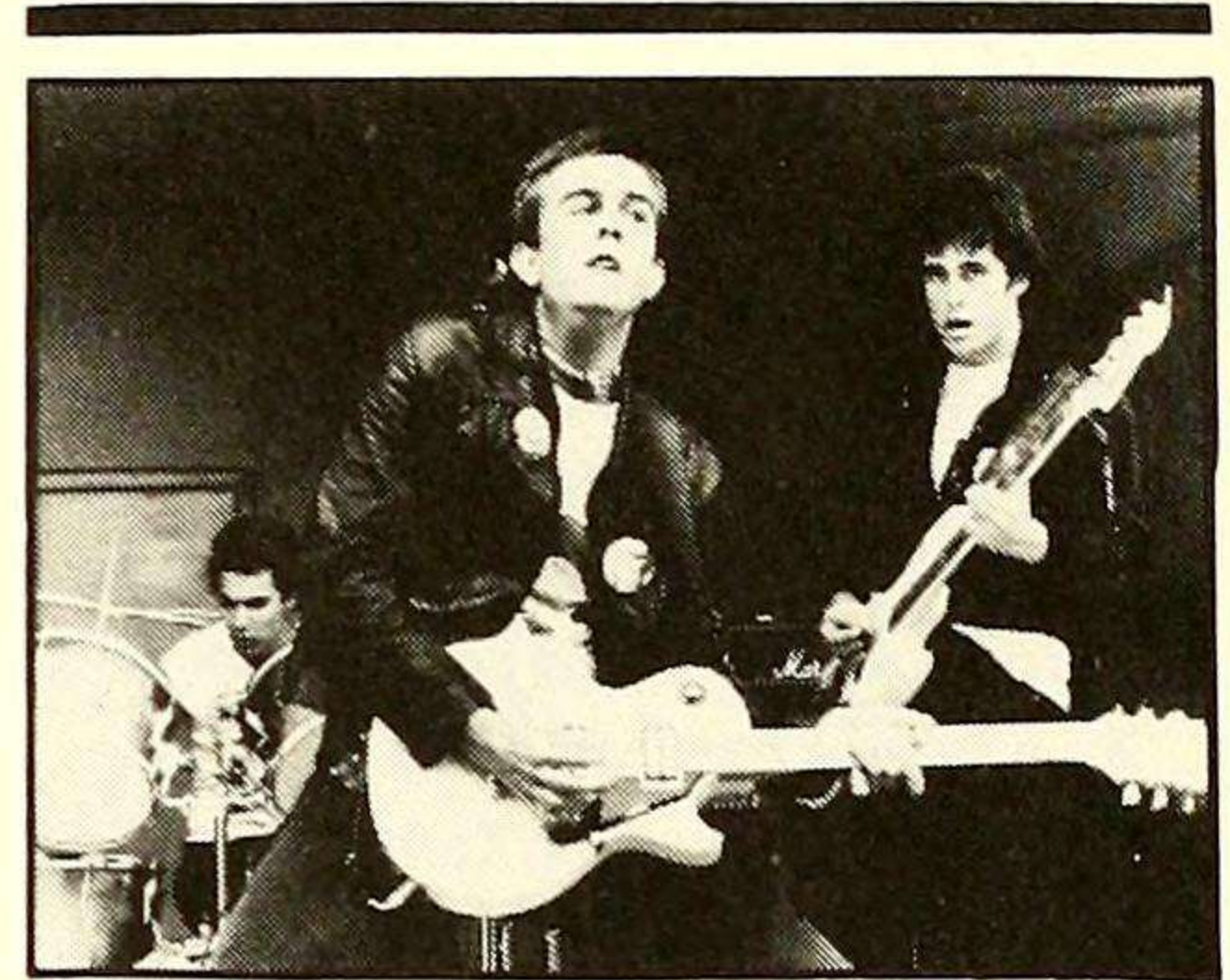
Hogs Norton have brought their own pig along, an albino with pink ears that squeals loudly in the heat as a Hogs supporter parades him round the grounds of the stadium on a leash. From time to time members of Young, Dumb and Violent try to capture the blistered pig, threatening to kill and roast it.

It's now 12.24 and the stadium is still empty. Where are the people? This was supposed to start at midday and the police have given Van Deventer a permit on condition that the festival finishes at 5.30. At this stage there are about 30 policemen and four audience members.

Round about 1.00 pm the festival starts picking up. Corporal Punishment, young, shining with enthusiasm, play a quick, tight set. The three members of the Corporals met in a mental hospital – or rather, the psychological ward of a military hospital.

Van Deventer is walking around with a decibel meter testing the applause. He thinks this is the fairest way of judging the most popular band, but he tests one band from the stadium seats, another from the stage, a third from the side away from all the action. There's a lot of injustice operating at this festival. Baxtop play two songs and have a proper sound check while all the lightie bands just have to go on and play.

Viv Horwitz, Race Relations official by day and punk by night, looks anxious when TV producer Peter Goldsmid



Wild Youth

Permission WEA

suddenly announces they were at university together.

Viv demands to know why Young, Dumb and Violent weren't featured in the TV show and Peter says the SABC wouldn't approve. "Why?" says Viv. "I figured if we neatened up our language it would be all right. Instead of saying 'Get fucked' I'd say 'Get Eschel Rhoodied'. That's the same, isn't it?"

Clouds are gathering overhead. There are only about 150 people watching the show. Flash Harry and Fresh Evidence play their sets. Fresh Evidence profusely thank Ian Warren, presenter of "Pop Shop" on TV, for allowing them on TV a week before. Warren, dressed in white like a Rhodesian cricket player, is the MC for this show.

Later when it looks like it's going to rain, Warren pisses off back to Jo'burg and Jon Ossher takes over as MC, his voice becoming American everytime he takes the mike.

Radio Rats and Hogs Norton

get the best response. Hogs sing a number called "Anti-society boogie" and what sounds like "Where are the politicians gone?" turns out to be "We're against the politicians".

By the time they play, the pig has gone. Gilbert explains: "He's just into very good music, like Hog's music. He gets nervous when these other bands play and decided to go home earlier on."

Young, Dumb and Violent also get a reasonable response. Viv breaks a bottle neck and rushes off stage threatening various members of the audience, spitting at them and leering with a white-coated tongue. Viv claims you can only deal with violence by being violent, not by dismissing it. "The essential logic for the act is a magnifying mirror for society."

By the time Raven, Free Ride and Baxtop get to play, it is raining. The crowds are racing off; the policemen, who've been watching from the top of the stands, go home; and Jack van Deventer announces Radio Rats

the winner.

The next day Gilbert Calvert claimed he'd seen the figures of the decibel metre and Hogs had rightfully won. Baxtop claimed they'd been paid off because they'd actually won but it didn't look good if a Springs band didn't come in first so they accepted second place. Raven said their sound had been half the volume of Baxtop's. Flash Harry said their sound was fixed too, so that they'd sound bad. Young, Dumb and Violent said some of their equipment had been tampered with before the concert.

Well, that's how new wave got off the ground in South Africa. It was messy and muddled. But you can't blame any of the bands for their paranoia. They haven't exactly had it easy trying to convert disco-obsessed audiences to original music. Nor has the music industry been particularly interested.

To start with CCP was the only company at all interested in new wave, probably because it was distributing Stiff records. It



Flash Harry

started promoting unsigned bands like Hogs Norton, Corporal Punishment and Fresh Evidence. Gilbert Calvert managed to get himself appointed as Stiff's Label Manager. He wasn't on a salary; he told the company he'd work for them for free providing they printed a card with his name on it.

Of all the new wave bands in the country only the Radio Rats have recorded an album (*"Into the Night We Slide"*) through Joburg Records. Disillusioned with all the major record companies, the Rats' Jonathan Handley has started an independent label and recorded the Rats' second album, *"To the Watertower"*. *"The Rats will persist,"* he said, *"on their own Springs terms."*

The Asylum Kids followed their example, and paid R1 000 to record their own single (released on Kritzinger's Transistor label) called *"Schoolboy"*. When this proved successful, they borrowed R5 000 to record an album.

WEA brought out a new wave compilation album called *"Six of the Best"*, featuring Wild Youth, Leopard, The Safari Suits, Corporal Punishment, Roger Lucey and a make-shift band fronted by actor Bill Flynn.

"The aim of the experiment," WEA told music writers on a press release, *"is to introduce the listener to TOTALLY South African new wave . . . this experiment will demonstrate that alternative sounds do exist to the mindless garbage being forced into our minds."*

*"Result of experiment: what can be predicted at this stage is that some people are going to cry 'rubbish', 'tuneless' . . . (place your favourite cliché here) . . . But despite criticism (we appreciate **constructive criticism**) it's the energy and freshness that counts - raw, rough energy, enough to keep Joburg warm in winter with Soweto thrown in for good measure."*

"This album is a budget-priced record designed to give

DON'T LIE TO ME

**I've seen you on my TV
and I've read about you in the news
You talk about the freedom
that we've got to give or lose**

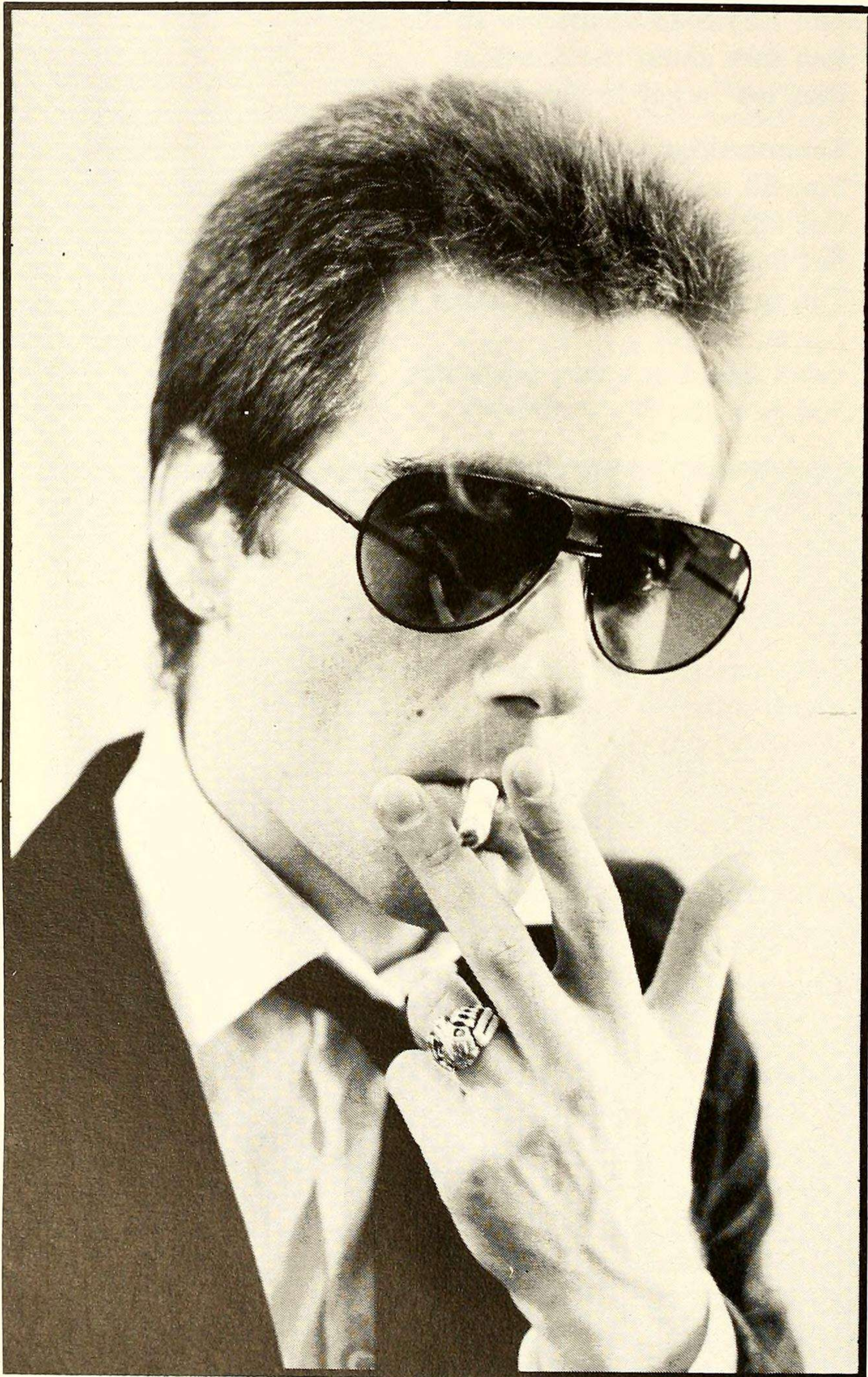
**Summertime graduate
You fill my head with law and order
Got lots to say and lots to do
but keep us in a corner
You taught me all the things that
I ever learnt
but I found out they were lies
You're a liar**

**Chorus: Don't lie to me
don't lie to me
don't lie to me
don't lie to me
don't lie to me**

**I've been through all your theories
about inflation just being air
Well blow away my overdraft
you blow it oh so well
Do what you do
but don't you do it where you shouldn't
Who the hell are you
you've got no right to make my mind up**

**Chorus: Don't lie to me
Don't lie etc.**

**Caught you with your pants down
you were just about to pull the trigger
Aint no way to get you down
'cause lives to you are just like figures
You do it all behind a wall of clever words
Shooh shubby dooba dubba wah-wah
LEATHERETTE (FORMERLY RAG DOLLS)**



Gilbert Calvert

people the chance to be heard, an opportunity thus far denied in this musically repressed country. Commercial viability is immaterial. It isn't a product, it's alive, demanding its right to exist."

Yet on the album probably the only tracks with a "ware" South Africa flavour were those by the now defunct Safari Suits: "But as you get old/you get to be told/that you got to uphold/the power of the men who wear Safari Suits." The Suits wrote a number called "A South African in Paris" for Eschel Rhodie.

Apart from this contribution by WEA (for which the energetic Benje Mudie is responsible), there are also a couple of albums from the Cape Town band Falling Mirror – produced by Tully McCully at Spaced Out Sound Studios, and distributed by WEA – and an album by Flash Harry called "Going Straight" as well as their single "No Football", a reggae spoof on the banning of football on Sundays in South Africa. The Rag Dolls have recorded an album with Grahame Beggs on Sunshine Records, but at the time of writing they were trying to break their contract with him, so it is unlikely he'll bring it out. Peach have been recording with EMI and it looks as though they are the great white hope at the moment. They work hard and are professional – particularly Angie Peach whose performance belies her 16 years. Then there are the Gents who are with RPM, while National Wake's album is going out through WEA. Otherwise, not many contracts have been meted out to the original new wave bands.

The record chiefs probably realised, before they parted with a few rand for recording, that if they were having a difficult time selling imported new wave, the local stuff was hardly likely to succeed. Besides, with overseas product their companies don't have to work very hard – since the whole image and packaging

ideas are sent through the post from overseas – whereas signing local bands means having to go to the trouble of working out a marketing strategy.

The important thing about new wave is that it revived live, indigenous rock 'n roll. Although there's not much to be said for a great deal of these bands – so many of them sing out of tune and write meaningless lyrics – at least, by and large, they are energetic.

But at the time of writing, there are a number of very talented groups heading the scene – Peach, The Asylum Kids, The Other Band, Pop Guns, Corporal Punishment, National Wake, The Gents, The Rag Dolls (who were renamed Leatherette), Party, Dog, Flash Harry, the AK-47s, Ad-Lib and The Stables.

Most of these groups are writing songs that could be called "political". Or perhaps a better word would be "topical".

Ad-Lib perform a number called "Anthem Blues" which is sub-titled "You Can't Keep the People Down": "They say there is a land somewhere, a land that's built on gold – it's breeding so much bitterness and it's waiting to explode."

Barely days after the Silverton Siege, Corporal Punishment came out with a number called "Down at the Bank", a song questioning who the real heroes were: "Those heroes in blue/they pushed their luck and you/ could have slipped up like they might soon/I hope I'm not there when they do/just think next time it could be/next time it could be you . . ."

The song goes on: ". . . but did you hear about the funeral/five thousand at his funeral . . . they're singing freedom songs/the beat is getting, beat is getting strong . . . heroes are for sale/they read the Daily Mail."

The Corporals don't claim to be anything but "lazy middle-class whites". Says Carl Raubenheimer, who pens most of their lyrics: "We're not heavy liberals. We don't go specially

and read the papers – you could probably take us as a barometer of public opinion. You know, there's just the fact that we say 'them'. That we talk of 'us' and 'them'. We're whities, and we might sing songs about 'them' because there's nothing to beat these people.

"It has got to that point where 'they' have nothing to lose but 'their' chains. So we feel we must give our audience that awareness. It's a very positive political stance. We don't offer any solutions."

The band hails from Springs (the centre of the universe according to bass guitarist Herbie Parkin) and more than anything they'd like to change the position of rock 'n roll in South Africa. They claim to be a "non-image" anti-"product" band.

"At the moment South African rock is a whole lot of emasculated men sitting in the army," says Carl. More than anything they'd like to make a living out of rock music. And if they can't do it here, they say, they'll do it overseas. At least there they won't be called up to the army the whole time.

When the Corporals first started playing around Johannesburg, they picked up a small staunch lefty following – until they came out with songs so fierce, like the one about Arrie Paulus, that the lefties couldn't be sure that what they heard over the mike was ideologically sound or not. The use of the word "kaffirs" in this particular song lost the Corporals a few fans, even though the Corporals were satirising a set of attitudes, not prescribing them.

"He's got a Cortina and a Granada

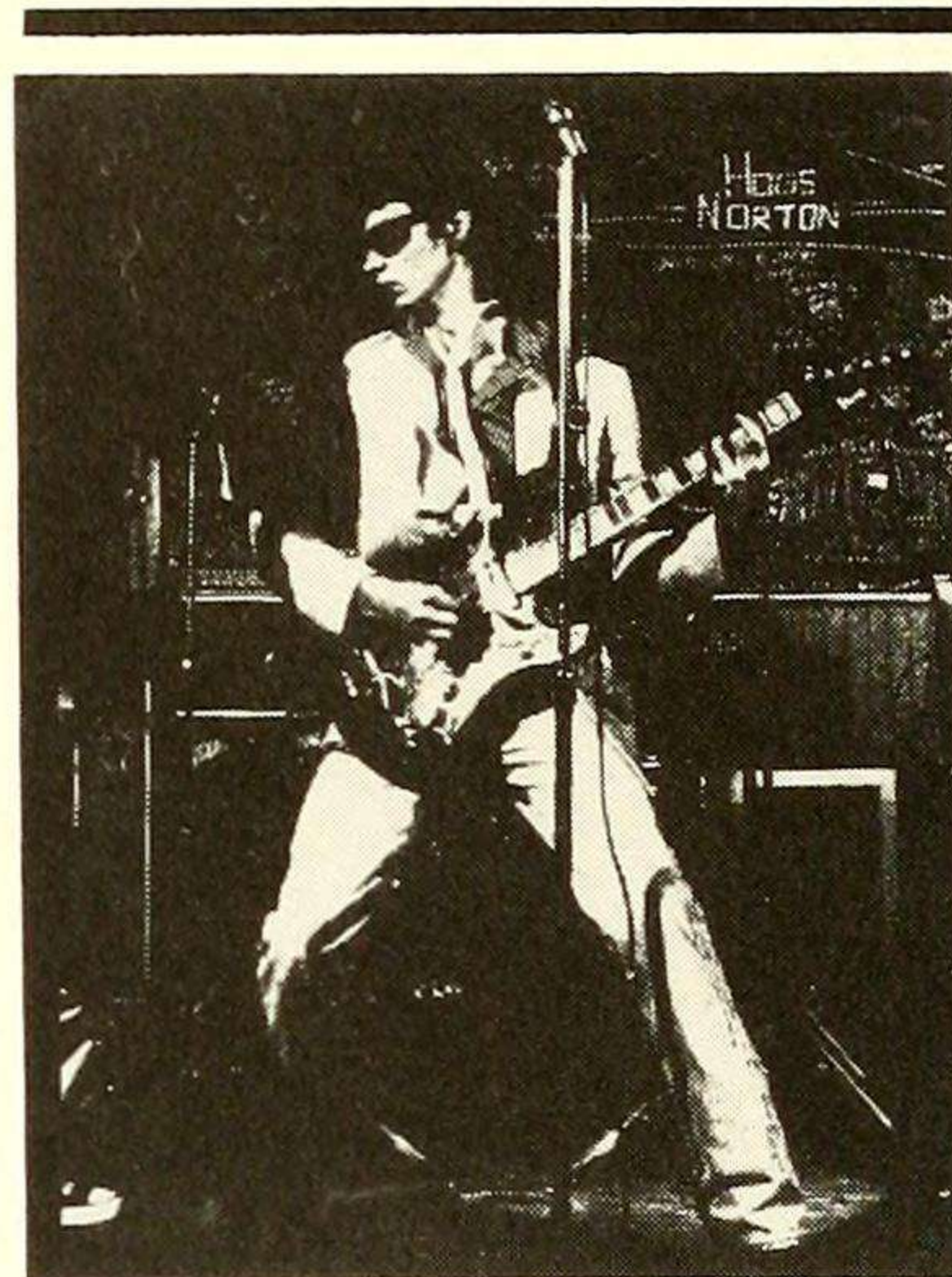
He built them himself with the help of his father

Company house, company wine
He's so secure he must be divine

"He's a supervisor, it takes a lot of skill;

To be in charge of 40 kaffirs – that's responsible.

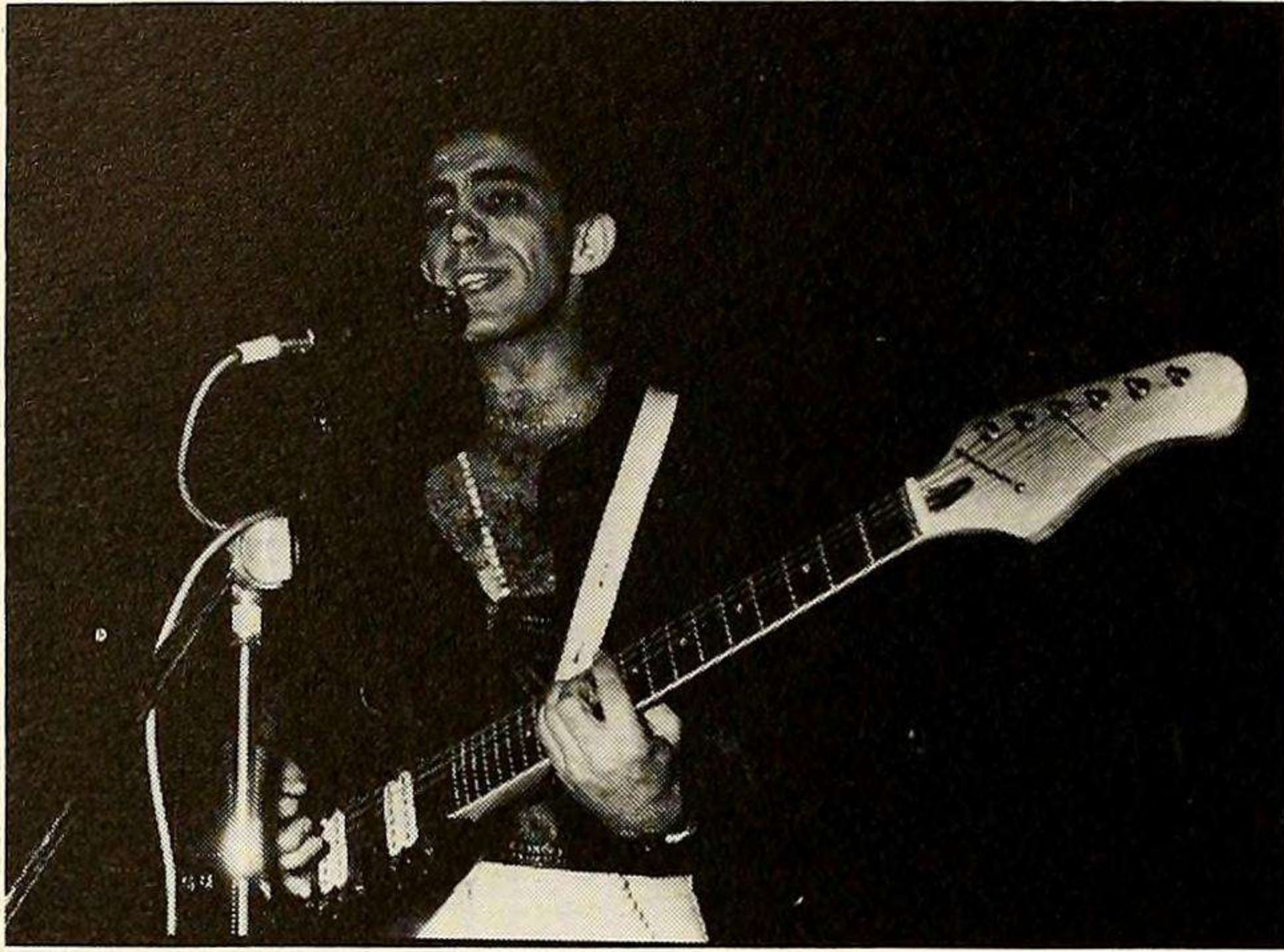
He doesn't mind that he gets all the pay



Hogs Norton

Dan Roberts

Steve Goldblatt



Steve Goldblatt



Dan Roberts



Peach

Arrie Paulus says they're just baboons anyway."*

* This refers to a statement allegedly made by the general secretary of the right-wing Mine Workers' Union, Arrie Paulus. In court on a charge of *crimen injuria*, Paulus got off on a technicality.

Also known for their shock tactics are the Asylum Kids. The Kids were born on June 16 but say that any connection with this date is completely coincidental.

Still, the Asylum Kids have been kicked out of clubs round Johannesburg for being either too political or for being blasphemous. In their repertoire is a number called "*Visionary Vagabond*", dedicated to Steve Biko, and at the time of the meat strike in 1980 they performed for free at most of the Rock Against Management gigs, and even wrote a song about the strike.

Another is a song called "*Policeman*": "*Policeman do you see your position/do you understand the condition/police-man you are playing a role/are you out of control?*"

"*Mothers, don't damage your children/there's no need for policemen*"

"*The future is yours (addressed to the audiences, not the policemen) WE DON'T NEED NO POLICEMEN.*"

The Kids decided on the name Asylum Kids, because according to Robbie The Kid, "*Asylum is a paradoxical word . . . you get committed to an asylum when people think y'r crazy . . . and you also seek political asylum, you check?*"

They feel their responsibility is to be "*pure expression*".

Robbie: "*People can't accept the chaos that exists and try to cover it up with politics, religions, relationships, drinking and drugs. They've covered it up so much that they become inhibited.*"

"*We want to get up on stage and spark them off. Some people might call this anarchistic, but we see it as a service, because people in the audience are so tight and controlled and*

TALKING 'BOUT SOLUTIONS

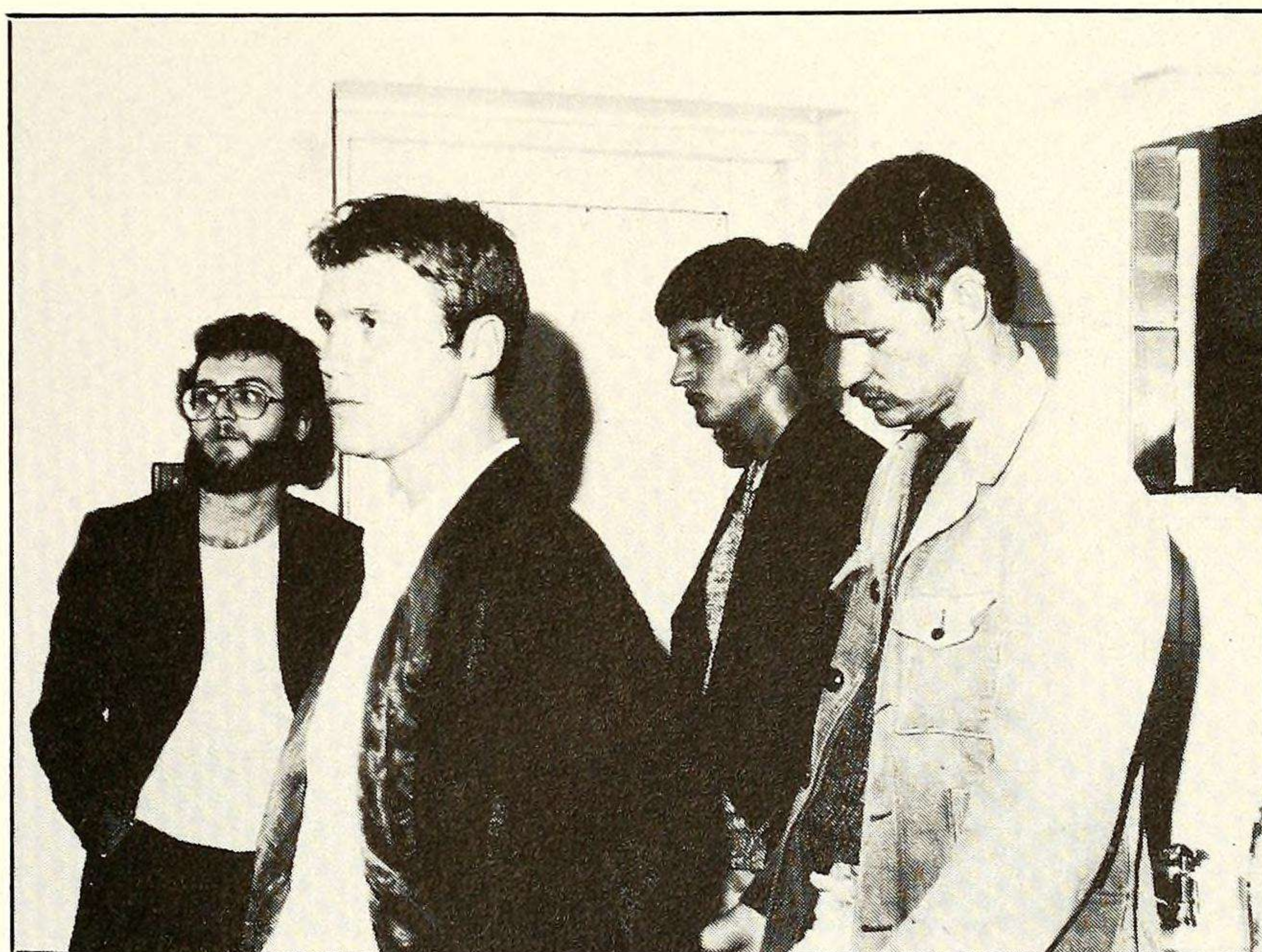
**You want to be free now/you want to go out and fight
You got all the reasons/but you still ain't got the right
You gotta give a little/take a little
Listen to my song/move on together/we can right the wrong**

**Schoolkids on the sidewalk/lookin' for a better deal
The children try/'cause that plural pie
Can't fill tomorrow's meal
You gotta think about it/do without it/listen to my song**

**Thanda mabantu Thanda kweula
revolution ain't no solution**

**The wind it whispers freedom/like the early morning glow
but you that deal in darkness/must reap what you have sown
You gotta wake them up/shake them up
sing your freedom song.**

THE OTHER BAND . . . Dax Butler (lead guitar), Larry (bass),
Mojo Gavin Stevens (percussion); Mick Hope-Baillie (guitar).



Corporal Punishment

Permission WEA

conditioned. A lot of musicians get up on stage and make love to their egos and become totally self-indulgent. That's what a musician does to cover up the chaos in his or her life.

"But a musician has got a great responsibility . . . to be open."

Dino, the bass guitarist for the Asylum Kids, agrees. "We can't offer alternatives, but we can try to make people aware of things, of the chaos, and to question what they see."

The third member of the Asylum Kids, The Brat, looks astounded as Robbie and Dino expound on their theory. I ask what he feels about it.

"The Brat's still trying to understand about the chaos. He's too doff to grasp it properly," says Robbie The Kid.

"I'm only a drummer," says the Brat.

Then there is Roger Lucey, who is a rock 'n roller who came through folk-rock.

He is arguably South Africa's most political **commercial** songwriter. I stress commercial, since there are hundreds of

others who haven't been within 2 000 km of a record company.

Roger's lyrics draw directly from events around him: "Spies Eyes" is about police spy Craig Williamson, who infiltrated student circles and the International University Exchange Fund in Geneva before being exposed; "Lungile Thabalaza" is about a political detainee who died mysteriously in prison; "The Boys are in Town" raises the question of compulsory military service for white youth; "Crossroads" is about a squatter camp.

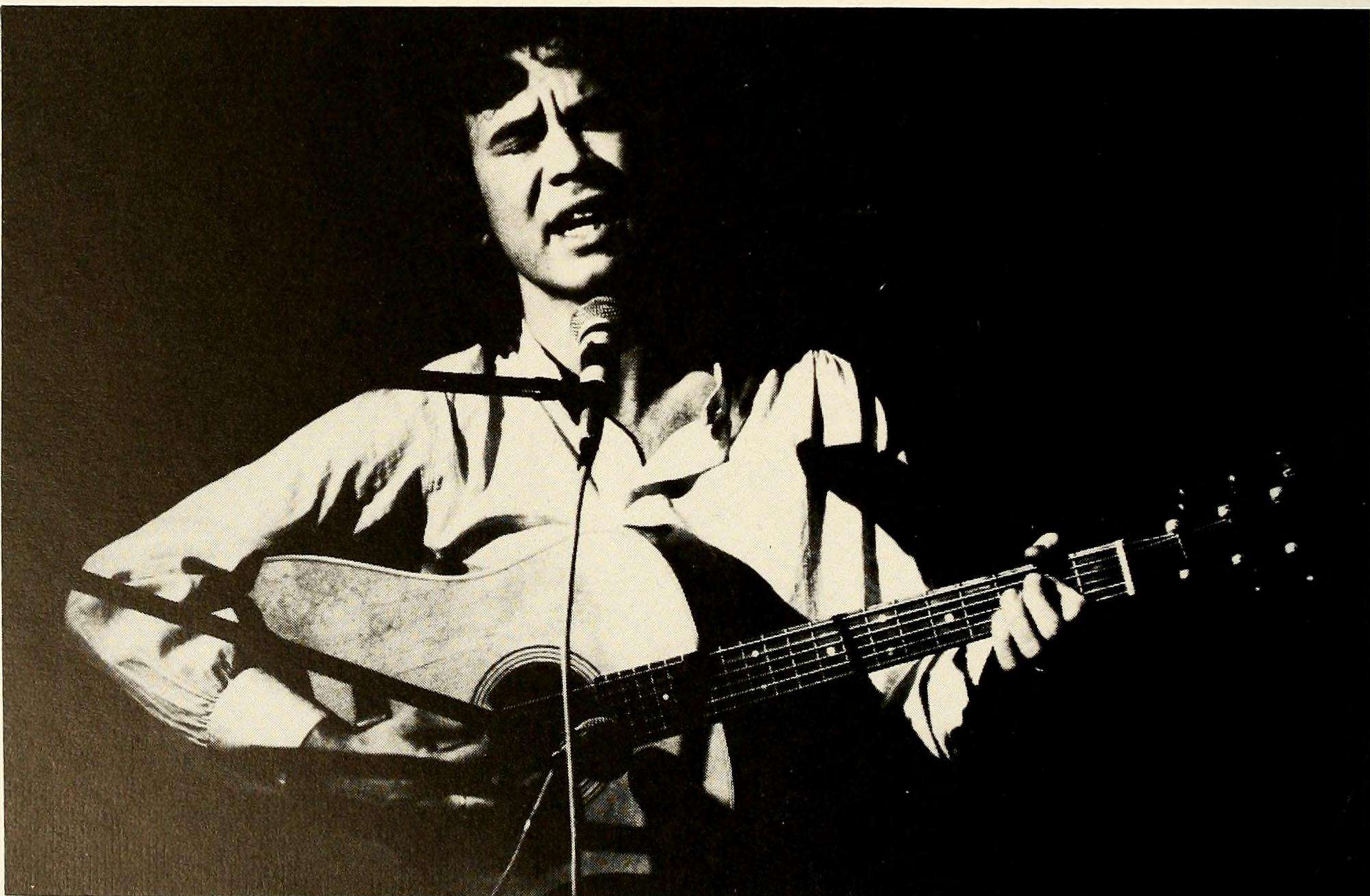
He has written songs about Steven Biko; the Blue Train; the richies who live in Houghton; the poor people who live in the townships; hippie hitch-hikers; black consciousness; beggars in the street and the liberals' dilemma at being confronted by rags and tatters.

He writes in a simple, evocative style that is neither pretentious nor trite. Take "Crossroads": ". . . and now all of these people/20 000 or more/they're going to have their houses bulldozed right down to

the floor/and you know in Constantia or Houghton/while nanny brings in tea/they'll say 'shame' and 'that's life, but it's got nothing to do with me'."

"The Boys are in Town" was written for a South African exile, Paul van Wyk, who left South Africa to avoid military service. He was murdered in America. In this part Roger writes through the eyes of an exile: "Drunk in a bar room in London or someplace/A kid thinks of home and he thinks of a face/ That he knew and he wonders how long it will be/Till he's back in the place that he wants to be/And he slams on the counter and he shouts at his friend/In a language they both knew but that was back when/They were home they were happy/and then the time came/To choose between leaving and losing your name/And they think of their families/And they think of their friends/And they wonder how long/It will take till the end/Till the boys are in town."

Roger comes from Durban, his mother is a "working housewife" and his father "a



Roger Lucey

crazy film maker, an erratic maverick – an old Transkei Mounted Rifles man."

They sent their son to some fancy schools, the kind that wouldn't normally encourage its pupils to make friends outside their class, but Roger says he was involved in "a whole other lifestyle" by hanging out around Greyville at the same time as going to these schools.

He played guitar in folk clubs when he left school. His political ideas aren't based on theories but a street thing, he says, which he picked up in the oil factories he worked in up and down the coast. He originally called his style of music "Prezarian" because he felt he was recording events prior to a period of change in South Africa: "I'm a documentary singer and am not pushing an ideology or plugging a path to redemption. In a way I'm a reporter.

"I'm a rock 'n roll singer who is trying to entertain, trying to make a crust, play music I can enjoy and have other people enjoy it at the same time. I'm not trying to do anything profound, not trying to change people's heads, not trying to be a political commentator. I'm just singing songs that give me satisfaction and maybe they're pertinent and close to the bone for a lot of people . . . I don't mind, just as long as I cause some discussion."

He couldn't fail to, with numbers like "The Struggle Goes On": "Azania will whimper/The birth will be heavy/And who will be sleeping/And who will be ready/To cope with the struggle/Going on, and on, and on."



Flash Harry

THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN

**It's a river on a railway
That runs straight through the town
One side you're a king or queen
One side you're a clown
There's a sentry at the iron bridge
And you have to show the stamp
Of how you rate in the class game
Are you up or down the ramp.**

**In an empty lot some city kids
Are sitting round a fire
Roasting chicken heads and feet
Till the sound of squealing tyres
Warns them that it's time to run
Up the alley to try and hide
Or else end up locked up in the back of a van
For a free but heavy ride.**

**So you piss against the wall
That marks the other side of town
And you fall beneath the savage blow
That makes sure you know you're down
And you crawl back to your sanctuary
And you don the thorny crown
And you wonder about the victim
From the other side of town.**

**In the middle of the uniforms
The sirens and the guns
Is a signpost pointing backwards
To a road you take but once
And once you have been marked off
By the indelible ink of the law
There's no hope in hell
That you will ever walk through the white man's door.**

ROGER LUCEY

Obviously the record companies steered well clear of Roger's music initially. How do you market a Prezanian poet, for Chrissake? It was Dave Marks, the determined Third Ear Producer who distributes through WEA, who decided to take a gamble on him.

He's now recorded two albums, "The Road is Much Longer" and "Half-Alive", and

his latest band is called the Zub Zub Marauders. Right now he's going all out to reach everyone in the country - whites and blacks, English, Zulu and Afrikaans speakers.

"I'm establishing my future in South Africa, looking at the next 50 years. This is my porzie, and I've got as much right here as anyone else. I'm an arch-patriot - towards my country, not the government."



The Other Band

Sue Hope-Baillie

Sue Hope-Baillie



Asylum Kids

Musiek en lyriek

HER voice choked on the word "Waterblommetjies", and as the "uit die Boland" came trembling out, so did a tear.

"Jammer," said Laurika Rauch, swiftly blowing her nose and wiping the tear off her guitar before bravely attempting the chorus again. But she needn't have bothered to apologise – there could not have been a more sympathetic audience than that one in the tiny Laager theatre. In fact, if she'd been able to see the 35 or so people gathered there, she'd have known that hers weren't the only tears in the place that night.

Folk music draws romantics like punk draws anarchists. Folkies love passion and tragedy; they are supportive when performers show their emotions, and more so now than usual because they are witnessing the birth of a brand new form – Afrikaans folk, played in a way that would have made Langenhoven gasp since it was so unlike anything that had traditionally come out of South Africa before.

The musicians in the forefront of the so-called Afrikaans new wave have come from a background not unlike that of singers like Kenny Henson, Paul Clingman and Ramsay Mackay, the difference being that in traditional Afrikaans music there was no element of protest. In English there was, and it grew stronger as it got older.

With few exceptions, the traditional Afrikaans folk songs are about as trite as you can

imagine. There are a few downright silly, sexist ones that children are taught from the cradle – like "Jan Pierewiet". Translated the words mean "Good morning my wife, here's a little kiss for you; Good morning my man, there is coffee in the can." Often at white junior schools this song is taught in singing lessons: the little girls and the little boys face each other and sing alternating lines. But from the famous "Bobbejaan Klim die Berg" (a ditty about a jolly baboon which upsets some farmers) to inane love songs like "Die Brug op Die Plaas", "Suikerbossie" and "Lente", there is little noteworthy about traditional Afrikaans songs – except that two of the best-known songs in the culture did not originate in South Africa.

The first, the patriotic "Boereplaas" is sung to the tune of the Red Flag, the Soviet National anthem. Ironical, in a society so anti-communist as white South Africa.

*"O Boereplaas – geboortegrond
Jou het ek lief bo alles*

Al dwaal ek heel

die wêreld rond

waar so gelukkig

so gesond

O boereplaas – geboortegrond

Jou het ek lief bo alles."

*"My Afrikaans homeland, my
birthplace,*

I love you more than anything

Even though I wander around

the whole world, healthy and

happy, I love you, my Afrikaans

homeland above everything."

Possibly the most famous Afrikaans song (with the exception of "Die Stem" is "Sarie Marais", based on the old English folk-tune "Ellie Ree".

*"My Sarie Marais is so ver van
my hart*

*en ek hoop om haar weer te sien
sy't in die wyk van die Mooi
Rivier gewoon*

net voor die oorlog het begin

*O bring my terug na die ou
Transvaal*

daar waar my Sarie woon

daar onder by die mielies

by die groen doring boom

daar woon my Sarie Marais."

*"My Sarie Marais is so far from
my heart*

And I hope I'll see her again

*She lived in the area of the Mooi
River*

Just before the war (Anglo-Boer)

*Oh take me back to the old
Transvaal*

to where my Sarie lives

down there near the mealies

at the green thorn tree

that's where my Sarie lives."

These songs just seem to go on and on, and, until recently, it seemed that for any Afrikaans singer to be successful, he or she had to perform songs along these lines.

Round about 1966 the best known Afrikaans vocalists in the country (with the exception of the institutions of Ge Korsten and Mimi Coetzer) were Gert van Tonder and Sias Reinecke. They called themselves Groep 2. In 1968 they won the Midem trophy (South African section) at Cannes for a song called – wait for it – "Die Oukraaliedjie" ("The Old Kraal song") of their "Pret en Plesier" album.

Popular singers like Carike Keuzenkamp (she is best known for the Afrikaans version of the Four Jacks and a Jill hit, "Timothy"), Herbie and Spence, Rudi Neitz, Charles Jacobie, Marie van Zyl and Vicki du Preez have all followed the tried and tired vaderland liefde line.

By far the most successful of these performers is Sonja Herholdt, six times Sarie award winner for best female vocalist.



Anton Goosen

Sonja was born in Nigel, and started singing in school operas and concerts. After studying speech and drama, and a stint at teachers training college, she met her future husband, F C Hamman, who became her manager and actually became responsible for turning her into South Africa's golden girl.

Her career was launched on the single "*Ek Verlang na Jou*" in 1975, written by a student from Stellenbosch university and arranged by F C. It was the theme tune for an Afrikaans film called "*Sarah*".

The song went to number one, sold more than 30 000, and won Sonja her first Sarie. By the time her first album was released, Sonja was the top Afrikaans singer in the country. Her sugar 'n spice appeal had won her countless fans, including five thousand army boys whose letters she faithfully replied to in person.

The album, "*Sonja*" contained her first two hit singles, two numbers translated from English and seven indigenous songs, mostly written by Anton Goosen, a highly talented songwriter who has written numbers for practically any Afrikaans singer you care to name.

The album, naturally, won the Sarie for Best Album of the year in 1976, and Sonja once again walked off with Best Female Vocalist... as she did in 1977... and 1978... and 1979... and again in 1980, after her movie "*Sing vir die Haarlekyn*" which was conceived, written, directed, produced, funded and publicised by FC Hamman.

And every time Sonja wins (even though off-stage she might admit to friends she felt she didn't really deserve it, as in 1978 when she won instead of Margaret Singana) she thanks the people, she thanks God, and she thanks Oom Jannie (or whoever presents the award) and she smiles her winning smile, cutely trips off-stage again and everyone says: "*how sweet she is*".

Which she might well be, but she is also **very** much an establishment figure performing in a genre that is singularly unchallenging.

Against this background comes the Afrikaans new wave, led by Anton Goosen but with people like Laurika Rauch and Clarabelle van Niekerk in tow.

How can you hold hands with the establishment on one level and claim to be writing "*protest*" songs on another? How can you be a participant in a festival like the 1981 Republic Day Celebrations which were boycotted by all progressive thinkers in the country? How do you reconcile accepting a handful of Sarie awards and writing songs for people like Sonja Herholdt and Herbie and Spence with what you say is a strong conscience about the government's resettlement policies, a conscience that apparently inspires songs about Atlantis, the resettlement camp outside Cape Town? What is the connection?

These are the sort of questions hurled constantly at Anton Goosen – and he replies that he needs the industry, but that he feels he can change industry thinking from within. He sees himself as a South African Bob Dylan, writing within a style of music that is acceptable to Afrikaans people but with lyrics that, while obscure, have the potential to change people's consciousness. It's sort of guerrilla warfare this new wave-establishment-hippie is going for.

Anton is the best-known writer in the country, apart from being white male heartthrob number one. He's had about 150 songs recorded by different artists; he writes most of Sonja Herholdt's numbers; he's written for Vicky du Preez ("*Tot Siens Auf Wiedersehen*" made number 12 on the SABC charts and was also released in the Benelux countries in Dutch), Glennys Lynne, Ge Korsten, Four Jacks and a Jill, Herbie and Spence, Carike Keuzenkamp, Rudi Neitz, Marie van Zyl, Gene Rockwell

"*My Life's in Good Hands*", which reached number two in South Africa and was released in Holland, Germany, Sweden, England and Ireland), Ian and Dix, Cornelia and Laurika Rauch.

In addition to this he's written the theme music for the feature films "*Die Spaanse Vlieg*", "*Penarie in Pretoria*", "*Jantjie*" (based on his song) as well as Sonja's latest movie.

The element of "*protest*" comes mostly in his numbers about the Cape – five songs based around a central theme – "*Jantjie*", "*Waterblommetjies*", "*Hanoverstraat*", "*Atlantis*" and "*Antjie Somers*". "*Waterblommetjies*" has been recorded by Anton, Sonja and Laurika; "*Antjie Somers*" by Anton and "*Atlantis*" by Laurika.

Says Anton: "*'Jantjie' was the starting point for me because at that stage Afrikaans people were writing 'come to me the moon's blue' type songs. Jantjie's a coloured and so's Katryntjie – it's a simple love song. From that we move into 'Hanoverstraat', the main street in District 6. The whole culture there has been flattened. . . I'm saying, more-or-less, what has happened to District 6? What have we come to?*"

The next one is "*Waterblommetjies*", which is again set in the Cape "*coloured*" culture. Then there is "*Atlantis*", written about the place some 30 kms outside Cape Town which has become a dumping ground for victims of the Group Areas act. It's possibly the most significant of the fivesome, appearing as it did on Laurika's album a year before the 1980 schools boycott.

*"O my naam maak rerig nie saak nie
en my ouderdom net so min
maar die plek en die mense wat
ek lief het
word uitgedop en omgekeer
O wat het hulle met my Kaap
gedoen
en wie gaan verantwoordelik
staan
met my hande vol vere oopge-*

maak
 en die dons wat daaruit waai . . .
 Laat die met ore hoor
 en die met oë sien
 in die ghettos, die nuwe
 ghettos
 daar dans onse kinders
 Laat die met oë dan lees
 en die met tonge dan praat
 in die ghettos, die nuwe nuwe
 ghettos
 daar bloei onse kinders
 Laat die met woorde dan skryf
 en die met note dan sing
 in die ghettos die nuwe nuwe
 ghettos daar sterf ons kinders
 O ek's oud genoeg om jonk te
 wees
 en ek sleep my geboortenis saam
 met my hand vol vere
 oopgemaak
 en die dons wat daaruit waai."

Rough translation

"Oh my name and age don't
 really matter
 but the place and the people I
 love
 have been shelled and moved
 around
 O what have they done to my
 Cape
 Who is responsible?
 My hand is opened and the
 feathers
 and down are blowing through.
 Let those with ears hear
 and those with eyes see
 in the ghettos, the new ghettos,
 our children are dancing
 Let those with eyes then read
 and those with tongues then
 speak
 in the ghettos, the new new
 ghettos
 our children are bleeding
 Let those with words then write
 and those with notes then sing
 in the ghettos the new new
 ghettos
 our children are dying
 I'm old enough to still be young
 and I drag my birthmark around
 with me
 my hand is opened and the
 feathers
 and down are blowing through."

This song was banned on
 radio and apparently the
 banning came from a ministerial
 level.

The last one of the five is
 "Antjie Somers". According to
 Cape tradition, Antjie Somers is a
 dreaded tokoloshe-type figure, a
 man dressed up as a woman.
 When children were naughty,
 adults would say to their
 children; "Be careful, Antjie
 Somers will come and get you".
 Anton refers to the old mythical
 figure in the song, and says
 Antjie Somers still exists – only
 her name these days is "geel
 bulldozer" (the yellow bulldozer
 used to demolish people's
 homes). The leading Afrikaans
 newspaper, **Rapport**, recently
 recommended in an editorial that
 its readers take note of the song's
 lyrics.

Anton has never spent much
 time in the Cape, but he says he
 feels very strongly about it.
 Possibly because of the language
 and cultural tie-up between
 white and black Afrikaners.

But why doesn't he write
 about areas like Soweto, outside
 Johannesburg where he lives?
 Anton: "I'm starting to do that.
 So far I've written 'Mpanzaville',
 on Laurika's album, which is
 about Soweto and June 16."

Anton says that many of his
 songs – even on Sonja's album –
 are subtle parodies of typical
 South African attitudes and
 situations like " 'Ta Mossie se
 Sakkie-Sakkie Boeredans'", in
 which he refers to dung floors,
 braaivleis and pap, and Oom
 Steffan se viool.

His "Boy van die Suburbs", a
 skit on the typical Bapsies
 jawler, had a radio embargo
 placed on it because of the street
 language it uses. Two other
 songs that had restricted airplay
 were "Sterf van Bethlehem" and
 "Begrafnistyd in Zeerust."

"I was born in the wrong
 country and born speaking the
 wrong language," says Anton.
 "When 'Kruitjie' only got to
 number 12 on the charts and it
 sold 36 000, the same number as
 Richard Jon Smith sold with
 'Michael Row the Boat Ashore'
 only he reached number one –
 then you know something's very
 wrong."

Anton feels people don't listen

to his lyrics carefully enough. If
 they did, he says, someone like
 Sonja Herholdt wouldn't be
 lumped with her sugary image.
 To the suggestion that maybe his
 parodies and the elements of
 protest in his lyrics are too subtle
 for the average person to
 understand, he smiles: "Maybe,
 but I know what I've written and
 as I say, anyone who takes the
 time and trouble to get into some
 of my stuff will see what I
 mean."

His desire to be seen as a
 protest poet is apparently the
 result of a conservative
 upbringing in Kroonstad and a
 life-long obsession with Bob
 Dylan. On the first score, he
 remembers one incident that
 clearly illustrates the
 background against which any
 comment he has to make on
 society would seem like a
 protest. "I was trying to discuss
 a fascinating letter in the
 newspaper which said Paul
 Kruger was coloured, and my
 father got so angry he threw a
 cup of coffee at me."

Anton left home, did a stint at
 college in Heidelberg, and then
 taught at an English school
 before opting for journalism. "I
 guess I've always been out of
 place and that's probably why I
 identify so strongly with Breyten
 Breytenbach and Dylan."

The desire to be like Dylan
 shows even in Anton's dress – the
 inevitable cap which he is never
 without and the casual clothes.
 He's even written a tribute to his
 idol – "Robert Zimmerman
 Blues."

But how can he model himself
 on Dylan? Would Dylan write
 songs for Sonja Herholdt? Would
 he accept a Sarie award?

In the light of what he's doing
 these days, undoing the
 statements he made years ago
 ("Don't follow leaders" seems a
 bit incongruous now that Dylan
 is a "Jesus freak") he just might.
 After all, he accepted a Grammy
 Award in 1979.

Maybe Anton is right – within
 the framework of this society, he
 is South Africa's Bob Dylan.

Another person seen frequently

at the Musiek en Lyriek shows is David Kramer, who is actually English speaking although most of his songs are performed in Afrikaans. He works in a textile factory, comes from a middle class white family in the Cape, and has become known as the Father of the Boland Blues. His songs are mainly satirical, and reflect the white Boland experience. The following interview was recorded with him during a show to promote his album "Bakgat". The album has since been banned outright by the SABC.

Andersson: Why have you chosen the idiom you have? Were you at all influenced by Jeremy Taylor?

Kramer: I can't say I was. I was a kid when he was at his peak, and I think I was probably more inspired by other things that were going on at the time. I was playing guitar at the time in a rock group called the Offbeats which later became the Naked Ape. So I was very amused by what he was doing but I never saw myself as doing anything like that. It was only in my matric year and in the army that I started to write South African songs. Before that I did write one or two songs for my band, but **real junk, Bay of Tranquillity type songs. Bad imitations of other people's songs that didn't say anything about me or my experience or what I knew about.**

Andersson: So at what stage did you decide to go "South African", and why?

Kramer: It happened when I was overseas. After the army I studied for three years at Leeds University. Realised then I couldn't do cover versions of folk songs there because it was so ridiculous, this Boland boy trying to do cover versions of something like Donovan. It would have them screaming with laughter – it's like having some guy coming from overseas and trying to sing South African songs. So I started to write my own songs in about '70 and I haven't stopped since then.

Andersson: What exactly is the

Boland experience?

Kramer: The Boland is an area in the Cape, a geographical area. The kind of people you get down there are different from the people you get in other parts of the country and my music draws on my background. I was born and grew up in Worcester which is very much part of the Boland, and it's the music I heard on the farms there, played by the coloured people and it's the music being played on Saturday in the town square, the sort of gospel-evangelist type music by the coloured people, and of course the kind of boere orkeste that you get down there and then in Cape Town the Klopse. "Boland Blues" just became a kind of apt description for what I was doing.

Andersson: Who do you define as your audience, or who do you think your music appeals to most?

Kramer: It appeals on different levels. It makes me happy that it does appeal to intellectuals and academics. But I've also played a lot to just ordinary people in the street who are definitely not intellectuals and recently I played in Stellenbosch at the Oude Libertas amphitheatre as part of the Musiek and Lyriek concerts that they put on there. It was very much a family orientated audience, mainly Afrikaans speaking, with all the old tannies and oompies there with their kids and their blankets, a cross-section of a Boland community.

Andersson: What exactly are you trying to do with your satirical lyrics?

Kramer: My music encompasses rather vulgar images, and it doesn't matter if you don't see beyond the vulgarity, but for me there is obviously something beyond the vulgarity – the whole value system. I write about taste. I'm interested in people's expression through their taste. The way they dress, the way they decorate their homes, the way they live.

I started off at university writing songs with a lot of

political content, about the situation in South Africa. I don't find expressing politics in my music very interesting anymore. I'm very bored with that. I find that I haven't really got anything to add to what is being said. As politics in SA have changed, the white South African does not have a valid part in the political game anymore, and my music could become very much like the newspaper editorials, the same old story over and over again. I think what is interesting is working on the cultural borders – that's why I find working in Afrikaans so stimulating.

Black people are calling the tune, and what they have to say is relevant; not what I have to say. I've never really considered black people as a potential audience, because to be quite honest I don't really come into contact with black people that often – that's just the way things are geared. I perhaps have preconceptions about what black people would and wouldn't relate to and I didn't think that they'd relate to my music. Yet from what I've seen they find my music very very funny. Thinking about it, obviously they live in the same world, walk down the same street, and see the same characters.

I see things in a particular way and I want people to see things the way I see them. I want the songs to be thought provoking, but I avoid strong messages in the songs. I want to share things – like people say "I never noticed letter boxes until David Kramer". That makes me very happy. I'm describing things as I see them. There are little messages here and there, but they're not very radical – just liberal snippets.

I've just written a song that sort of pokes fun at male chauvinists: "Well I don't really mind the way that women drive their cars/and I can't say I'm disappointed if they don't wear bras/a woman if she's married should never wear the pants/cause her duty's to her husband and picking up his

skants." So I hope that while people find it funny, at the same time it will make them question their own value system. I have no great expectations about changing society – I might have had when I was younger – but I don't have any great faith in art to transform society. I think it should have content and should be relevant to the society that generates it, but I personally don't think that my songs will make the world a better place to live in.

I don't believe music should just be entertaining, but people should be drawn by the humour. The humour is a tremendous aspect of the song. It makes people like you, and when they like you, they listen to the song and what you're saying. Hopefully it will create a new awareness. That's what I think art should do – it should open up your vision.

Andersson: Now most South African musicians, at this stage of their careers, are dreaming about cracking it overseas . . .

Kramer: South African musicians bug the life out of me. It's totally ridiculous the way everyone is ripping off and imitating what is happening overseas. There's nothing wrong with learning from overseas new wave say, or country and western. But it should be interpreted and applied to the South African experience. If a South African new wave band was to express **their** new wave experience, then I'd say that was valid but unfortunately it doesn't seem to happen. It's changing, and there's much more of a South African expression and awareness than there was in the past. People are meeting more now – before those who were working in this medium were totally isolated from one another, they didn't know about one another. The media doesn't inform you of what is happening.

Some Americans recently heard my "*Bakgat*" album and they said it was the first authentic South African music they'd heard. Luckily I've been

John Kramer



David Kramer

across every year since '77 on company business so I get the chance to play for people.

Andersson: You used to be known as a political songwriter; now there's not much blatant political content in your songs. Why?

Kramer: You're talking about songs like "*Daniel Khumalo*", about the migrant worker. "*Daniel Khumalo*" is a song about a migrant worker, his history and background. "*I'm filling up my car/ although he chokes and dances and he wears that mask of joy / just pause awhile before you say 'here's five cents for you boy'.*" I don't believe that that's what I should be doing. People must sing about things from their own experiences, they mustn't sing as though they are black-white men or white-black men or whatever. This is what's happening in SA, the white man can't talk for the black man.

Andersson: Why is it more relevant that you sing about Boland people who you might be plugged into, but whose experiences are certainly not your own (considering the Leeds University stint and so on) than the experiences of black people?

Kramer: My experience is white middle-class, Okay, but the Boland is pertinent to me. It's more relevant to me. It depends how you see it and what you see it in terms of. I wouldn't be honest to myself if I was writing

about a guy dying in detention. That song of mine, "*Dry Wine*", says "*knowing it all from the distance of headlines*": well that's what it's all about for me. Shit, I don't know what it's like to be thrown out of a window or anything like that. OK, it's relevant to the political cause but for me it's not relevant.

Andersson: How can one be more relevant than the other when in fact **neither** is your own experience?

Kramer: I mean my personal experience. Take "*Botteltjie Blou*". That's a song about a methylated spirits drinker. I feel very strongly for these people, they live near me and I see them. When I wrote "*Daniel Khumalo*" it was about the cruelties of the pass system. I feel that is dishonest, it's not for me to do. I don't carry a pass or suffer under that system at all. Why must I as whitey get up and sing about that to other whities? That is exactly what white politics has been about in this country – white people trying to tell other white people how bad it is for the blacks. Blacks aren't interested in what white liberals have to say. So I'm just recording white suburbia as it is today, for me. What would be the point of a black township writer trying to write about white suburban life?

Using English I feel I'm falling into the trap of a singer from overseas. Afrikaans has more of an authentic feel for me, it has

the texture of South Africa. I'm more interested in the voice quality and the chord structures that come out of the roots of our folk music. I mean there was a chap called Oom Klaasie Louw on TV the other night and he's the greatest folk singer in this country in my opinion, he's from the Knersveld vlakke.

I'm not interested in sophisticated music, augmented sevenths and minor elevenths and all that sort of thing. I'm interested in basic crude guitar work. Crude vocal style, somewhere in the folk history there was a kind of chop off point and certain people took over and adopted the SA folk music and made it something else and since then it's become very sophisticated. Like a lot of Afrikaans songs were written by coloured people, they were farm songs and so on. And these were adopted by white culture and have become sort of associated with nationalist policies.

Songs like "*Bobbejaan Klim die Berg*" is very much a coloured song, and it's become a white song and there are so many versions of it now, orchestrated and studio quality and all that.

I'm saying bullshit to that, that's not what it's all about. We've got to get back to the essence of the thing. Our folk tradition has been perverted, same as most music in South Africa. I want to be authentic.

THE festival at Tembisa was due to start at midday. We'd arrived early, thinking that there were bound to be long queues. Also, we were white which could mean trouble if we were caught without permits – nobody ever knows whether permits are needed for whites at township festivals – so we wanted to be there before the police arrived.

Midday came and went, and then it was one o'clock. There were about five people in the Jan Lubbe stadium, and the promoters had predicted a crowd of at least 10 000. Round about 1.15 a few musicians started setting up and the compere, Colin Mashigo, got up and welcomed everyone (probably no more than 20 people, including musicians). From the top seats of the stadium it was possible to look out over Tembisa: groups of people talking here and there; women carrying buckets; children playing in the dust among the molehill shanties. No one seemed to be the least bit interested in the goings on in the stadium.

But as the first few crooked notes from as yet untuned guitars hit the air, people arrived out of nowhere. Within the space of about 10 minutes the stadium was full. Seems that the line-up that Easter Monday had great pulling power after all: The Jazz Ministers, Vicky Mhlongo, American bass guitarist Steve Neil, Soweto, Kori Moraba and the Young Lovers, the Rag Dolls, Tou and Phil and Neo... a real "International" line-up.

Probably the most "African" moment at the festival was when Vicky Mhlongo performed an exquisite version of "Jikel' emaweni", backed by Andy Chabeli, Xoli Qalaba and Ali Lerefolo. That song, made famous by Makeba, and the entire set performed by Tou – an Afro-rock group from Daveyton – was indigenous. Apart from that the festival was very American. The Jazz Ministers include a hint of mbaqanga in their music, but generally it's very Newporty. Even when they asked the crowd to observe a few moments of

Crossover... at the crossroads

silence in memory of Isaac "Bra Zakes" Nkosi, the famous mbaqanga musician who died in Alexandra township on Good Friday, they went immediately back to playing westernised jazz.

Nor did any of the others give us township sounds. The Young Lovers and Soweto were into a funky soul bag, the Rag Dolls into "white" reggae and rock, Phil and Neo into Las Vegas cabaret style singing. The organisers of this particular festival, Solly Nkutha and Hassan Cassimjee, said later that they preferred to stage "international" appeal acts at an urban festival.

With the new black middle class have come two approaches to local music. On the one hand the attitude is: "Look, we're black and proud. We identify with the black American struggle. We identify with American styles of music like motown, funk and disco, because they were started by blacks. We're not going to listen to any music that doesn't have the international sound because it's backward, right? It's tribal... retrogressive."

The other strain of black consciousness might declare that "ethnic" is where it's at, because it's the original, the untainted pure black music of South Africa. Therefore it's the music that must be supported, and if its origin is tribal then that's just fine, because that is our heritage.

So, on the one hand, you'll have the supporters of The Young Lovers and Papa and Blondie, and on the other, the fans of Malombo, Malopoets, Tou, Roots

and Lesotho-Afro. The trend does seem to be towards the bands that are making use of traditional rhythms. Kaizer Ngwenya, writing for *Post* newspaper before it was banned, commented: "Black American music is the hottest thing today and African music is the music of tomorrow."

Crossover, presently the favourite word of the record industry, includes both the "today" and the "tomorrow" sound Ngwenya speaks of, as well as something in the middle – expressed by groups as divergent as Harari and Juluka. Sadly, though, the mbaqanga sound remains the poor relation as far as the middle-class audience is concerned.

At a typical international or crossover festival these days there's usually a mixture of groups, firstly, the funky songsters speaking in phony American accents and going through the "touch your knee / turn around / touch you hip / tap the ground, all-together-now" routines of outfits like the Young Lovers; secondly, there are those groups which claim to be firm adherents to African culture, and thirdly, those groups which have assimilated a little of both indigenous and western music.

The manager of Joy, Linda Bernhardt, admits that their shows in a dorp or country town are different from what they'd do at a Johannesburg festival. "There are two markets – the ethnic, for the rural people, and the sophisticated for the townpeople. What goes down at

a rural show would be very hard for urban people to get into."

Linda, however, is hoping to find something in-between for Joy, a market for which they'll be performing neither tribal nor Americanised songs.

"You know how reggae has been made sophisticated, how it's been removed from a crude state... and what Chick Corea did with Latin American music, even though it's jazz orientated and therefore appeals to a limited audience, is the same thing that I see Joy must do. They're a product of an urban society... and at the same time these rhythms are very important."

Probably the best known crossover act in the country is Harari, who call their music Afro-rock. It's a curious but compelling mix of electric rock guitars, keyboards and African drums – as astonishing to listen to as Harari are to look at. They come on in red, gold and white robes, crowns and cloaks moochies and African beads.

Manager Di Brukin has started describing Harari's

overall impact as the "Harari music concept", and explaining this, the band leader Sipho Mabuse says Harari differ from other groups in that they feed directly from "the mood of the people": "The musicians in the band are not individualists. When we go onstage we already know in our minds that lots of those people out there already believe in us as their sole representatives. So onstage we think about the people constantly, we have to make them happy and give them everything. This music is owned by the public."

Harari's Afro-rock sound has evolved since 1968 when Selby Ntuli (now dead), Sipho Mabuse and Alec Khaoli met at Orlando High School and played in a fund-raising concert. Sipho: "In those days we played Beatles' music all the time. But you know how it is, as you become an adult and start to think in different directions? Well, eventually we realised that Beatles' music is not what we think, not what we see – and that it was high time we started playing **us**. In other

words, putting into the music things that affect us, how we live, our surroundings. You find people saying that our music is changing constantly, yet they can't understand why our following remains. It's because we can only compose according to the environment and the inspiration we get from the people. If tomorrow the music in the townships changed to heavy rock and blacks were into it, that would be our environment and we'd have to keep on."

This idea of reflecting their environment in music has caused Harari to be dubbed "protagonists of black consciousness" by at least one music critic, although Sipho says the label could be deceptive.

"If you take a popular group like Soul Brothers and look at their audience, you'll see that it is only the working class. Harari appeal to both the working class and the middle class, so possibly because of that we've been called a 'black consciousness band'. It's a difficult thing to know, because we play according to the mood of the public and I wouldn't say



Paul Weinberg

Johnny Mekoa of the Jazz Ministers

black consciousness is a mass thing; but maybe because we are consistent and other bands come and go, because the different ideas of the people are reflected in our music, we have been called that."

Harari – known as the Beaters until Selby died – have been through virtually every problem a South African band could. Siphon: *"It was really tough when we left school to take up music professionally. We had several managers, and most of them didn't know what was happening in showbiz or how to look after a band. They were only interested in money – so after a while we started trying to manage ourselves, which was quite a task as we didn't know how to handle our finances. We'd buy instruments and they'd get repossessed. In addition to that we had problems because as a high school band – middle class band – we were not playing mbaqanga, and at that time people were only into mbaqanga."*

Then along came a fairy godparent in the form of South African boxing champ, Levy Madi. He heard Harari on his way to fight in a professional tournament in Cape Town, and was so impressed that he bought them as much equipment as he could out of his winnings from the Cape Town fight.

But then were to come the hassles of dealing with the record industry and the SABC. *"In the early days,"* says Siphon, *"we deal with Teal and were never paid royalties for our first recordings. Record companies in South Africa are not prepared to spend money. They are spoilt, and they believe that a record will sell itself. I remember, we walked into the director's office and said that we wanted our royalties and that we wanted to be released from the contract. He looked at us, and took out our contract, wrote 'cancelled' on it and then tore it up. He said we could go back there anytime for our money, and we went back many times. That was 13 years*

ago, and we still haven't received a cent."

The SABC, apart from handing out a few awards to Harari (an example is the Radio Bantu 1976 award for Top Instrumental Group in the country), put pressure on the group by offering to give airplay to certain songs if Harari would play at a promotional concert. Harari considered the offer, decided that the SABC was such a huge organisation that it didn't need to have promotional concerts, and told the SABC: *"No. If our music isn't good enough to play anyway, then don't play it"*.

The SABC continued to give Harari airplay, but it was plain that only material that was not considered to be contentious was accepted. Songs with anything but the most subtle political message were not even recorded. Siphon says that once the security branch warned Harari that they were under surveillance, and had better remove all political content from their songs. This followed a period of friendship with a group called Dashike, whose leader fled South Africa after being detained in 1976.

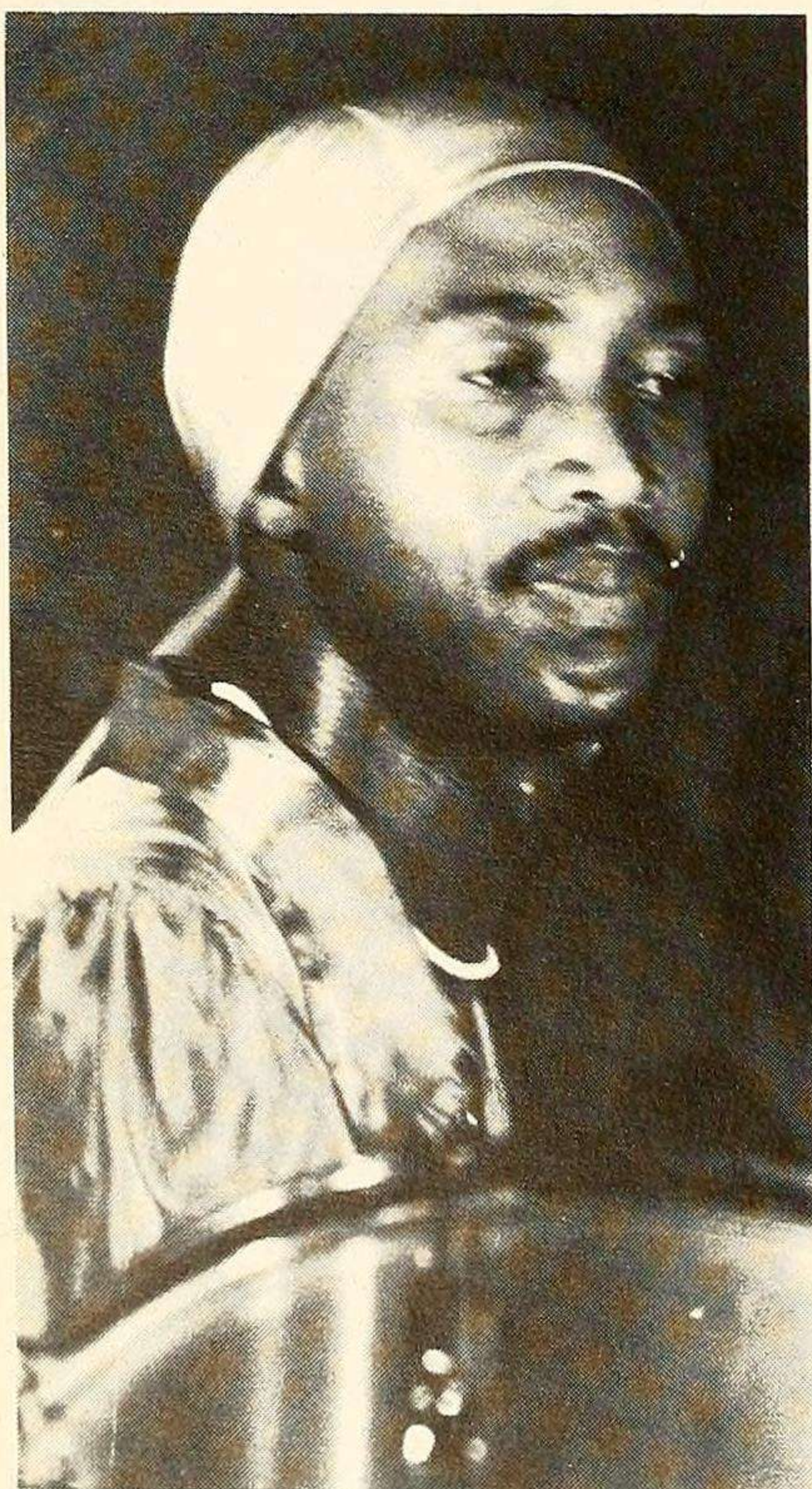
At present the line-up of Harari is Siphon, on drums and flute, Alec Khaoli on bass guitar; Masike Mohape on lead guitar; Charles Ndlovu, guitar; Thelma Segonah on keyboards and Branny Ledwaba on percussion. Recently, former lead vocalist, Lionel Petersen, has rejoined the group.

Harari have dreams of travelling overseas, seeing what other big bands around the world have seen and playing to different audiences. And not with the object of making money, says Siphon: *"Maybe we are different from other musicians in this, but we feel that as long as we have a roof over our heads, a meal once a day, our equipment paid for and transport, then we'd rather use all that money for those who don't have the same things."*

Another Afro-rock band, not quite in the same league as Harari but still very popular, is



Branny Ledwaba of Harari



Siphon Mabuse of Harari

Era. The members, mostly from Queenstown and Grahamstown, are Buggs Tafu (guitar), Sam Mxusani (bass), Desmond Malotana (keyboards), Themba Mngomezulu (drums), Zola Sisuba and Stompie Mavi on vocals.

The brass section comprises Don Heba on trumpet, Xuba Xaba on alto sax and Gambu Pasiya on tenor sax. Era plays a mixture of trad jazz and "up-market" mbaqanga, songs in Xhosa like "Manyano", "KwaXhosa" and "Phesha Komlambo" and English numbers like "Mother Africa" and "Dreams of a Gifted Man".

Like Harari, the members of Era struggled incredibly hard to get going.

During their formative years, from 1976, all nine of them lived in a tiny room in Queenstown. They finally managed to get a gig at the New York City club in Johannesburg in 1977, but had hardly arrived in the city when the police decided to crack down on mixed (non-racial) nightclubs and closed it down, along with another non-racial club, San Francisco (notice the names of the clubs – others with similar status are Club Chicago and Las Vegas).

The closure of these clubs gave rise to what was to become one of the most popular pieces of contemporary theatre in South Africa, "Cincinatti", which was directed by Barney Simon and work-shopped with the cast. It explored the issue of non-racial clubs; the people from all walks of life who frequented them – people who, contrary to government fears, did not feel the least bit inclined to rob, rape or stab those of other colours on the dance floor, but only wanted to dance with them.

Anyhow, the title track off Era's first album, "Manyano", was rejected by the SABC. The word "Manyano" means unity.

Sunday Post's showbiz writer Elliot Makhaya had this to say about the banning of the song:

"There is nothing to fear in the message, really. The song as I

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF AFRICA

Sons and daughters of Africa

Your soil is black

Your soul is pure

Your veins like the river Nile

overflowing with rich blood

Your heart is strong

You've struggled long

Your feet full of mud

The leaves of your trees are green

Your fruit is ripe

Your sun is bright

Your forehead shines of sweat

Wipe the tears off your face

This land is yours

Beat your drums

Rejoice, enjoy yourselves

You don't have to cry

It will change one day

Africa . . .

SELBY NTULI, SIPHO MABUSE AND ALEC KHAOLI

understand it, encourages self-motivation. All the same, despite the SABC, the song has picked up among young and old in black townships.

"You start recording a song about the freedom of a bird in flight and chances are that it will never smell the SABC turntables. The word freedom gives some Auckland Park 'experts' goosepimples. This is just one example of the disembowelling of a universal art form."

Also falling into the category of crossover, are those groups that draw from the "roots" of their African heritage: the best known are Malombo, although the Malopoets and Tou are becoming more and more popular.

Malombo centres around Philip Tabane, a self-taught and extraordinary guitarist from Mamelodi, a township outside Pretoria. The word "Malombo" means "spirit" in Venda, and the music draws from traditional Ndebele, Pedi and Shangaan forms. Tabane formed Malombo with Julian Bahula (now working in London) and Abe

Cindi (who later founded the Malopoets).

"It all started in Mamelodi with my family," says Tabane. "I had two brothers who were guitarists, playing Ndebele music – where there is a lot of plucking and you sing almost the same notes that your fingers play on the guitar. My mother used to sing, and my whole family loved music so I formed a vocal group with Julian and Abe called the Lula Landers. There were four of us to start with – the other person was Neville Mcobe, but he didn't come to practices so eventually I bought Abe a flute and Julian some drums, and that's how Malombo started.

"At that time I was concentrating hard on original sounds. Unfortunately these days people want me to commercialise my music, and I don't really feel good about it. Anyway, as Malombo we were popular. We played at the Orlando stadium 1964 jazz festival, and won first prize as best band. I won as best guitarist. Then in '65 Abe and Julian decided to go their own ways. They used to call

themselves the Malombo Jazzmakers, but these guys used to fight and I knew it wouldn't last long.

"I got in Gabriel Thobejane, also from Mamelodi, and taught him drums."

The Tabane/ Thobejane link-up lasted from 1965 to 1977, and it was during this period that Malombo had most of their breakthroughs. They played at the Montrose festival, in Europe, London and at the Carnegie Hall where they were on the same bill as Charlie Mingus, Herbie Mann and the Pointer Sisters. They also performed in Canada, San Francisco and Los Angeles. But if they went down well overseas, people in South Africa thought they were crazy. Says Philip: "They only accepted the music when we came back between the overseas concerts. We also liked the overseas audiences better. Here, people always make a noise during concerts and this is distracting onstage. American audiences always wait till the end of a tune and then say 'wow'."

Philip also prefers the

Paul Weinberg



Patrick Sefolosa of Malopoets

American habit of hiring individual musicians in different centres, since he finds it difficult to hold a band together as a unit. *"I think when people get into the music business and find they are earning money they get over-excited. Like a guy will come to me and say: 'Philip, I want to join your group. I'm a serious somebody.' Yet when money starts coming in, he just disappears."*

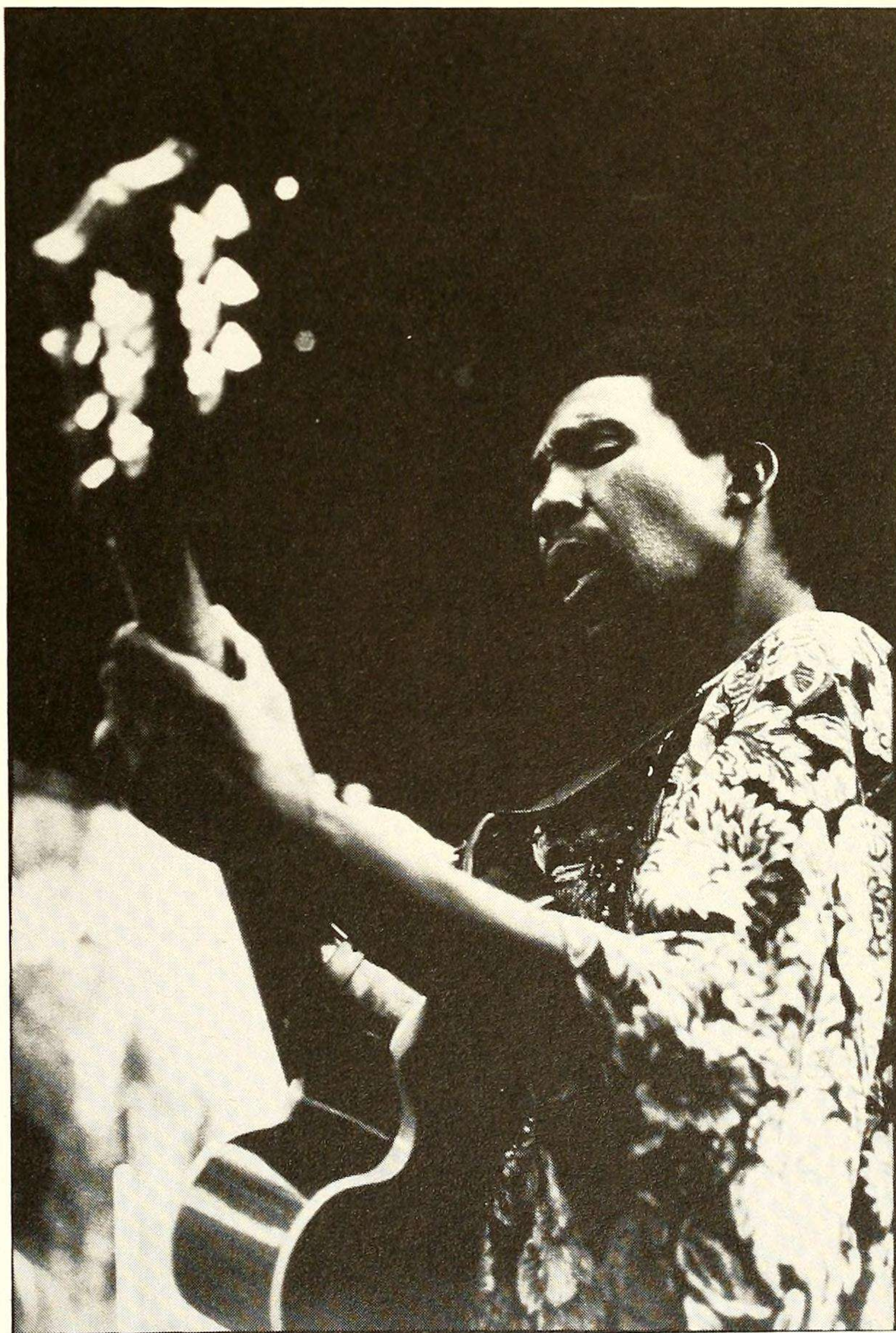
His bitterness is probably justified: in '77 Gabriel Thobejane disappeared mysteriously in London, at the height of Malombo's success. Thobejane had returned to South Africa and when he returned, Tabane was forced to regroup Malombo.

Despite his claim that his record company has not paid him royalties yet for sales of his albums *"Sangoma"* (sangoma is a traditional healer) and *"Pele Pele"* (a hot chili), Tabane does not feel he is being short-changed in any way. *"We earn R800 a gig. That's a lot of money. There are local musicians who make money, but they misuse it like on drinking - and then they blame the promoters."*

He accepts that the promoters might be making more in many cases than the musicians themselves, but still feels that musicians are generally irresponsible. For the same reason, he's not madly keen on helping a musician's union get off the ground: *"I don't mind the idea of a union, but it would cost too much money. I want to make enough money so that I can retire as soon as possible."*

Although Philip plans to keep Malombo going as a band, it is plain that he understands that he is the major drawcard and that if it was possible to be as popular as a solo artist as he is in a band, he'd go solo. Nonetheless, he writes the lyrics and Malombo is his idea.

"I write too much about the sangoma people, and I feel I have the same spirit as the sangoma people. I can always see things from afar, and this music might



Paul Weinberg

Philip Tabane

heal some people like the sangoma. I also write too much about the crying children, because this is what I see, and the song 'Father and Mother' is exactly what went on at home. But when I play it, even in America, people say to me that what I'm trying to say or play reminds them of something too. Even white people understand this music."

It interests Philip that what black South Africans thought was "crazy" when he first did it, they now support. He intends exploring traditional music even further.

"There's a time for this kind of music and it's come now. When we play people say 'power'."

And when Juluka perform people chant "Ju-lu-ka".

Juluka – the word means "sweat" in Zulu – is fronted by Johnny Clegg and Siphon Mchunu, and possibly of all the crossover bands in South Africa, it is the one that has most successfully transcended cultural barriers and black/white barriers to create a unique South African sound.

Siphon is a migrant worker from KwaZulu, working as a gardener for a white Houghton family, while Johnny is a social anthropology lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand. The two of them have been playing together for more than a decade.

Their first album together is called "Universal Men" – the title refers to the migrant workers of South Africa.

"Most of the songs have to do with the Zulu culture," says Johnny, who speaks Zulu fluently and who, because of his association with different Zulu dance troupes from way back is hailed by some black people as a "white Zulu".

"I suppose the album is political in a sense that we are singing about issues that have been touched on in other areas but not in music. Siphon's been a migrant worker for 10 years and what we sing is drawn from his experience."

The single from the album, "Africa kukhala ambangcwele" ("Africa the innocent weep") reached number one on Capital Radio but it was banned on Radio 5 and received next to no airplay on the black services of SABC. The songs calls for solidarity: *"let us sing and we'll walk through the dark, hand in hand."*

SABC declared the song "too political".

Johnny has been interested in the Zulu culture for a long time. He was born in England and then lived in Zimbabwe until he was seven, when his parents moved to Johannesburg. As a teenager he learnt the Zulu guitar tunings from a Zulu guitarist.

"I learnt some very bawdy mineworkers' songs. I didn't understand the words. I used to go into the shebeens and sing with this intense conviction and everybody would roll about laughing."

When he was at school in form three he ran away from home with two friends. They rode on bicycles all the way to Zululand in Natal.

"I guess it was very romantic – we were going to be Tarzans in the bush or something like that."

"A Zulu family took us in, even though they didn't know us from a bar of soap. They didn't ask us any questions and gave us the run of the place. We stayed with them for about three weeks, and then the police found us."

Siphon was born in Makabeleni in Natal. His father, a herbalist from Msinga, had been "resettled" by the Government along with many other people from parts of the Greytown area in Natal and eventually established an alternative home on the banks of the Tugela in Makabeleni.

Siphon was the last-born. His father had eight wives and Siphon has eight "mothers" and an enormous family. He spent most of his youth as a goatherd, and never attended school. Out in the fields he taught himself to play on a tin guitar made from a petrol container, and he learnt all the tricks of the veld.

When his father died, Siphon was forced to become a migrant worker to support his family. He went to Durban, unable to read or write, and got work as a gardener. Later he went to Johannesburg and started gardening for the Houghton family he still works for.

In Johannesburg he continued playing guitar and became a well-known street musician. He also danced with a team of dancers from Natal, and it was around this time that he met Johnny.

Johnny too, was a street musician. *"I suppose people accepted me because I was only 16 years old. And I heard Siphon one day and thought he was the most formidable street musician."*

Siphon says he was slightly unnerved by Johnny's friendliness at first when they met and he agreed to teach Johnny some dancing and play music with him.

"The first day we spoke I wasn't worried, but when he came to visit me in my room here on the second day, I felt a bit of fear."

"I said 'what's going on here?' When I saw him dancing I really started thinking hard about this boy. He was dancing like somebody jumping into a swimming pool."

"When I went to his flat to meet his mother I didn't know what was going on. I couldn't understand a word of English."

"Then I went home to Natal and told my mother about this white boy who wanted to be my friend. She said maybe I'd like him and maybe I wouldn't."

"So I taught him a little of my music and when he played it I was happy. He became my friend. If he was worried, then I was too. And my people at Wemmer Hostel liked him too." Apart from their working class appeal, Johnny and Siphon started becoming popular with the middle classes as well. They started playing small clubs, appeared at Des and Dawn's soirees, and then got bookings at

big festivals around the country. Today they're a major drawcard on whatever bill their name appears on.

Throughout their friendship and musical partnership the police have watched them. Once when Johnny went on holiday with Siphon to meet his family in Natal the security police arrived and told him to leave. *"They asked for my permit, and I didn't even know I was supposed to have one,"* says Johnny.

When they first started meeting to practise, Siphon's employers were highly suspicious. Now they've changed. *"They like our music,"* say Siphon. *"Johnny is free to come here whenever he likes, and they tell their friends about me."*

Neither Siphon nor Johnny have had any formal musical training. They can't read music, and found producer Hilton Rosenthal vitally important when they were trying to translate their music into terms the session musicians who played on the album (mostly *Spirits Rejoice*) could understand.

"Hilton tried to understand the concepts in our heads. That was really necessary because otherwise they would have thought we were a bit fluffy...not being able to put things into musical jargon," says Johnny.

He says both he and Siphon are shy to have formal music lessons.

"I don't want what I know to be contracted into formal logic. For us, music is a feeling and I'd rather battle the whole day to discover a chord than know that after a particular chord the logical progression is this, this or this."

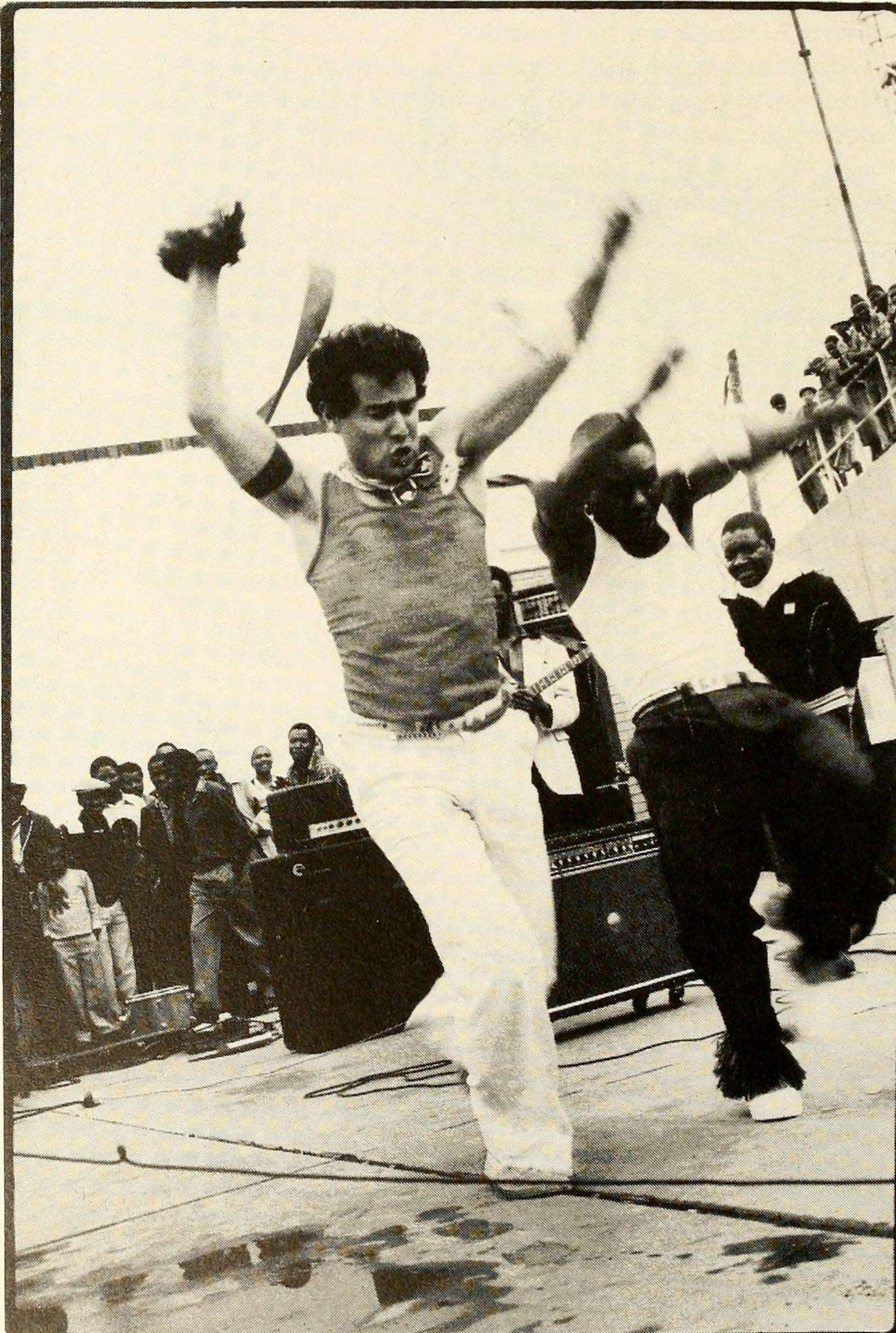
"It would be terrible if music were to become finite for us. This way we have this brute feeling, this brute awareness, or an idea we want to put into a song and we stumble around until we can put it out."

Johnny stresses that all the music, the intricate cross-rhythms which come from the



Siphon Mchunu of Juluka

Sue Hope-Bailie



Johnny Clegg of Juluka

Zulu culture and the words (in Zulu and English) and westernised chords used are not intended to make a statement for tribalism. Simply that the music is the starting point, and that most of the lyrics are drawn from Sipho's experience with the exception of one song on *"Universal Men"* which is called *"Deliwe"* – a love song written by Johnny about a *"child of Africa"*, a woman who is not going to be like all the other swallows (the word used by Zulu people for whites) and fly away overseas when things become a little difficult.

The theme of the album is the constant journeying of the migrant workers:

"I have undone this distance so many times before / that it seems as if this life of mine is trapped between two shores / as the little ones grow older on the station platform / I shall undo this distance once again."

There's a reference in the song to a phantom ship, which represents, says Johnny, a goal that is never attained.

Apart from this journey, there are all the other journeys in life – for the migrant worker, the journey home again. The homecoming is described in a number called *"Mehlo Madala"* (*"Old Eyes"*), with the idea of someone addressing the worker who is returning home: *"I don't know you anymore, from whence have you come my friend?"*

There's the journey idea in a walking song called *"Thula M'ntanami"* (*"Be Quiet my Child"*), and the question of another journey that whites are fond of making in *"Deliwe"* and then finally a song about the ultimate journey in *"The Sky People"*.

In a way the journey idea also reflects the development of Johnny and Sipho as conscientised musicians; musicians who've become aware of their responsibility to provide, if possible, a music that is ideologically sound in terms of the change they are seeking in South Africa.

This development affects them both on a personal level too. In a society that uses discriminatory terms for practically everyone who is not white and male, it is rare to find two people who strive to be inoffensive. Once, describing a speech at Wits University by a right-wing guerrilla from Zimbabwe, Johnny Clegg commented:

"I didn't believe a thing he said. You know that whenever somebody says confidentially 'the truth of the matter ...' they're probably lying. Oh man, it's sick! I'm sorry, that's really bad. . . I should have said: Oh person, it's sick! I hope you're not offended. It's years of conditioning that makes me use a phrase like 'oh man!'"

When I said I wasn't the least bit offended, he added: *"At least I don't have to wean myself off using the word 'chick' because I never used it in the first place . . ."*

The first crossover artist in South Africa was Margaret Singana. A PRO for SABC once mentioned that he thought Singana had *"the voice of the century, after Edith Piaf."*

And yet she was miserably treated by the SABC. Initially, anyway.

In 1978, despite being nominated the best female vocalist in the country by the entire record industry, and despite being the first local artist to be awarded a platinum disc (this doesn't mean she was the first musician to sell 100 000 copies – it suits many in the industry to keep sales figures from their musicians) for sales of *"I Never Loved a Man"*, she did not win the Sarie award.

After the ceremony she didn't flinch. Smiling and serene, she told reporters that she was pleased she hadn't won. *"Now I'll work harder than before."*

She could hardly work much harder. From the time, 15 years before, when her singing career began she had slaved at it.

Margaret M'cingana was a domestic worker in Johannesburg before becoming *"lady*

Africa", the *"international"* local star.

Her employers, thrilled that their little maid from Queenstown could sing so nicely, asked her to perform for their guests at the party. Unknown to her, they made a tape recording of her performance, and although the recording never received much recognition, Margaret soon did.

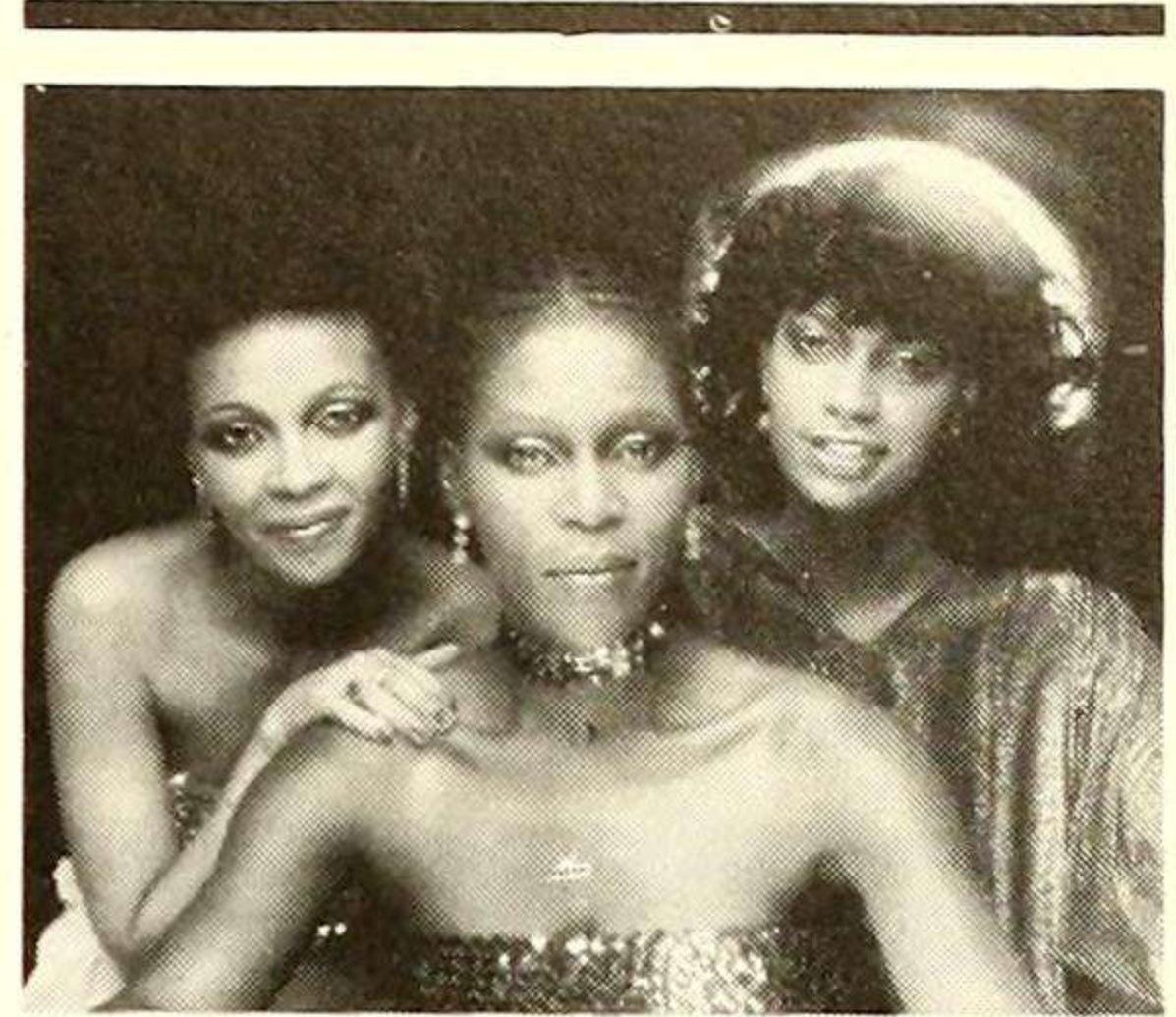
After becoming involved with various theatre groups she landed a chorus part in Alan Paton's *"Sponono"*, a musical that played in New York in 1964.

Then there was *"Ipi Tombi"* which featured Margaret's magnificent voice on both albums from the show, *"The Warrior"* and *"Ipi Tombi"*. And three of the singles (*"The Warrior"*, *"Ipi Tombi"* and *"Mama Thembu's Wedding"*) literally swamped the white *"market"*.

Margaret signed to Satbel, and later to Jo'burg Records, working with Patric van Blerk. Prior to the 1978 Sarie debacle, she'd received plenty of awards:

- Britain's *"Music Week"* South African winner of the Star of the Year Award – for both 1976 and 1977.
- Top **black** female singer SABC award, 1976.
- Silver Medal Award for *"Singana Gold"* a collection of five of her best known singles and nine other numbers by OCCAY, awarded by American judges.
- In 1977 she was the first ever local artist to be nominated for the 'best new female vocalist' award in the Grammy awards in the States. She was nominated by her US record company Casablanca Records.
- In 1978, oddly enough, Radio 5 declared Margaret top female artist, top South African artist and *"I Never Loved a Man"* top record of 1977.

Apart from these, Margaret toured extensively in Southern Africa and had hit after hit here, and chart successes in Britain



Joy

Gavin Furlonger

and Belgium as well.

Her album *"Tribal Fence"*, from which most of these hit songs came, also contained numbers like *"Johannesburg"*, *"Hamba Bekile"* (*"Pass the Calabash"*), the title track *"Tribal Fence"*, *"Have You Ever Seen the Rain"* and the SABC-restricted *"Light up the Light"*.

Her winning the Record of the Year award on Radio 5 caused her to say: *"It's a great honour to be the first South African to get this award."*

Her manager, Mike Fuller, commented that it was a strong indication that the *"South African record industry has come of age."*

"Certainly the success of "I never loved a man" confirms that the top local records are now on a par with their international counterparts. I believe everybody concerned in the local record business can be justifiably proud of Margaret's success. The local standard really has improved dramatically and this award represents a significant breakthrough."

Margaret was also the first local black singer to appear on SABC TV's *"Pop Shop"*.

And yet the Sarie was denied her.

Margaret was the first black artist to get a permit to perform to whites in Bloemfontein, the first black artist to appear in cabaret in a prominent Windhoek hotel in Namibia. Her appeal undoubtedly lay in her incredible talent and personality, but it is curious that the SABC – after their initial reluctance to accept her onto the white playlist – supported her as they did, apart from denying her the Sarie award.

The question is: "Why did the state do it? What were their motives for letting her become a household name in both white **and** black houses when they'd prevented any other black artist from reaching this status?"

Had Margaret recorded *"I Never Loved a Man"* before she did *"Mama Tembu's Wedding"* the chances are that it would never have received airplay on the white services. But because

Margaret happened to be the singer on the records of *"Ipi Tombi"*, which **promoted** tribalism and the *"homelands"*, she was allowed airplay with those records initially. The SABC turned those songs into hits, playing them so much that whites latched on to them and to the whole *"Ipi Tombi"* concept. Those particular records never enjoyed black sales, but by the time she got to singing the numbers that would *"go black"*, Margaret was pretty well established.

And, of course, by the time she did record *"I Never Loved a Man"* the government was already implementing its Total Strategy policy, and encouraging a black middle-class with a stake in the system to act as a buffer group. The sophistication of numbers like *"I Never Loved a Man"* – regardless of the talent they revealed – suit that middle-class nicely, so once again Margaret had SABC's backing.

Producer Patric van Blerk reckons that Margaret, at this point, has sold proportionately as

Paul Weinberg



Joy

many white records as she did black – but there is no proof that the same records sold on both markets. An example of her split appeal is that although her “*I Never Loved a Man*” sold in excess of 100 000 copies, no one knows whether it was in fact that side, or the B-side “*Hamba Bekile*” which was responsible for those sales. At the time it certainly appeared that “*I Never Loved a Man*” was a real crossover record, but a press release from Margaret’s management stated that the flip side “*is proving to be even more popular with the Bantu population (sic) than the A-side.*”

The fact that she was hailed as “*Lady Africa*” by the black press and eulogised constantly by the same, implies that she did have definite black middle-class appeal. It is, for the most part, the middle-classes which spawn the journalists in South Africa.

These days Margaret Singana is spoken about with reverence, and justifiably so. She is a person of astonishing courage. When she broke her leg once in an accident, she went onstage with leg in plaster.

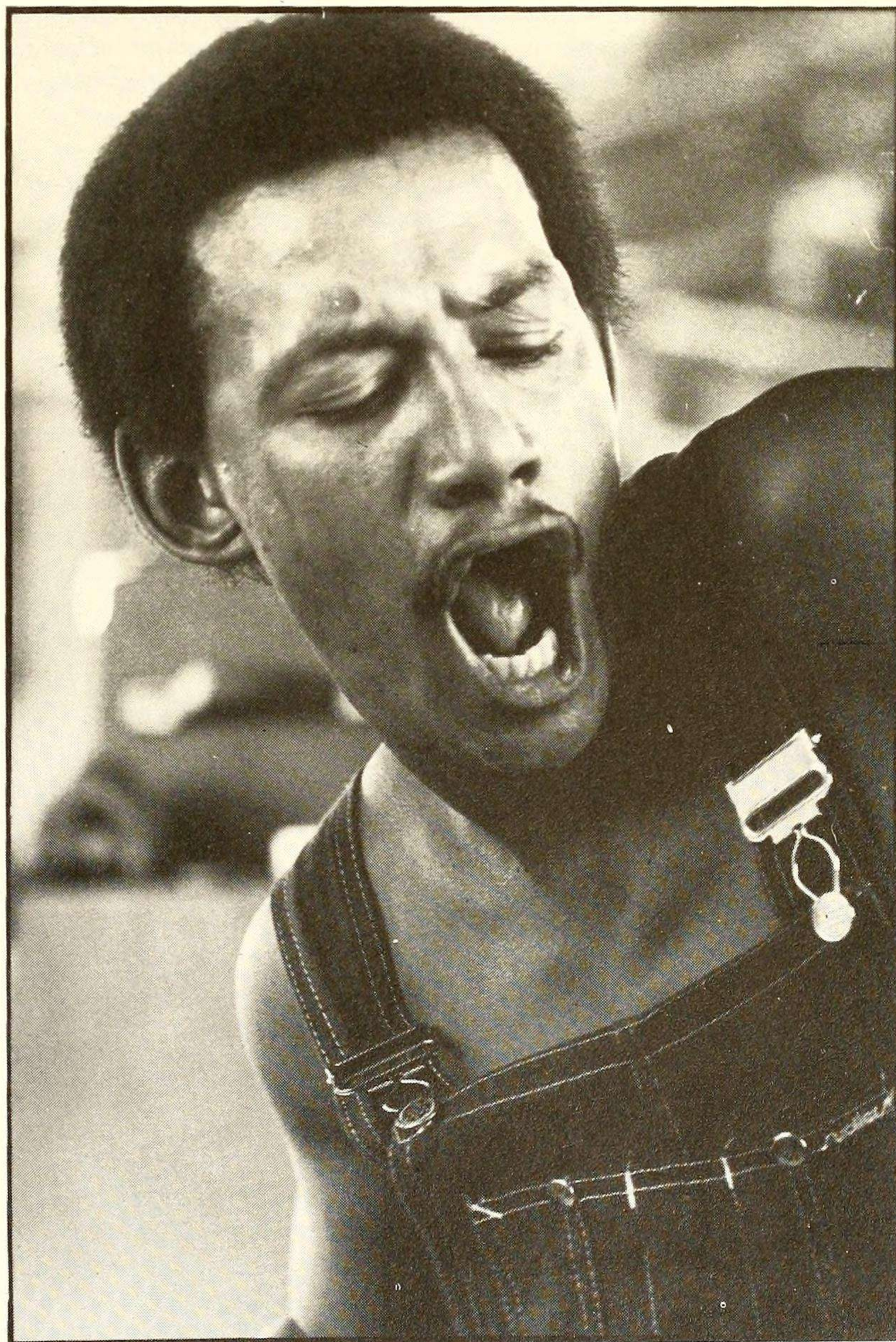
After a stroke, she performed at the Woodstock festival in Cape Town in a wheelchair. She sang for her life, and most of the 8 000-strong audience wept to see her.

She is still in her wheelchair, and she’s still singing.

And for whatever perverted reason the SABC decided to promote Singana, the precedent of giving her “*white rights*” on radio and TV has meant that things have been much easier for her natural successors, Joy.

Joy are the logical follow-up to Singana not only because they are also one of Patric van Blerk’s “*projects*”, but because they have taken the dazzly, flash appeal a step further. Yet despite the cover-girl image projected by Felicia Marion, Thoko Ndlozi and Anneline Malebo, they are very concerned about the issues of the day.

They say they really enjoy performing “*Paradise Road*,” a



Mervyn Africa

Paul Weinberg

haunting number written for them by Patric van Blerk and Fransua Roos. They are not that thrilled with their first hit "*Ain't Gonna Stop (Till I reach the Top)*" – which has been interpreted in some quarters as a sort of black consciousness warcry, even though it probably more accurately reflected Patric's frame of mind when he started producing again after a break of a year – because it was disco.

Surprisingly, for a trio that has become so famous, the Joy seem to lack the over-bearing self-confidence of so many local artists. Asked about their success, the Joy weren't exactly bubbly:

Felicia: Two of us have developed corns on our vocal chords from singing too much without the necessary voice training behind us. We've started training now, and we're learning to read music too. But I don't think we'll end up as a trio. I can't see myself 10 years from now in a trio, unless we happen very big. Perhaps I'll become a teacher eventually. Things would have to pick up considerably financially and otherwise if we are going to survive.

Anneline: I had the same feeling at first, but I think the problem is that there's no one to compete with in South Africa. We are the only trio of this kind and until we get some strong competition, we won't know where we stand.

Thoko: I haven't given it much thought, but I often get the feeling that the whole thing's a bit of a joke. At the moment I love Joy, I love our harmonies. None of us is a leader, we know our ranges and work out our songs accordingly. There is no jealousy, because if one member is doing something beautifully it means she is doing that for the good of Joy.

Prior to their break-up in 1981, Spirits Rejoice were the Joy's back up band, in addition to being a band in their own right (with their own hit song too). Manager Linda Bernhardt saw

the break as inevitable, saying that Spirits had got to the point where "*they had to move apart to make music*". Others consider it a tragic move.

For my part, I hope that the individual musicians in Spirits Rejoice carry through the ideas they had collectively into their new groups. Keyboard player Mervyn Africa has gone to London to join Julian Bahula; bass guitarist Sipho Gumede and tenor saxophonist Khaya Mahlangu have joined up with Gabriel Thobejane (formerly of Malombo) to form a group called Sakhile, while guitarist Paul Petersen has put together a new band called Dr. Rhythm. The remaining members, band leader and tenor saxophonist Duke Mokasi, trumpeter George Tyefumani, trumpeter Thabo Mashishi and drummer Roger Harry might stay together.

As a unit, Spirits Rejoice once said that what they'd like to do was grow musically. They were all taking music lessons, and said they'd like to explore music in other less repressive societies and then come back to South Africa and workshop ideas with other musicians. As Duke put it, "*go out, because it's getting to the stage where we can do that, grasp as much as we can, then come back and share it with our brothers and sisters.*" That aim is surely far removed from the "*I wanna be a star 'cos I know I am a star*" cry of so many popular local groups.

Spirits Rejoice, as a crossover act, were on the other end of the scale from Harari. Spirits all favoured the American-style jazz and fusion, even though they had great respect for groups like Harari, and for the mbaqanga acts which don't even fall loosely into the crossover category. Vusi Khumalo from **Pace** magazine once wrote that Spirits should come down to the people's level. That criticism hurt the band deeply, and it could well have been at the back of a few of their minds when they split.

The following anecdote is not really related to the discussion

on Crossover, but came out when I was interviewing Mervyn Africa and deserves a mention.

Turns out that Mervyn and a band called Oswietie got a job performing in Angola in 1975 and 1976. When they finished their stint in Angola and were on their way back to South Africa, they were prevented from coming back into the country. The war had started, and South Africa was still claiming that it wasn't in Angola.

So Oswietie went to Central Africa. "*It was at the time those planes were shot down,*" says Mervyn. "*We met up with these guys from France and went to Gabon. We had a hard time there.*"

What actually happened was that the Gabonese authorities thought they were spies and ordered their execution. The President of Gabon granted them a reprieve, but forced them to perform to various governmental officials to prove that they were bona fide musicians. Having established that they were in fact musicians, the Gabon government enlisted them as state performers and they played at all the State functions for a while. They were allowed no contact with South Africa.

They eventually wrote to Linda Bernhardt (now their manager) who was working in London at the time. She spoke to Dollar Brand, who was at the time travelling on a Sengalese passport, and he – through various musical contacts eventually secured their release.

One of the songs still played by Spirits is a number called "*Confusions*", composed by Mervyn in Gabon.

"*Musicians there were saying to us: 'You can't be musicians because why do you only play with one hand'. They were out of touch with new trends in music, ek sê. So I composed this tune to show them I could play with two hands. That tune helped us a lot in Gabon, ek sê.*"

The experience put a few people in the band off music for a while. "*We came back to South*

Africa and most of the guys said: "Let's quit". But we also wanted to help Dollar because he helped us, so Robbie represented us all and helped Dollar on "Mannenbergh".

The list of "international" and crossover South African acts could go on forever – Blondie and Papa, Abigail Kubheka, Richard Jon Smith, Neville Nash, Renaissance: and all could tell more or less the same story. All have an incredibly difficult time, an extremely depressing time, trying to grow as musicians and yet all have survived. Yet perhaps no one has had it quite so rough, or had to do quite as much soul searching, as Moghamad Zayn Safidin Adam, a singer from Cape Town.

Now lead vocalist for Plastic Mac, Zayn used to sing for Cape Town's longest surviving group, Pacific Express.

When he was a young boy, Zayn won a talent contest and went up for the first prize of 500 cigarettes. He was given instead 200 sweet cigarettes and a few cents for pocket money.

"Maybe it was because we

were still kids, but more likely it was because they were such capitalist rubbishes."

At a gig not much later, his five-piece group – The Rocketeers – was paid five banana shakes in a restaurant called La Fiesta in Cape Town, after being told by the management they would be well paid.

They walked out in a huff but there was a shortage of places to play and they were back in the job a week later.

This time they were payed five banana milkshakes and a rand apiece.

"What the hell," says Zayn now. "At that age (about 14) you don't really need money, I suppose. Probably just for bioscope or something."

But in point of fact Zayn did need the money. Not long afterwards he got a full-time job as a delivery- and junior despatch-clerk in a tractor spares firm. *"Three months after starting there I took this look at the manager. He was a complete Nazi, straight out of Hitler's book. I decided I must get out,*

that I'd never work for a boss again. I was 14, and the guy had the nerve to tell me to cut my hair. Then I got really freaked, all the frustration started piling up on me."

Zayn joined a show called Stars of Africa, financed by a group of undertakers, and later joined up with the Golden City Dixies, along with artists like The Flames who Zayn did a stint with from 1965 till 1968.

How did he feel about being part of the Golden Cities Dixies, a "Coon Carnival" type show?

"Look, I was a product of my environment, I was brought up in a shady situation and my father is a beautiful man, but thinks of himself – accepts himself – as a "coloured". He is so patriotic he would back any South African, and it hurts me. But I've learnt to accept it.

"I was part of the Coon Carnival when I was about 12. It was terrible. The troupe I belonged to was the Young Stars American Jazz Singers. There were 1500 of us. We put on a concert at the Greenpoint stadium to about 30 000 people,



Sue Hope-Baillie

Spirits Rejoice

with everything – singers, dancers, even midget clowns. The talent was all there.

“At that time... look, when you are a 12 year old your mind isn't working too well. If you look at a bunch of arseholes standing around and you decide one of those arseholes is the best, you're gonna go for that. At that age there was no one to guide us, and say “don't do it.”

“When I was 15 my mind changed and I became more politically aware, but there's something you must realise. A white 14 year old and a black 14 year old are two totally different things.

“As a black kid if you said: ‘I want to be a doctor or a lawyer’ people said: ‘You must be crazy’. But if you said you wanted to be a teacher that was fine.

“I thought: ‘Why a teacher?’ They're just bricks in the wall. They say what they're told to say.”

The Golden City Dixies was a financial necessity at that stage, and Zayn says that later he sold his principles when he joined them again.

In July 1968 he went to England and joined up for a while with the Flames and then when they went on to the States in 69 with the Beach Boys. He signed a contract with EMI, and started working with the Norman Newell organisation.

He was about to start recording for Norman when he came back to South Africa on a visit – and had his passport taken away from him by the security

police.

It turned out that while in London Zayn attended a anti-apartheid rally at Hyde Park and the SB took his photograph, even though he was just watching the demonstration.

“So that became a black mark against my name. They took away my passport, and I couldn't get back to London. Norman wanted to sue me – he was talking about damages of £25 000, but there was nothing I could do. I wrote to him explaining the situation and I hope he got the letter.

“That was late '70. So I was back here with no money, and to try to survive I did gigs all over the place and took part in talent contests. At that stage I was probably into some sort of ego trip. But other musicians around Cape Town saw me as a deserter. They said: ‘He thinks he's a big nob because he's been to London’.

“There was a big talent competition being organised by Plascon 2000. The band was up the pole, absolutely terrible. You'd ask them to play C and they'd play F. Nevertheless it was music and as long as I get the key and the cue I'm alright.

“Anyway, I won. But more important than the bread was that the artists left me alone after that. They never criticised me or called me a deserter again.

“But in 1973 I put my foot in it. Fred Langfor asked me to join the Golden City Dixies and by then I understood all about the Coon Carnival nonsense and said

‘No way am I going to do it’. He said ‘I'll get you a passport’. So I sold my principles for a passport.”

After getting the magical passport, Zayn joined Pacific Express as their frontperson for eight years, but finally left them because he felt that as musicians you can't just play music, that you have to be a whole live act. The other members of PE, however, apparently believed their fans would think they'd become “commercial fools” if they started performing.

They parted ways on friendly terms, and Jonathan Butler took over as lead vocalist – he's since embarked on a solo career as well. Pacific Express have had one or two attempts at breaking into the overseas (European) market with little success, and Zayn has started to produce bands in addition to his work with Plastic Mac.

The decision to produce is two-fold. Firstly, because after singing with an untrained voice for so long he started getting very ill and thought he should moderate it before he sang himself to destruction. Secondly, because he is genuinely interested in the little band and eager young musicians who are popping up all around the country and who won't be able to do it their way as long as the star-struck record industry has its way.

Zayn: *“Everyone's looking for stars, no one's interested in the monkeys. I want to be the one who looks after the monkeys.”* ■

Chapter 4

TOWARD THE FINAL MIX

THERE is one area of light music that has not been mentioned so far: the "imported" musical, which is linked up with the struggle for non-racial theatre. Des and Dawn Lindberg are the central characters in this, and all major developments have been closely recorded in the commercial press.

In October 1973 Des and Dawn obtained rights from "Godspell's" author, John Michael Telelak, to produce the musical in South Africa. Telelak gave permission on condition that at least two members of the cast were black. Previously 14 other impresarios had tried to get the South African rights to "Godspell", so it was a major coup for the Lindbergs.

The cast was Trish McKenna, Hennie Bekker, Ali Lerefolo, Harriet Matiwane, Cocky Thlothalemaje, Jenny Canton, Ros Monat, Des, Karyn Solomon and Bruce Millar. Dawn stated that the three African members were chosen on merit. Arrangements were made to have the musical staged in Lesotho, because under South Africa's race laws it was illegal for blacks and whites to perform on stage together.

The liberal press went crazy. A double ticket to the premiere, with a champagne dinner included, was R30, and all the showbiz writers were invited.

The Afrikaans church leaders objected to Christ's portrayal as a clown in the musical (Des said he wanted to show Christ as a happy person) and the **Star**

(1/9/73) reported that the head of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk's Public Moral's Commission, P.W. Jordaan, said he'd do everything in his power to stop the show if it was blasphemous or if it undermined Jesus.

But the critics loved it and hailed the musical as a breakthrough:

"If the law of South Africa prevents this show being seen within the confines of the Republic, then the law – in the words of the immortal Sam Weller – is an ass." (Vivien Allen, **Pretoria News** 2/10/73). *"This is the first time a South African cast have hugged and kissed each other in front of a multi-racial audience."* (Brian Gibson, **Sunday Tribune** 7/10/73). *The production heralds a new phase: a theatre for all the people of Southern Africa. The thought that this innocent, innocuous and disarming musical play... cannot be seen in South Africa underscores with devastating clarity the fact that we are indeed the polecat of the world."* (**RDM** 7/10/73).

Di Wemyss from the **Cape Argus** pinpointed exactly the double standards operating here: *"Ironically, this updated version of the Godspell is showing where South Africans are at their decadent best – wining, dining and gambling across the border in tiny Maseru."*

Shortly after the opening of the live show across the border, Jimmy Kruger banned the film of "Godspell". The then Interior

Minister said Christ was made to look like a "weak-kneed fool". An appeal was lodged with the Publications Appeal Board, but they upheld Kruger's decision.

An editorial in the **RDM** a few days later (31/10/73) slammed Kruger's ruling. *"His statement confirms once again that censorship is used to protect the sensitivities of one particular segment of the population even if it means outraging the sensitivities of others... whether he intends it or not, his decision does no more than impose the norms of one group on all the others."*

A great row developed between arch-verkrampste clergy which was keenly followed by the commercial press. "Godspell" became a household word in white South Africa.

After running for months in Lesotho and then Zimbabwe, the show was brought to the University of the Witwatersrand where it was to be shown privately to members of Convocation. Without seeing it, the Publications Control Board banned it. Once again, all hell was let loose in the liberal press. *"This insulting ban does not only offend the 10 000 people who booked tickets for the show,"* raved an editorial in the **Star** (11/3/74). *"It is offensive to everyone who believes that adults are at least as capable as Big Brother of making up their own minds."*

Eventually the ban was lifted for the first night so that Justice J H Snyman of the Rand

Supreme court could see it, and once he'd seen it he ruled it could run with a few cuts and changes. These included: not addressing Bruce Millar as Jesus; inserting a prologue stressing that all action in the musical was symbolic; Harriet Matiwane, in giving a finger sign, was to use three fingers instead of two! Commented the **Sunday Times** (17/3/74): *"In spite of the help from the Supreme Court, the bulk of South Africans can still be prevented from seeing 'Godspell'. Another weapon in the Government's armoury of repressive measures, the Group Areas Act, can be used to stop public performances because the cast is racially mixed."*

Then Des and Dawn obtained the rights to yet another "imported" musical – "Pippen".

Sunday Times' arts editor Len Ashton wrote about their interest in imports: *"The Lindbergs speak with a certain hauteur of the 'beads and feathers' shows: 'Sophisticated black artists don't want to shed their city clothes in favour of skins for ethnic shows. It is not our role to present the 'Ipitombis' and 'Meropas' of this world."*

Just as the Africans who participated in "Godspell" could only rave about it (Cocky Thlothalemaje commented that he liked the fact that it had no "colour consciousness" while Ali Lerefolo said members of the cast "don't think in terms of black and white anymore") so Sammy Brown beamed gratitude at everyone for giving him the title role in "Pippen".

"Some people", he told journalist Jeanette Keill (**RDM** 17/4/75) *"will probably think 'Pippen' will be a cheaply cast show because a black man is doing the narration. But I will give it everything I've got and justify the confidence of those who have selected me and the other black artists. I can't tell you what this means to me. We are doing it in our own backyard and if it is a success it will pave the way for more local black talent to be accepted and*

appreciated."

Dankie baas, baie baie dankie.

Sammy was a prominent member of the Golden City Dixies before joining the "Pippen" cast, so months of playing the Cheerful Coon might be behind his apologetic attitude. Cilla Duff reported in the **Sunday Tribune** some months later (22/6/75) that Sammy Brown was *"Mr Cool... and what the glossy section of the population call 'international' or 'midatlantic'."*

Sammy obviously saw that every problem he had was racial in character. As with all apologists for their colour, he later looked to black consciousness as a solution. Describing to Sydney Duval (**RDM** 21/6/75) his experiences at the record companies when he went off his own bat to record a demo, he commented: *"Well, you should have seen their faces, the shock they got because a black man had the gall to dare to arrive under his own steam with such a request."*

In late June 1975 the Nico Malan theatre barred "Pippen", despite an earlier decision to open the theatre to all. A non-racial audience, it appeared, was in order – but not a non-racial cast. The **RDM** (26/6/75) editorialised: *"This ban is much more in keeping with day-to-day policy than was the initial relaxation. Nationalists like a little multiracial window dressing, but they still shy away from sharing as a policy. For audiences generally the 'Pippen' ban means a deprivation. For the producers it means financial loss. But for black people... the ban constitutes yet another racial humiliation."*

Following the Nico Malan ban, six out of the remaining 10 major theatres in the country also refused to allow the show because of the mixed cast. The Lindbergs were forced to cancel a national tour because there was a lack of suitable (and commercially viable) venues. Once again the **RDM** wrote an editorial on it. *"Does the minister think that the sight of white and*

black on stage will excite a mixed volk to new ideas?"

In Black Stan's column (**Drum** magazine 22/8/75) the following piece appeared. *"One day this Blackstania opened up a newspaper. 'Hau hau hau,' I holler (because of) a news item that the Nico Malan theatre to which mlungus (whites) have always had a copyright, is to open its doors to all races. Unbelievable. Blackstanians and mlungus rubbing shoulders in the auditorium... I decide to read mlungu newspapers regularly to keep up with the winds of change. Some time later I am again paging through the newspaper. 'Hau hau hau' I let out. This report is also about the progressive Nico Malan theatre. Des and Dawn Lindberg are one mlungu couple who insist on calling it as they see it. Their job is to produce plays. Drama is supposed to mirror life. Here in South Africa mlungus and Blackstanians live together so any play about South Africa has to have both groups... well, the Nico Malan is government subsidised and it is against government policy to have mixed casts. Turning over the next page of the same newspaper I come across yet another thought provoking article. It is PM Vorster elaborating on his detente bid. Making friends with Blackstanians all over Africa and vowing that race discrimination has to go. Put the two articles together and then you have what someone once called a riddle wrapped in an enigma. That's my South Africa."*

Recalling the boycott of the theatre by whites before it became "non-racial", the **Cape Times** (26/6/75) remarked: *"So what? South Africa itself has a multi-racial cast... the latest piece of nonsense over the Nico Malan theatre is in itself quite trivial; what makes it significant is its illustration of a petty and pusillanimous frame of mind which multiplied a few thousand times over the length and breadth of this country makes it problematic whether South*

Africa can adapt to the realities of this century at the speed required."

It seemed to be the pettiness of the matter that irked the commercial press more than anything else. This was another example of "petty" apartheid as far as they were concerned. Not one editorial questioned that most of the population of South Africa wouldn't be able to **afford** the Nico Malan anyway, even if the state relaxed the laws affecting mixed theatre.

Des and Dawn were undaunted. Their next venture was "*The Black Mikado*", based on the Gilbert and Sullivan theme from an idea by Patrick Ide and James Verner.

In the South African version Pooh Bah became Van der Pooh Bah, and the setting was the Transkei. Probably because the Transkei was becoming "independent" the following year, the state chose not to clamp down on this one quite so heavily and permission was granted for the South African premiere to be held at the Diepkloof Hall in

Soweto. For the first time both a non-racial cast and a non-racial audience were allowed. Liberals hailed this as a "terrific step" forward. Commented theatre director and playwright Barney Simon: "*This is great news. Things come and don't come. We live like cockroaches with what we can get and this really seems good.*"

The cast included singers Ben "Satchmo" Msinga, Thandi Klaasen and Sue Kiel. The backing band was Spirits Rejoice.

Again, the commercial press were there to herald a meeting of the races. The typical white South African fear of townships (gang rapes, murder, robbery, tsotsis!!!) is amply demonstrated by columnist Kate Lee (**RDM** 19/5/76) whose overt cynicism about the life-styles and attitudes of the white elite fails to disguise a patronising tone to blacks:

"I went to Soweto on Monday. Thirteen years I have been in South Africa and that was the first time I'd experienced a night trip to a township. I'd heard tales

of course, of what happens out there when darkness takes over – the violence, the fear, the smog, the tightly closed doors. But hearing it while sitting smugly in Parkview is a whole world away from the knot that squirms in your stomach as the smog curls in your nostrils and the road lies pitch black in front of you.

"So there I was, official permit in hand, driving to see The Black Mikado... I cannot claim to have felt anything but uneasy. Expecting to see a bogeyman behind every – er – tree? bus? lamp post? Not many places to hide. It was the darkness that got to me. I expected the little brick houses, the barrenness, the absence of people from the street but not that thick blackness..."

Lee raves on about the "marvellous magic" of the show and continues: "*Then when the applause had died away it was time for our convoy to trek past the security guards with their Alsatians, through the silent black streets, back to our smug little suburbs where we threw*



Des and Dawn Lindberg

Permission Dawn Lindberg

our peanuts into the trashcan and vowed we'd never let Seraphina go home late again. I know now why she wants to be home by 6 pm; so would I."

That's white liberal thought for you. We'll never let Seraphina go home late again indeed . . .

Raeford Daniel, a more sensitive critic, pointed out that the lack of a city venue to accommodate the show was a curious and ironic reversal of the usual procedure. Having the premiere in Soweto, he said, created a precedent which "hopefully will be followed, giving a prominent place to black theatregoers in plotting a national itinerary which should serve until that happy day dawns when theatre will be the prerogative of all the people of South Africa, regardless of colour."

Then the Group Areas Act hit Des Lindberg like "a bolt from the blue".

"Why why why," cried Des. "are we being banned from the Iscor Club in Newcastle when 'Ipi Tombi' has been staged there? Are they tightening up on policy, or what?"

"It's simple Des" somebody replied. Or if they didn't, they should have. "It's because 'Ipi Tombi' encourages government policy. Treurnicht's scared that in your show blacks and white might appear together in passionate love scenes."

Des and Dawn were told Newcastle had turned them down on account of the Liquor Act. The press was outraged. Marilyn Holloway, of the **Sunday Tribune** asked if it really required a machine gun to burst a bubble? "The musical does highlight the madness of bureaucracy and one understands the message might be a little close to the bone."

Pretoria News: "Is there no limit to the folly the government is prepared to perpetuate in pursuit of its blind preoccupation with race? Its latest - and greatest - effort at black comedy is the threat by the deputy minister of Bantu Education, Dr

Andries Treurnicht, to act against the . . .multiracial production of the *Black Mikado*. Is the government really unable to grasp that art and culture know no political (or racial, for that matter) bounds?

The World: "On numerous occasions promoters have been lucky to obtain permission for mixed shows. . . on all these occasions the heavens did not fall in. Nor was there racial friction - the usual excuse for not allowing the different races of the country to meet on a cultural basis."

Rapport: "and then came Mr Jimmy Kruger's proposed legislation on Sunday cinema performances and Dr Andries Treurnicht's warning that legislation would be introduced to prohibit mixed casts on the South African stage. In sharp contrast to all this, there was the South West conference where far-reaching proposals were submitted for abolishing race discrimination in various fields. All of which was enough to make a foreigner shake his head and recall Alan Drury's 'A Very Strange Society'."

The Natal Witness: "Just imagine what Gilbert and Sullivan would have made of our so-called sports policy, theatre admission and detente."

Progress: "One hesitant step forward, two determined strides backward. That more or less sums up Nationalist Government's approach to shared entertainment facilities and the issue of mixed casts in plays and musicals."

On June 10 vandals slashed the tyres of the invitation-only mixed audience at the Pretoria performance of "Black Mikado". It was widely believed to be the work of ultra-right wing militants.

In possibly the most prophetic piece she has written, Fleur de Villiers came out with this in the **Sunday Times** on June 13: "Where have all the verligtes gone? Frightened by Andries Treurnicht, every one. . .if ever a production served to encapsulate the Government's dilemma, it is

the touring Lindberg musical *The Black Mikado*.

"Ironically the mixed cast, while it is not proportionately representative, is a microcosm of South African society. . .it is not simply the kind of manifestation that does more to defuse inter-racial tensions than all the official platitudes put together. . .

"If the government is genuinely concerned to create international peace, then surely the most effective beginning would be to sustain and encourage shared pleasures. Laughing together is infinitely better than crying together."

Three days later it was June 16 1976.

The story of the struggle for non-racial theatre outlined above would be of interest to all liberals. Remember how the news of Richard Jon Smith being allowed to perform to a mixed audience was hailed as a breakthrough?

Richard wept when he received a Sarie award - he was the first black to be "honoured" in this way.

Recently club bands like Fantasy have spoken out openly about their battle to find gigs because they have a black frontperson: in terms of South Africa's liquor acts they can only play in unlicensed white clubs. Other groups, like the now defunct Graffiti, solved the problem another way. When they performed in licensed clubs they didn't use black vocalist Al Etto, and their audiences knew them as the all-white band Graffiti. When they performed in unlicensed clubs they became Sweet Chocolate with Al up front.

As pointed out before in the context of non-racial musicals, it's easy for the real issue here to become obscured. Despite the hundreds of reports and editorials on non-racial theatre, not one person in the commercial press wrote about the fact that theatre in this country caters for a small elite; that even if mixed theatre were allowed, the majority of South Africa's

population **could not afford** it – and seen in that light, the question of non-racial theatre becomes something of a non-issue.

Similarly, bands with a mixed line-up are a non-issue. What is important is that those bands reckon they're having it hard because they're not allowed to play in the classier clubs. They don't realise that to perform in any club that is open to only one section of the population is to lend support to the system which creates that situation.

Ah, but the musicians in question say, and then where are we to work? How are we to survive if we don't play these clubs? If there were alternatives we would go for them.

Maybe...but more likely not. There **are** alternatives, but it would take more than a brief discussion to persuade them of that. In a system dedicated to the pursuit of private profit, music making – like any other human activity – can be exploited by capital.

It is logical that in such a system the response from a musician will be a belief in individualism, and a hankering after some assets – which taken to its natural conclusion in this context would be stardom.

In this there would be a conspiracy with the record company, the manufacturers of star kits (badges, posters, dolls and so on) and the media. It is in all their interests to create and promote stars, because it means bigger sales and therefore higher profits.

It seems obvious that no musician who is involved in the struggle of the people can operate as an aspiring star.

What then, would be the objectives of progressives who are involved with music making, and to what extent should they make use of institutions like record companies and the media?

It seems that there are three areas to be considered for those embarking on an alternative course.

A first priority would surely be organisation – involving musicians, composers, producers – to work towards the day when these people themselves have control over the production of music. Secondly, there would have to be a ruthless examination of the form and content of music and song. It would be necessary to look at whether, in the South African context, progressive musicians can allow themselves to compose, perform or produce music which is not entirely reflective of their society; whether culture and politics can be separated; whether music as an *"art form"* should be allowed an elevated status and special privileges.

Thirdly, there would be a detailed investigation of the audience-performer relationship and the question of the institutions and media through which music is disseminated.

Let us look at these three areas more closely; starting with organisation. Obviously, it would be ideal if all musicians in South Africa could become part of a strong non-racial and democratic union. However, since musicians are so scattered and divided it will be a long time before this happens. Let us examine the organisations which presently have as their aim the unionisation of musicians.

A number of organisations have attempted to help musicians in one way or another. The problem with most of them is that they cater for the stars; they encourage musicians to allow themselves to be mystified and separated from the people they should be working with. Money becomes the motivating force.

At the time of writing, organisations working directly with musicians are: the Federated Union of Black Arts (FUBA), the South African Musicians' Association (SAMA), the South African Musicians' Union (SAMU) and the Black Music Foundation (BMF).

FUBA concerns itself with all forms of creative media. It takes

a strong black consciousness line, but provides bursaries and training schemes for black musicians as well as workshops on all aspects of music from the tonic solfa to discussions on indigenous instruments. FUBA does not concentrate on promoting any one type of music, the only specification being that people who approach FUBA are black.

SAMA has a membership of around 1 000, and it states as its aims the provision of insurance for musical instruments, a medical aid scheme and possible contact with the Federation of International Musicians and the International Labour Organisation. SAMA also wants an unemployment fund, and has a regular newsletter. SAMA says it's interested in all professional musicians, black and white. It sounds reasonable enough for all those musicians who are into personal growth and star status, but I have my doubts.

Chairperson of the Transvaal chapter, Anne Sherman, once told me in a telephone conversation: *"These poor musicians, they have no medical aid. They are treated as if they are a group of Bantu."*

That's why I have my doubts about SAMAs motives.

OK. So FUBA takes a black consciousness line, SAMA is white controlled, while Harold Herbert's Musicians' Union (which the papers say has started admitting blacks) is about as worthy of discussion as Arrie Paulus and **his** union.

Which leaves the Black Music Foundation, to my mind the most progressive of the four organisations. The BMF's co-ordinator...Ray Nkwe, explains that its main purpose is to take the music of the people, the music of the townships, the vocal music of the rural areas, the instruments that have always been used and the ones that have only been in use in recent years – to take all this and work on it, develop it, until it speaks of South Africa.

At the time of writing, the

**The kids are on the streets again from the so-called Coloured schools.
They want a decent education, they say, theirs is for fools
The state says it's agitators but we all know the truth,
You don't need instigators when the grievances are real.**

**CHORUS: GUTTER EDUCATION DOESN'T EDUCATE
GUTTER EDUCATION FRUSTRATES. 2x**

**It all started in 54 with the Bantu Education Act
Separate schools for separate groups,
Gutter education for the blacks.**

**Unregistered education, forbidden since those days
So they turned to culture-clubs, learning history in a different way.**

CHORUS: GUTTER EDUCATION etc.

**They blamed the agitators too in 76 and now they're saying it again.
Even though their Silly commission, said it was bungling and injustice.**

**Whitey education is not their aim, because the opposite of a slave is a
master**

The kids are calling for social change ALLE MAG AAN DIE MENSE!

CHORUS: GUTTER EDUCATION etc.

JESSICA SHERMAN

BMF was planning a resources centre – where all musicians could watch videos and listen to tapes of indigenous music – and a recording unit which would constantly tour the country on the look-out for music of the people. There would be a few groups of progressive musicians to work on the music and write it out with the original songwriters (where these people are still traceable – in many cases they are dead) and another group to protect the interests of musicians, give advice on recording contracts and so on.

THE BMF was also planning a musicians' directory, and a regular newsletter, to be posted to members.

But most of all, the BMF has been interested in the form and content debate. Ray Nkwe feels that there is a great need for a music form which is representative of the needs, aspirations and demands of the black majority of South Africa. He explains that the evolution of reggae from the forms of dub, ska and rocksteady (not necessarily in that order) could find a parallel in South Africa where the forms of marabi, mbaqanga and mbube would be instrumental in creating a music for the new South Africa.

The BMF is not suggesting an end to the love song, but rather a move away from the banal love expressed in forms like disco. It is suggesting that no hybrid of form is developing within the present structure that can respond to majority needs, and nor is there a music that transcends ethnic and class barriers.

The foundation feels it's important that musicians are not alienated from their environment, and that they should see themselves – as does Dollar Brand – as having "a job to do": creating music in a style that reflects both the atmosphere of the society and the needs of the people of a particular area. So that if the rate of literacy is low in a particular area, and the problem of malnutrition high,

musicians who wish to address themselves to these problems would communicate them to people in simple language.

On this page reproduced from **The Sun, Water and Bread Report on Appropriate Technology** (published by the Nutrition Unit of the Botswana Health Ministry) are some examples of the types of songs I'm talking about. They reflect a reality of the people who perform and hear them.

These songs emerged from different workshops, and consequently have no real authorship.

Some crazies who read this will believe that I'm proposing that every musician goes out and composes songs on firewood in rural areas. That would be ludicrous. The proposal is simply that song is a form of communication, and musicians should realise their responsibility to the community in which they live when they compose.

Someone who feels the need for this responsibility is Jessica Sherman, whose songs are documentary, recording events in South Africa and focussing on resistance. Many of her songs have been written in a workshop, using newspaper articles to base the lyrics on. This seems to be one way of escaping the traps so many musicians fall into.

At this stage Jessica's audience is largely campus based, which is precisely why she refers to people and institutions known to students. Jessica says she's trying to find a function for music beyond its usual commercial value. She is one of the few who have not been conditioned into thinking in terms of club gigs, record companies and star appeal.

The same should happen to any progressive musician.

Although raising the issues of responsibility, writing "relevant" lyrics and expressing community feelings often sounds like a load of counter-cultural hogwash and can promote the most lengthy and tedious debate,

SONG ON FIREWOOD

**Another day has dawned
Let us unite in Botswana
Another day has dawned
Let us unite in Botswana
Let us reduce the hardships caused by lack of firewood
Let us build mudstoves
Mudstoves use less firewood
Build a mudstove
Also, you can cook by using the sun
It's dawn let us unite in Botswana
It's dawn let us unite in Botswana
Build a mudstove
Mudstoves use less firewood
You can also cook by using the sun.**

SONG ON TB

**Our people listen
Listen to the news about the big cough
Do not be shy to come for treatment
This cough can be cured
Let us go to the treatment centres
This treatment is free
Those of us whose relations have this big cough
You too come for treatment
Let us be injected against the big cough
Our people listen
Listen our people
Even those of us who have this cough
Be patient it takes time to cure this cough
Do not disregard your tablets
This big cough takes time to cure**

SONG ON DRINKING WELLS

**Here in Selokelela
Let us unite and work together
Let's dig drinking wells
Let us cleanse the water
Let us work together to get rid of disease
To dig wells and cleanse water is a necessary civilisation
(repeat)**

**FROM THE SUN, WATER AND BREAD REPORT ON
APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY.**

it really is not an area that can be side-stepped. Music is not merely a form of entertainment and its power as a mass medium should never be forgotten.

Rosselson: *"It is generally agreed that song is the most powerful emotional force of all, capable of stirring people into violent action or dulling them into a state of stupified numbness."*

No two ways about it, music influences ideas. To what extent it **changes** ideas (if at all) is not possible to say, but it does reach more people than any other medium. To listen to music people do not have to be literate, as with newspapers and the printed word. They do not have to be able to afford the reproduced forms of music, because as an expression of life it exists in every community.

South African lyricists who are not intent on maintaining the status quo can therefore no longer use song to express only fantasy and illusion – though there is no reason for those elements to be done away with

completely – and they must start to look realistically at their society. This does not mean personal heartaches and triumphs should not be written about in "relevant" song. That would be an ultra-leftist position. All aspects of life can be represented in progressive song writing: but responsibility means not writing anything that in any way gives credence to the status quo. To write, for example, about the glamour of fast city life while millions of black workers are starving on the outskirts of the city is crazy and obscene.

It would not be necessary to challenge the system in song constantly and simplistically. But, song should implicitly oppose it – propaganda goes one or the other way. So that is the choice of the lyricist: to view "culture" as something special with no political links, or to recognise that song as a cultural form must reflect the atmosphere of its society and let this be apparent in the content.

Then there is the question of form and idiom. Jessica Sherman

has been criticised for using an American folkly idiom for her "protest" music. Many people feel it doesn't "go" with songs about the schools boycott. Roger Lucey has been knocked for leaping about the stage like a mountain goat in the manner of a rock star while singing about deaths in detention. The Malopoets have been warily regarded for using a tribal idiom.

Similarly, we have questioned elsewhere in this book the effects of mindless disco music on the consumer and the symbolism that can be attached to tribal music.

It is necessary to consider the symbolism of a genre and its effects, but is there reason to believe that one form of music is superior or ideologically more pure than another?

Anglo-American pop music might be taking over the world, but that is no reason for this form to be dismissed. The same form, in combination with a careful lyric, could be a very effective way of influencing millions of people.



National Wake

The reggae genre might speak of the ghettos to people who know something of its origins, but to a person listening to it for the first time, to someone who is enjoying the beat and the words, it is likely that the words will influence thought more than the idiom. One has only to look at the socialist anthem, "*The Red Flag*" and the Afrikaans folk song "*O Boereplaas*" to understand this – because both have the same tune.

The symbolism of song becomes an increasingly important area to investigate. Those who believe that anything other than the "*music of the people*" is not pure should try tackling the issue of African folk music in the light of the state's encouragement of tribalism.

Another area that will cause confusion for progressives involved in music making is the question of the production of recorded music, which is surely as important as the product itself and its effect on the consumer. It would appear that musicians will always be compromised by their involvement with record companies.

Once again, Rosselson has a few thoughts on the matter: "*Anyone who suggests that it is possible to make music within the system, retaining control so that it does not become packaged entertainment, will be hard put to it to find any evidence that it has ever happened . . . The relationship of musicians to businessmen has been strictly that of servants to masters. . . As long as rock depends on expensive technology, and as long as that technology and the production processes are controlled by businessmen, all such dreams (of achieving peace through publicity) are doomed.*"

Yet technological advance is crucial to the development and dissemination of a new "*relevant*" music, and at this stage the alternatives of making recordings outside of the record industry are not really viable on a large scale.

This is because of the power of

Put a blanket over Soweto
They put a blanket nowhere to go now
They put a blanket over the news
They put a blanket nothing to choose
International international news (2)
Chorus: I feel the bomb yeah
It grows inside me
I feel the bomb yeah
It blows up inside you
I feel the bomb yeah
Is something wrong here
I feel the bomb
There's nothing wrong
Going to the movies
What do I see
Going to the movies
What are they throwing at
What are they throwing at me

International news
International views
Insanity

They sent the troops yeah
Into Angola
They sent the choppers
Over the border
They put a blanket over the border
They put a blanket into Angola

International international news (2)
Chorus: I feel etc.
Going to the movies
What do I see
Going to the movies
What are they throwing at
What are they throwing at me

International yachting
In the deep blue sea
International jumping
Society

They put a blanket over the blanket
And then a blanket over that blanket
They put a blanket to suffocate it
Put a blanket
Suffocate
International international news (6)
IVAN KADEY, NATIONAL WAKE

radio, even if the record industry could be bypassed.

So where do we go from here? We can discuss whether a music that stands for the unity of the people should go through any commercial processes at all; and to those who believe not, we could argue that some powerful and politically sound music has come through these channels. Unfortunately not too much of this can reach the people it is aimed at, because of state control of radio and because of controls on other institutions.

Theatre, music, art – all these “cultural” forms are still considered very precious, they’re all in cocoons. Popular elements have managed to a small extent to penetrate these forms, but perverted by the system they all still ultimately cater for the interests of the rich. Avant garde theatre, French and counter-culture film festivals, art exhibitions, soirees...they all have a mystique that finally helps to reproduce ruling class ideology rather than challenge it.

It will take time before culture can shrug off these shackles, and respond instead to the needs of the majority. It will take time before people involved in creativity will realise that no change will come from attending a non-racial performance of “Pippen”, or watching Richard Jon Smith getting his Sarie. Or by writing “protest” songs and performing them to elite gatherings.

As Franz Fanon has pointed out (though possibly in a different context), change doesn’t come by writing songs. You have to fashion the revolution with the people, and if you fashion it with the people, the songs will come by themselves.

So the music of change is waiting in us somewhere, waiting for the final mix.■

(Mandela Mandela)

**Mandela prescribed for freedom
Freedom is in your hands
Show us the way to freedom
In this land of Afrika.**

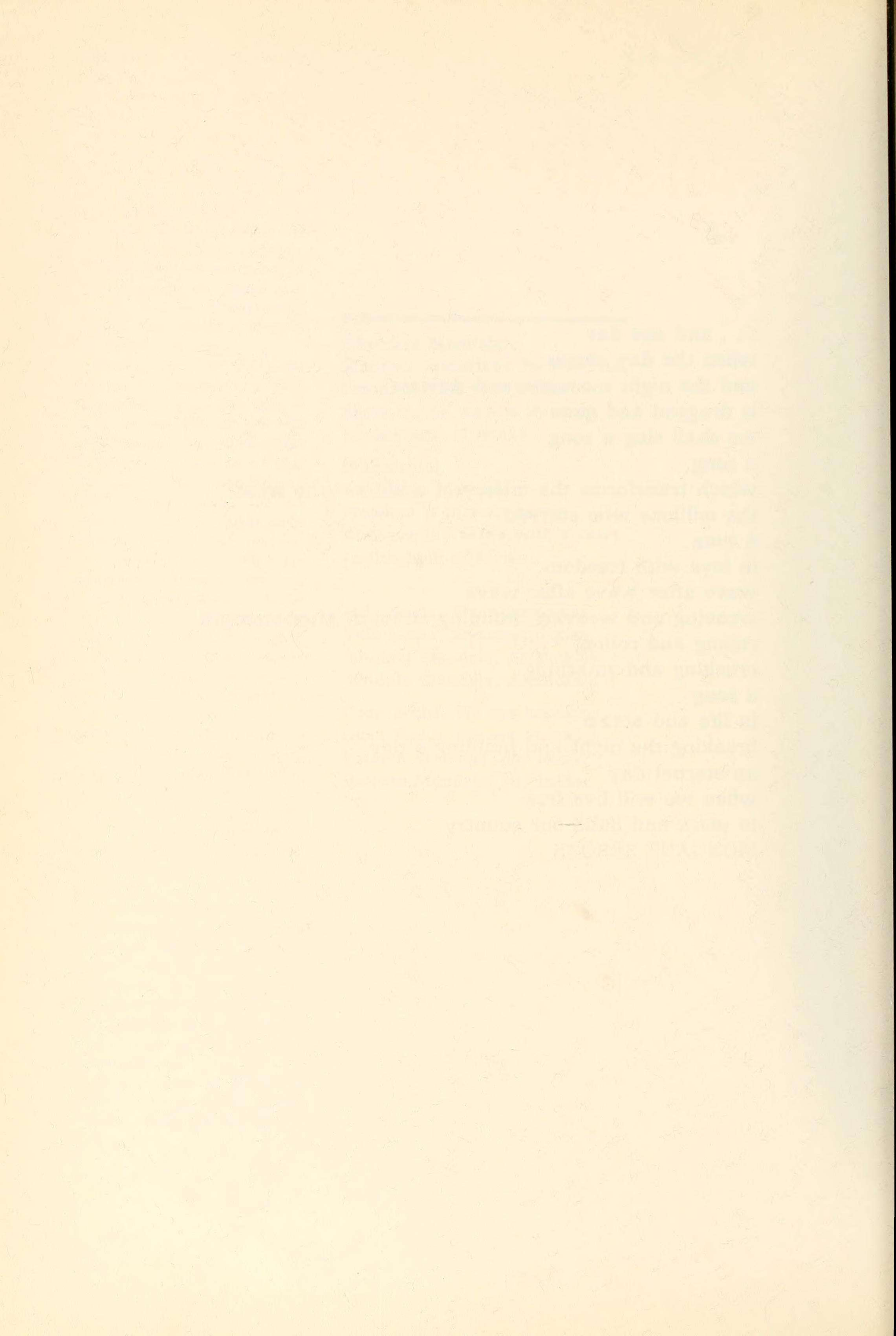
(Rolihlahla)

**Rolihlahla Mandela
Freedom is in your hands
Now we say away with slavery
In this land of Afrika**

**Vula Botha, Siyankqonkqoza
Vula Botha, Siyankqonkqoza
'khululu Mandela, Asikhokele
'khululu Mandela, Asikhokele**

**Open Botha, We are knocking
Open Botha, We are knocking
Release Mandela, our leader
Release Mandela, our leader**

. . . and one day
when the day comes
and the night moonless and starless
is dragged and gone
we shall sing a song
a song
which transforms the misery of millions who went
the millions who starved
a song
in love with freedom
wave after wave after wave
weaving and weaving, building strength after strength
rolling and rolling
crushing and smashing
a song
in life and action
breaking the night and building a day
an eternal day
when we will live free
to work and build our country.
MONGANE SEROTE



Music in the mix

**Always been a backstreet boy
Playing my tunes on a tin-can toy
Never hear my voice too loud
Laying those rails to a choo-cha sound
Give me a cheap guitar from Hong Kong or Japan
I'll give you rhythm from the heart of an African
Us "floppy" boys make good music in the mix
Us "floppy" boys make good money for the rich
Us "floppy" boys gonna turn black someday
and take all of it back.**

**Music I play makes you move
Playing my tunes in thin black grooves
Music I play's here to last
Playing my tunes for the working class
You filled your Colosseum with those Rabbitt boys
I fed a nation with my township noise
Us "floppy" boys make good music in the mix
Us "floppy" boys make good money for the rich
Us "floppy" boys gonna turn black someday
and take all of it back.**

RUDI FRÖHLING OF LEATHERETTE

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INDEX

A

A&M, 82, 121
Abafana Baseqhudeni, 27, 28, 87, 93, 127
Abafana Besishingishane, 127, 128
Abba, 67, 72, 75, 76, 93
"Abelungu Goddam", 32
Abrahamson, David, 32
Abstract Truth, 81, 88, 109
Adam, Moghamad Zayn Safidin, 52, 93, 100, 167-8
Ad-Lib, 140
"Africa Kukhala Ambangcwele", 160
Africa, Mervyn, 165-7
Africa, Patience, 124, 126, 128
African Broadcasting Company, 19
African Inkspots, 25
African Jammer Kids, 111
"African Jazz and Variety", 27, 119, 121
African Medical Trust Fund, 32
African Music and Dance Association (AMDA), 31
African National Congress, 18, 30-2, 119
"Afrikaanse Treffers", 92
"Ag Pleez Deddy", 109, 115, 122
"A Ho Neo Bophelo", 128
"Ain't Gonna Stop", 76, 128, 165
Air Supply, 75
AK 47's, 109, 110, 139-43
Albrect, Gabrielle, 112
Alessandri, Duccio, 112
"Alex Death Blues", 29
Alexandra Township Bright Boys, 27
Allen, Vivien, 169
Allman Brothers, 119
"All You Need is Love", 69
Alpert, Herb, 120
Alter, Cindi, 45, 67
"Amabutho", 125
Amagugu S'Manje, 80-2
Amanzimtoti Zulu Choir, 38
"Amandla/Ngawethu", 32, 131
"Amaqhawe", 125
Amaswazi Emvelo, 124
Andrew Tracey Steel Band, 20
Angel, Bobby, 133
Anglo American, 32
Animals, the, 69
"Another Brick in the Wall", 85, 87
"Anthem Blues", 140
"Anti-society Boogie", 138
"Antjie Somers", 149, 150
Archondakis, Dino, 143
Armatrading, Joan, 121
Armstrong, Louis, 24, 41, 120
Ashton, Len, 170
"Asi Hambi", 25
Asylum Kids, the, 109, 110, 139, 143, 146
"Atlantis", 149
Atwell Lionel, 116
Audiomix, 48, 92
Auvico, 71, 72
Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), 49
"Azikwelwa", 32
Aznavour, Charles, 75

B

Babys, the, 52
Backtrax, 109
Bahula, Julian, 119, 122, 157-8, 166
Baker Gurvitz Army, 120
"Bakgat", 151-2
Ballyhoo, 88, 109, 119
Bantu Glee Singers, 38
Bantu Mens Social Centre, 31
Bapsfontein, 132-3
Barbara and Andy, 112
"Basetsana", 87
Bass Culture, 53
Bassey, Shirley, 72
Bats, the, 63, 109
"Batswadi Baka", 127
Baxtop, 109, 134, 137
Beach Boys, the, 119, 168
Beaters, the, 156
Beatles, the, 69, 74, 76, 87, 92, 128, 155
Bebbington, Brian, 112
Bee Gees, the, 75-6, 83, 121
Beer, Ronnie, 111
Beggs, Grahame, 61-83, 89, 94-5, 140
"Begrafnistyd in Zeerust", 150
Bekker, Hennie, 169
Belafonte, Harry, 120-1
Bengu, Sammy, 38
Berduk, Ray, 38
Bernhardt, Ian, 27-30, 32-35, 102
Bernhardt, Linda, 154-5, 166-7
Berry, Chuck, 80
"Best Little Whorehouse in Texas", 115
"Better the Devil You Know", 75
Biko, Steve, 143, 144
Bill, Eugene and Peter, 112
"Black Mikado", 171-2
Black Music Foundation (BMF), 13, 173-4
Black Saries, 93
Black Stan, 170
"Blinded by the Light", 120
Blignaut, Chris, 38
Blondie, 52
Blondie and Pappa, 154, 167
Bloom, Harry, 28, 32
Blood, Sweat and Tears, 120
"Blowin' in the Wind", 111, 115
"Blue Bayou", 133
Bluebeats, the, 103
Blue Chip Records, 122
Blundell, Keith, 112, 116
Blue Notes, the, 111, 122
"Bobbejaan Klim die Berg", 147, 153
"Boereplaas", 147, 177
Boley, Al, 38
Bolin, Rod, 112
Boney M, 121
Bono, Sonny, 121
Boomtown Rats, 120
Boone, Pat, 69, 80
BophuthaTswana Boys' Choir, 57
"Botsotsi", 131
"Botteltjie Blou", 153

"Boy van die Suburbs", 95, 150
"The Boys are in Town", 144
"Boys will be Boys", 76
Bowie, David, 72
"Brain Damage", 134
Brand, Dollar, 25, 119, 167, 174
Brat, the, 134
Breakaway Music, 67
Brettall, Bones, 67
Brewer, Bill, 35
Breytenbach, Breyten, 150
Brickhill-Burke, 102
Broeders at SABC, 85
"Broken English", 88
"Broken Link", 92
Brooke Theatre, 100-1, 114
Brooks, Ike, 27
Brown, James, 121
Brown, Sammy, 170
"Brug op die Plaas", 147
Brukin, Di, 155
Brunswick Records, 38
Bryden, Gary, 112
Buffalo, 48
Buddies, the, 111
Bulawayo Cold Storage Band, 41
"Burning Soul", 64
Bush, Kate, 48, 120
Butch, 109
"Butchers and Bakers", 71
Buthlezi, Samuel, 127
Butler, Jonathan, 52, 168

C

Cafe Society, 76
Calder, Clive, 71, 119, 122
Caluza, Reuben, 24, 26, 37-8
Calvert, Eddie, 53, 137
Calvert, Gilbert, 53, 137-40
Campbell, Shelagh, 19
Cannibals, the, 124
Canton, Jenny, 169
Capital Radio, 64, 88-90, 92, 93, 95-6, 160
Capricorn Records, 119
Carnegie Foundation, 19
Carpendale, Howard, 119
Cartens, Nico, 40
Cartiers, Jeff, 119
Casablanca records, 164
Cashears, 48
Cassimjee, Hassan, 154
CCP Records, 61-83, 119, 128, 130, 139-40
Cele, Solomon "Zulu Boy", 25
Chabeli, Andy, 154
Channel 702, 88, 90, 92, 95-6
Chapman, Mike, 52, 119
Charisma, 67
Charles, Ray, 49
"Charlie", 69, 74, 76
Checker, Chubby, 69, 99
Chetty, Ronald, 119

Chicago, 122
 Chisa Records, 120
 Chonco, Richard, 124
"Choosy Mama", 19
 Christelis, Marina, 20
 Christie, Roy, 115
 Chrysalis, 72
 Cilliers, Mark, 119
"Cincinatti", 157
 Cindi, Abe, 157
 City Limits, 110
 City Jazz Nine, 40
 Clarke, Roy, 80
 Clash, the, 109, 134
 Clegg, Johnny, 159-63
"Click Song", 109, 120
 Cliff, Jimmy, 110
 Clingman, Paul, 116, 147
 Clout, 45, 49, 52, 56, 61-83, 94-5, 110
 Cockney Rebel, 120
 Coetzer, Mimi, 147
 Cohen, Mandy, 63
 Colosseum, 120
 Columbia, 28, 38
"Come Back Africa", 120
 Companions, the, 112
"Confusions", 167
 Conglomeration, 71-2
 Constanza, Al, 72, 76
"Coon Carnival", 99-105, 167-8
 Cooper, Alice, 81
 Copley, Lauren, 71
 Copperfield, 88, 109
 Corea, Chick, 155
 Cornelia, 112, 149
 Corporal Punishment, 109, 134-7, 139-40, 143
 Count Basie, 24
"Cow Cow Boogies", 27
 Crazy Dazzlers, 25
"Croak and a Grunt in the Night", 76
"Crossroads", 144
"Cry Wolf", 122
 CTV, 45, 59

D

"Daar Kom die Alabama", 103
"Dadewethu", 128
 Dadoo, Yusuf, 30
 Dambe, Sue, 112
"Daniel Khumalo", 152-3
 Daniel, Raeford, 172
"Dannie Boy", 104
 Dantu, 104
 Dargie, Dave, 17
 Dark City Sisters, 37
"Darkie's Gonna Get You", 134
 Dashike, 122, 156
 Davashe, Mackay, 24, 38
 Dave Brubeck Quartet, 121
"Daydream Girl", 72
 Dead Babies, 134-5
 Debbo, Al, 40
 De Pitch Black Follies, 39, 111
 Dekker, Desmond, 119
 De la Porte, Betsy, 38
"Deliwe", 131, 161
 Delmont, Alec, 39, 41, 64
 Dempsey, Terry, 67, 71, 75

Dennis and the Valiants, 121
 De Villiers, Andre, 116
 De Villiers, Fleur, 172
 De Villiers, Paul, 119
 Diamonds, the, 111
 Dickman, Mike, 112, 116
 Dicky Loader and the Blue Jeans, 63, 109
 Dieter and the Raves, 72
 Dikoba, Basotho, 128
"Disco Rock Machine", 122
 Dlamini, Dumisani, 29
 Dlamini, Ezekiel, 32, 102
 Dlamini, Jabu Moses, 131
 Dog, 109, 140
 Dominoes, the, 109
 Donovan, 151
"Don't Lie to Me", 139
"Doo Wah Diddy", 120
 Dorkay House, 30
 Double Exposure, 57
"Down at the Bank", 141
 Draper, Simon, 119
 Dr Crippar and the Lasars, 134
 Dreamland, 119
 Dream Merchants, the, 56, 64, 66, 109
"Dreams of a Gifted Man", 156
 Dr Rhythm, 166
"Drums of Africa", 27
"Dry Wine", 111, 153
 Duff, Cilla, 99, 170
 Duke Ellington, 24, 38
"Dumela", 131
"Dumelang Morena", 27, 127
 Du Plessis, P G, 133
 Du Preez, Caroline, 132-3
 Du Preez, Vicky, 132-3
 Duval, Sydney, 170
 Dylan, Bob, 74, 79, 95, 149, 150

E

Edmund, John, 71, 112
 Egnos, Bertha, 99-101
"Ehotela", 127
"Ek Verland na Jou", 149
"Elegy", 117
 Elite Swingsters, 111
"Ellie Ree", 147
 Ellin, Beryl, 112
"Emakholweni", 127
 EMI, 38-9, 45-59, 81-3, 140, 168
 Era, 156
 Ericans, the, 57
"Esontweni", 127
 Espi-Sanchis, Pedro, 20
 Essex Music, 121
 Esterhuizen, Tinus, 80, 93
 Etto, Al, 93, 172
 Evans, Roy, 71
"Eve of Destruction", 114

F

Fabulous Footsteps, 111
 Faithfull, Marianne, 87
 Falling Mirror, 109, 140
 Fanon, Franz, 178

Fantasy, 109, 172
 Fataar, Ricky, 119
"Father and Mother", 159
 Federation of International Musicians, 173
 Feldman, Peter, 53
 Fenter, Frank, 119
 Ferreira, Willie, 40
 Fig, Anton, 119
 Fihl, Ian, 57
 Finch, Brian, 89, 116
 Fine, David, 64
 Flames, the, 63-4, 109, 119, 167-8
 Flash Harry, 109, 134, 138, 140, 145
 Floaters, the, 69
 Flying Dutchman, 71
 Flynn, Bill, 139
 Forrest, Billy, 37, 56, 87, 89, 99
 Four Jacks and a Jill, 67, 79-80, 92, 109, 147, 149
 Four Seasons, 121
 Francesco the Clown, 52
 Frangs, Irene, 112
 Fraser, Bill, 83
 Free People's Concert, 81-3, 111
 Free Ride, 109, 134, 138
 Freedom Charter, 30
 Freedom's Children, 80-1, 88, 109, 110, 134
 Frehley, Ace, 119
 Fresh Evidence, 109, 134, 138-9
 Fröling, Rudi, 68, 134, 179
 Friedman, E, 48
 Friedman, Pip, 92
 Frith, Simon, 17, 56, 61, 90, 101
 Fugard, Athol, 30
 Fuller, Mike, 52, 164

G

Gail and Ginny, 112
 Gallo, Eric and Peter, 19, 38
 Gallo Records, 19, 21, 26, 30, 37, 39, 41, 45, 64, 66, 71, 81, 82, 125, 127
 Galloway, Noel, 87
 Gampel, Edith and Linda, 112
 Garson, Jenny, 67
 Gate, 109
 Gottesman, Yona, 103
 Gay Gaities, 111
 Gein, Alan, 71
 Gents, the, 140
 George, Gambi, 119
 Gershwin, George, 34
"Get Down and Boogie", 74
"Die Gezoem van die Bye", 115
 Gibbons, Carol, 38
 Gibson, Brian, 169
 Gilbert, Alexander, 96
 Gilbert and Sullivan, 171-2
 Gilder, Barry, 119
"Give", 58
"Giving a Little Away", 117
 Glasser, Spike (Stanley), 34
 Glover, Clive, 112
 Gluckman, Leon, 19, 30, 34
"Godspell", 115, 169-70
"Going Straight", 140
 Goldberg, Alan, 71
 Goldblatt, Phil, 38, 66
 Golden City Dixies, 167-8, 170

Goldschmidt, Peter, 137
"Good Feeling", 72
 Goodwin, Allan, 112
 Goosen, Anton, 69, 94-6, 148-50
 Gordon, Doug, 76
 Graffitti, 172
 Gramophone Company, 38
 Grammy Awards, 93, 95
 GRC, 28, 39, 45, 71, 87, 131
 Green, Mel, 112
"Greendore", 69
"Greensleeves", 45
 Gresham, David, 66, 75-6, 93
 Gray, Dobie, 57
 Groep 2, 147
"Guabi Guabi", 19
 Gudla Brothers, 57
"Gudla Gudla", 128
 Gugushe, R N, 86
 Guma, Gideon, 41
 Gumede, Siphon, 166
"Gutter Education", 174
 Gwangwa, Jonas, 25, 30, 34

H

Haarburger, Ivor, 49, 56
"Half Alive", 81, 145
 Hallowell, Maurice, 64
 Hatting, Francois Johannes, 133
"Hamba Bekile", 164
 Hamman, F C, 149
 Hammand, Woody, 24
 Hammond, Albert, 121
 Hanna, Derek, 49, 55, 64
 Harry, Roger, 166
 Harambee, 117
 Harari, 58, 93, 96, 154-7
"A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall", 114
 Hardy, Francois, 75
 Harlem Swingsters, 24, 37
 Harris, John, 112
 Harris, Kevin, 94
 Harris, Rolf, 76
 Hart, Herman, 100
 Hartman, Hennie, 94
"Have You Ever Seen the Rain?", 87, 164
 Hawk, 71, 82, 109, 134
 Haycock, Ken, 128
 Heba, Don, 156
"Heidi", 133
"Hello My Baby", 125
 Hendrix, Jimi, 69, 74
 Henson, Kenny, 89, 116-7, 147
 Herbert, Albert, 27
 Herbert, Harold, 173
 Herbie and Spence, 147, 149
 Herbst, Ingi, 67
 Herholdt, Sonja, 69, 74, 91-2, 95-6, 147-50
 Herman, Gary, 53
 High Jumpers, the, 126, 128
 Highlanders, the, 125
 Hill, Dan, 53, 69, 72
 Hillage, Steve, 122
 Handley, Jonathan, 135-9
 Hinds Bros, 112
 Hiseman, John, 120
 His Master's Voice, 38

Hlophe, Ephraim, 124
"Hlotse", 124
 Hoare, Ian, 53
 Hofmeyer, Gordon, 64
 Hogs Norton, 109, 134, 125-8, 141
 Hollies, the, 119
 Holloway, Mauritia, 56
 Holloway, Marilyn, 112
 Horwitz, Viv, 112, 134, 137-8
 Hot Soul Singers, 128
"Hot Streets", 122
"House with the White-Washed Gables", 79
 Howa, Hassan, 101
 Howling Wolves, the, 69
 Hyam, Glenda, 67
 Huddleston, Trevor, 30-1, 120
 Hughes, Don, 67
 Human, Pieter, 45, 48, 88-91
 Hunters, the, 128
 Huskisson, Yvonne, 21, 59, 100

I

Ian and Dix, 149
 Ide, Patrick, 171
"I feel so Lonely", 149
"If I had a Hammer", 114
"Ikhaya Likababa", 80, 87
"I Look Back", 80
 Impact, the, 134
"Indlela Yasezulwini", 125
"I Never Loved a Man", 74, 163-4
 International Federation of Phonogenic and Video Producers, 91
 International Labour Organisation, 173
 International Library of African Music, 13, 19
"International News", 177
 International University Exchange Fund, 144
"Into the Night we Slide", 139
 Ionian Choir, the, 21
 Ipi Tombi, 38, 73, 98-105, 121, 164, 170, 172
 Ipp, Howard, 48-9, 58-9
 Ireland, John, 45
 Irene and the Sweet Melodians, 128
 Isaacs, Brian, 120
 Isitwalandwe, 30
"Izinkomo Zikababa", 87

J

Jabula, 122
 Jackson, Millie, 48
 Jackson, Joe, 121
 Jackson, the, 80
 Jacobie, Charles, 132
 Jacobs, Nancy, 37
 James, Dave, 79
 James, Jeanette, 20
 James, Lance, 71, 93-95, 132-3
"Jan Pierrewit", 147
"Jantjie", 149
 Japhta, Harold, 120
 Jazz Maniacs, 24-5, 37, 39
 Jazz Ministers, 154-5
 Jazz Revellers, 24
 Jazz Symphonators, 24

Jeppe, Zelide, 20
 Jethro Tull, 72
 Jets, the, 111
"Jikel' Emaweni", 109, 154
 Jo'burg Records, 45-59, 139, 164
 Johannesburg Jazz Club, 111
 John, Mervyn, 67
 John, Olivia Newton, 75
 Johnny Kongos and the G-men, 109, 111
 Jo Jo Zep and the Falcons, 76
 Jolson, Al, 38, 103
 Jones, Henry and Ingrid, 103
 Jones, Jessica, 120
 Jordaan, PW, 169
 Joy, 69-76, 96, 128, 154-5, 163-6
 Joyce, Ronnie, 121
 Joy Music, 57, 69-76
 Juluka, 56, 81, 110, 131, 154, 159-63
 Just Us, 112

K

Kaempfert, Bert, 41
 Karvallas, Georgina, 120
 Keeler, Christine, 111
 Kekana, Steve, 48, 52, 56, 80, 123-31
 Keill, Jeanette, 170
 Kelly, Clive, 56-7, 91
 Kente, Gibson, 35, 99, 101
 Keuzenkamp, Carike, 147, 149
 Kermit the Frog, 19
 Kerzner, Sol, 96
 Keynes, Quentin, 103
 Khaniyle, Steve, 128
 Khaoli, Alec, 155-7
"Kfoto", 124
 Khumalo, Albert, 124
 Khumalo, Groomwell, 125
 Khumalo, Vusi, 166
 Kid, Robbie, 143
 Kiel, Sue, 171
"Kill My Radio", 135
"Kiloyena", 101
"King Kong" (first version), 19, 27, 32-5, 111, 120
"King Kong" (second version), 99, 103
 Kirkland, Jill, 112
 Kirsh, Izzy, 96
 Kirsten, Ken, 96
 Kiss, 119
 Klaassens, Thandeka, 37
 Klaasens, Thandi, 27, 37, 171
 Klaaste, Sol, 34, 41
 Kleinschmidt, Ilona, 116
 Klopjaeger, Quentin E, 56
 K-Mart, 57, 59
 Knack, the, 52
 Kongos, Johnny, 80, 109, 111-112, 120
"Konsertinaclub", 92
 Koornhof, Piet, 85
 Korsten, Gê, 71, 92, 147, 149
 Kramer, David, 111, 151-3
 Krige, Uys, 116
 Kritzinger, Chris, 66, 139
 Kruger, Jimmy, 169, 172
 Kruger, Paul, 150
"Kruidjie Roer My Nie", 95, 150
 Kubheka, Abigail, 25, 167

"Kulukhuni", 131
Kwanongoma College, 19
"KwaXhosa", 156
"KwaZulu", 102, 121

L

LA Weekly, 120
"Lady Africa" . . . see Singana, Margaret
Lady Frere, 17
"Lady from the Odeon", 116
Ladysmith Black Mambazo, 56, 87, 124-7
Laine, Cleo, 120
Lange, Mutt (Robert John), 120
Lange, Stevie (see also Van Kierken), 120
Langfor, Fred, 168
Langenhoven, 147
Larks, the, 111
Lascelles, Kendrew, 20
Lastique, 110
Lawrence, Ian, 79-80, 112, 115
Laxton, Julian, 75, 103
"Lazylife", 56
Leatherette, 139, 140, 179
Ledwaba, Branny, 156
Lee Kate, 171
Lee, Patrick, 49, 51, 52, 89
Lennon, John, 79, 87
"Lente", 147
Lentin, Keith, 119
Leopard, 109, 139
Lerefolo, Ali, 154, 169-70
Lerole, Aaron, 27
Le Roux, Piet, 112
Lesotho-Afro, 154
"Let it Be", 128
Letellier, Mike, 92
Levin, Dave, 101
Lewie, Jona, 119
"Light Up the light", 74, 87, 164
Lincoln, 74, 109
Linda, Solomon, 26-7
Lindberg, Des and Dawn, 79, 103, 112-5, 160, 169-72
Linde, Annabel, 96
"Lindiwe", 101
Little Richard, 69, 80
L M Radio, 69, 72, 73, 79, 80, 88, 90, 109
"Locomotive Breath", 71-2
Loggins, Kenny, 122
"Long Days and Lonely Nights", 71
Lord, Bob, 93
Loring, Richard, 96
Louw, Mara, 167
Louw, Oom Klaasie, 153
"Love You Just a Little Bit More Babe", 72
Lovich, Lene, 119
Lucey, Roger, 81, 109, 116, 139, 144-5, 176
"Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds", 92
Lula Landers, the, 157
Lumko Music Dept, 17
"Lungile Thabalaza", 144
Luthuli, Chief Albert, 30
Lynne, Glennys, 149

M

"Maaka le nnete", 127
"Maatla ke a Rona", 32
Mabaso, Connie, 102-3
Mabaso, Jerry, 27
Mabso, Lemmy "Special", 27, 30, 37, 40, 131
Mabaso, Mathews, 127
Mabaso, Meshack, 27
Mabaso, Normonde, 128
Mabuse, Siphos, 155-7
MacGregor, Chris, 111, 120, 122
Mackay Brothers, 38
Mackay, Clacky, 79-80
Mackay, Duncan, 120
Mackey, Ramsey, 110, 116-7, 147
Mad Joe, 111
Madi, Levy, 156
Madondo, Siphos, 124
Mafoya, Mabel, 37
Magicians, the, 110
Mahlangu, Khayn, 166
Mahlangu, Norman, 127
Mahlatini, 37, 128
Mahotella Queens, 128
Makasa, Duku, 102
Makeba, Miriam, 25-7, 31, 41, 56, 73, 79
Makhaya, Elliot, 55, 58, 157
Makwele, Joe, 26
Malan, Rian, 120
Malcolm, Alex, 112
Malebo, Anneline, 165
Malherbe, Pierre, 112
Malombo Jazzmakers, 158
Malombo, 81, 96, 110, 154, 157-9, 166
Malopoets, 154, 157, 158
Malotana, Desmond, 156
"Mama and the Load", 101
"Mama Kilio-E", 19
"Mama na Mwana", 19
"Mama Thembu's Wedding", 73, 101, 164
"Mammy Blue", 67
"Mamsie", 130
Mandela, Nelson, 18, 32, 119
Mandela, Winnie, 116
Mangope, Lucas, 57
Manhattan Brothers, 24-6, 31, 37, 41, 111
Mann, Herbie, 158
Mann, Manfred, 80, 120, 122
Mann, Matt, 53, 55, 69, 80
"Mannenber", 119, 167
"Mantombazane", 130
Manthunjwa, Mac, 124
Manuel, George, 105
"Manyano", 156-7
MAP, 71
Maphoi, 128
Marion, Felicia, 165, 112
Marks, David, 61-83, 112, 145
Marley, Bob, 63
Marshall Tucker Band, 119
Martin, Ian, 94
"Mary", 122
Masekela, Hugh, 25, 27, 30, 34, 41, 53, 56, 73, 96, 119-21
Mashigo, Colin, 134
Mashishi, Thabo, 166
Mashiyane, Spokes, 28, 31, 37, 40

Masinga, Ben "Satch", 27, 111, 171
Masoka, Mabel, 37
Masondo, David, 131
"Master Jack", 61, 67, 79-83, 103, 109
"Masters of War", 114
Matanzima, Kaizer, 18
Mathumba, Cuthbert, 38
"Matinees on Saturdays", 116
Matiwane, CB, 72
Matiwane, Harriet, 169
Matshikiza, Todd, 25, 31-4, 37, 102-3
Mavi, Stompie, 156
Mavuthela Music, 26, 125
May, Chris, 90
"Mayibuye Africa", 32
Maynier, Dave, 112
Mazibuko, Albert, 125
Mazibuko, Abednego, 125
Mazibuko, Teba, 57
Mbanase, Joyce, 37
Mbele, Raymond, 128
Mbitjane, Blythe, 121
"Mbube Song", 26
Mbulu, Letta, 25, 27, 37, 56, 121
McAleer, Father, 112
McCartney, Paul, 87
McCrae, George, 122
McCully, Tully, 140
McCully Workshop, 109
McCutcheon, Robert, 112
McGrath, Gerald, 67, 83
Mchunu, Cyril, 131
Mchunu, Moses, 128
Mchunu, Siphos, 159, 163
Mchunu, Zanzela "Israel", 131
M'Gingana and the Symbols (see Singana, Margaret)
McInnes, Allan, 51, 55, 90
McKenna, Trish, 169
McKinley, Ray, 38
Mcobe, Neville, 157
Mdledle, Nathan, 35
"Meadowlands", 37
Mechudi, AB, 124
Mehethwa, Tuza, 131
"Meholo Madala", 161
Mekgoe, Shimane Solly, 101
"Mekoting Ya Ganta", 87
Melody Maker, 52, 134,
"Meropa", 102, 121, 170
Merry Blackbirds, the, 24-7
Meyer, Mike, 112, 115
Meyer, Piet, 154, 157
"Meyetlo ya Basotha", 127
Mgcinga, Godfrey, 124
Mhlongo, Simon, 127
Mhlongo, Vicky, 113, 154
"Michael Row the Boat Ashore", 150
Michel, Martell, 20
Miden, 72
"Midnight in the Jungle", 117
"Midnight Soul", 90
"Might Quinn", 120
"Mike Till Midnight", 92
Millar, Bruce, 169
Miller, Rian and Selwyn, 121
Miller, Glenn, 24, 38
Miller, Mel, 80, 112, 115

Mills, Dave, 71
 Mingus, Charlie, 158
 Minerals, the, 87
 Miss Piggy, 19
 Mitchell, Joni, 122
 Mkhize, Mbaso, 127
 Mkhiza, Ray, 127
 "Mkumbane", 35
 Mkwawasi, Meshack, 124
 Mlangeni, Babsy, 56
 Mngadi, Maxwell, 131
 Mngoma, Khabi, 21
 Mngomezulu, Themba, 156
 Moeketsi, Jacob, 25
 Moeketsi, Kippie, 25, 34, 41
 Mohape, Masike, 156
 Mokasi, Duke, 166
 Muller, Cornelia. . .see Cornelia
 Moloisi, Willie, 96
 Monat, Ros, 169
 "Moon River", 104, 122
 Moppieliedjies, 103
 Moraba, Kori, 154
 Morris, Ritchie, 112
 Morocko, 110
 "Mosadi Ona", 127
 Mosia, Meshack, 35
 Most, Mickey, 80
 "Mother Africa", 156
 Mothile, Ernest, 121-2
 Mothoa, Albert, 124
 Mothoa, Philip, 124
 Motsieloa, Griffiths, 39
 "Mountains of Men", 79, 82
 Movers, the, 128
 "Mpanzaville", 150
 Mpharanyana, 52, 124, 128
 Mpungase, Johannes, 131
 Masaho, 19
 Msarurgwa, August, 41
 Mseleku and his Merrymakers, 38
 "Mshoza", 131
 Msomi, Welcome, 99, 102
 Mtalana, Mandla, 124
 Mthembu, Russell, 125
 Mthimkulu, Joseph, 127
 Mthombeni, Betty, 96
 Mtshali, Isaac, 124
 Mudie, Benjy, 56, 139
 Mugabe, Robert, 34
 Muppets, 19
 "Music in the Air", 122
 "Music in the Mix", 179
Music Maker, 52-3, 137
 Musicians Union, 24-5
 Mvincane, Olga, 128
 Mwelasi, Jabulani, 125
 Mwenda, Jean Bosco, 19
 Mwrebe, Gwigwi, 25, 28, 34, 37
 "My Life's in Good Hands", 132, 149
 "My Name is Jack", 120
 Mxusani, Sam, 156

N

Nabangqongqozi, Muvelasi, 128
 Naked Ape, the, 151
 Nash, Neville, 95, 167
 National Wake, 52, 106, 140, 176, 177
 Ndilo, Teaspoon, 124
 Ndlovu, Charles, 156
 Ndlozi, Thoko, 165-6
 Nduweni, Nowa, 131
 Nduluka, Tex, 127
 Neil, Steve, 154
 Neitz, Rudi, 147, 149
 Neu, 53, 96
 Newell, Norman, 168
 Newfield, Barbara, 112
 New Mayfair Dance Orchestra, 38
New Musical Express (NME), 69, 134
 New Trend, 112
 Ngono, Thandi, 96
 Ngwenya, Kaizer, 154
 Ngwenya, Moses, 131
 Ngwenya Vellie, 111
 Ngwenya, William, 127
 Nhlapo, Daniel, 127
 Nhlapo, Walter, 40
 Nico Malan theatre, 170
 Niederlander, Edi, 112, 116
 Night, 120
 Nkosi, Isaac "Bra Zakes", 25-8, 37-8, 40, 111, 154
 Nkosi, West, 35, 57, 99, 124-6
 "Nkosi Sikelel' i-Afrika", 31
 Nkutha, Solly, 154
 Nkwe, Ray, 173-4
 Noble, Mike, 121
 Noble, Ray, 38
 Nofal, Joe, 37-8, 40-2, 56, 66, 93
 "No Football", 140
 "Nontsokolo", 37
 North Country Replacements, 112
 Ntoni, Victor, 121
 Ntuli, Selby, 155-7
 Nxele, Bongani, 131
 Nzimande, Hamilton, 131

O

"O Fortuna", 117
 Oakley, Mary, 133
 Oakley-Smith, John. . .see Smith, John Oakley
 Odendaal, Johnny, 90
 Offbeats, the, 151
 "Old Man River", 104
 Oldfield, Mike, 119
 Oliff, Bill, 112
 Oppenheimer, Harry, 100
 "Orang-Outang", 117
 Orbison, Roy, 69, 133
 Orff, Karl, 117
 Orlandini, Hal, 115
 O'Shea, Sheilah, 112
 Ossher, Jon, 52, 137-8
 Oswietie, 167
 Other Band, the, 109, 140, 146
 "Other Side of Town", 135

Otis Waygood Blues Band, 109
 "Ou Kraal Liedjie", 147
 Outlaws, the, 120

P

Pacific Express, 52, 167-8
 Pages, the. . .see Kekana, Steve
 "Painted Ladies of Roseband", 134
Palladium, the, 53
 "Paradise Road", 74, 76, 109, 165
 Paralelo 27, 96
 Parker, Col Tom, 76
 Parker, Graham, 119-20
 Parkin, Herbie, 141
 Parsons, Alan, 120
 Parton, Dolly, 133
 Party, the, 109, 140
 Pasiya, Gambu, 156
 "Pata Pata", 120
 Patience and the U Vees, 128
 Paton, Alan, 35, 164
 Paulus, Arrie, 134, 141, 173
 Paulus, Harry, 79
 Peach, 109-10, 140, 142
 Peach, Angie, 140, 142
 Peanut Butter Conspiracy, 64, 109
 Pedigree, 109
 Pedlars, the, 124
 "Pele Pele", 158
 Pendulum, 67
 Perdeby, 116
 Permanent Force, 109, 134
 Petersen, Lionel, 74, 120, 156
 Petersen, Paul, 166
 "Phesha Komlambo", 156
 Phil and Neo, 154
 Phiri, Raymond, 124
 Phoenix Players, 26, 31, 114
 Piaf, Edith, 163
 Pillay, Sonny, 27
 Pink Floyd, 85, 87
 "Pippen", 115, 169-70, 178
 Pitch Black Follies. . .see De Pitch Black Follies
 Plaatje, Sol, 31
 Plasmatics, the, 119
 Plastic Mac, 167-8
 Platters, the, 49
 Pogo, Marko, 135
 Poho, Dan, 28
 Pointer Sisters, 158
 Police, the, 56, 121
 "Policeman", 143
 Polliacks, 38
 "Poo Ke Nna", 87
 Poppuns, 140
 Porgy and Bess, 103
 Powerpak, 109
 "Prayer to the Young Moon", 117
 Pratley, Colin, 116-7
 "Precious Lord", 124
 Pregalato, Dennis, 121
 Presley, Elvis, 69, 76, 80, 111
 "Pret en Plesier", 147
 "Pretty Flamingo", 120
 Prior, Charlie, 121

Prior, Chris, 92
Privilege, the, 79
"Puff the Magic Dragon", 92
Pukwana, Dudu, 56, 118, 120, 156
"Pyramid", 120

Q

Quad Sisters, 25, 37
Qalaba, Xoli, 154
Quatro, Suzi, 48, 119
Quibell, Ronnie, 44, 49
Quinn, Roddy, 134

R

Raath, Rocky, 112
Rabbitt, 50, 52, 69-76, 109, 119, 122
Rabin, Trevor, 71-2, 119
Rabinovitz, Leon, 112
Rabotapa, Mary, 25
Radebe, Jacob, . . . see Mpharanyana
Radio Bantu, 41, 73, 80, 85-96, 125, 156
Radio Five, 45, 48-9, 64-6, 74, 76, 80, 85
96, 149, 160
Radio Rats, 109, 134-9
Radio Swazi, 92, 96
Radio SR, 96, 125
"Radio Today", 92
Radio Truro, 96
"Radio Youth", 135
Raff, Yvonne, 112
Raffles, 121
Rag Dolls, 66, 68, 109, 134-5, 140
"Raising my Family", 109, 128
Ramblers Swing Band, 24
Rand, Ayn, 137
Ranku, Lucky, 122
Rathebe, Dolly, 27, 31
Raubenheimer, Carl, 141
Rauch, Laurika, 141
Raven, 109, 134, 137-8
Ray, Barbara, 95, 132
Realistics, the, 49
Rebels, 111
"Record Companies", 134
Red Flag, the, 147, 177
Reinecke, Sias, 147
Renaissance, 167
Rezant, Peter, 24-5, 30, 36-8
Richard, Cliff, 48, 111
"Rich Man, Poor Man", 133
Rising Sons, 64, 109
"Rivers of Babylon", 121
Rhodie, Eschel, 137, 139
Rhythm Clouds, 24
Rhythm Kings, 24
"Road is much Longer, the", 145
"Road to Shangala, the", 87
Rob, Sandy, 67
"Robert Zimmerman Blues", 150
Robinson, Dave, 119
Robinson, Malcolm, 48
Robot, Ronnie, 72
Rock Against Management (RAM), 143
Rockets, the, 167

Rocketeers, the, 167
"Rock 'n Roll It Ain't Easy", 134
Rockwell, Gene, 94, 132-3, 149
Rodgers, Richard, 34
Rogers and Hart, 34
"Roland the Headless Thompson Gunner", 117
Rollers, the, 50, 119
Rolling Stone, 81
Rolling Stones, 69
Ronstadt, Linda, 133
Roos, Fransua, 71-2, 165
Rooster, 134
Roots, 154
Rosen, Josh. . . see Jon Ossher
Rosenthal, Hilton, 161
Ross, Diana, 72
Rosselson, Leon, 51, 53, 90, 176-7
Roussos, Demis, 65, 75
Routh, Guy, 28
RPM, 45-59, 80, 83, 122, 140
Rudd, John, 34
Rumour, the, 119
Rusiki Brothers, 80
Rutles, the, 119
Rycroft, David, 26-7

S

SABC, 19, 41, 48-9, 56, 61, 72, 80-1, 85-96,
109, 115-7, 119-20, 124, 128, 130, 134-8,
149, 156-7, 160, 163-5
SABC Broeders, 85
"Sacred Drums", 122
Safari Suits, 109, 134, 139-40
Sakhile, 166
South African Musicians' Association (SAMA),
173
Sampson, Cedric, 72
South African Musicians' Union (SAMU), 173
Sandpipers, the, 112
"Sangoma", 158
Santana, 122
"Santa Rosa", 72,
"Sarah", 149
"Sarie Marais", 109, 147
Saries, 74, 93-5, 128, 149-50, 163-5, 172
Satbel, 49, 72-3, 76, 164
Savoy Orpheans, 38
Scandal, 122
"Schoolboy", 139
Schroeder, Robert and Ernest, 69
Schuster, Leon, 92
"Seagulls Name was Nelson", 114
Sean and Maurice, 112
Sedaka, Neil, 72
Seeff, Norman, 122
Seeger, Pete, 30, 112
Sefer, Zvi, 112
Segal, Ben, 81
Segonah, Thelma Neo, 156
Selbourne Hall, 27
Sello, Bra, 25, 128
Semenya, Caiphus, 27, 121-2
Sentso, Ol Man, 111
Serote, Wally, 178
Settlers, the, 121
Sex Pistols, 52, 119, 134-5
"Sgt Peppers", 69
Shabalala, Headman, 124-6
Shabalala, Jockey, 124-6
Shabalala, Joseph, 87
Shadows, the, 79
Shah, Krishna, 102
Shamley, Colin, 81, 116
Shangaans, the, 63, 109
Shapiro, Colin, 116
Shaw, Min, 71
"Shebeen", 35
Sherman, Jessica, 174-7
Shipanga, Esme, 103
Shoelaces, the, 158
Shongwe, Richard, 124
Shyannes, the, 111
Sibanda, George, 19
Sibson, Robert, 19
Siggala, Merriman, 127
"Sikalo", 35, 99
Silgee, Wilson "King Force", 10, 24-5, 39
Simon, Barney, 157, 171
Simon, Paul, 122
Simon, Ralph, 119
"Sing vir die Harlekyn", 69, 149
"Singana Gold", 164
Sinagana, Margaret, 52, 69-76, 80, 87, 94, 149,
163-5
Sisuba, Zola, 156
Sithole, Lucas, 127
"Siyabonga", 128
"Six of the Best", 139
Sklair, Susan, 112
Skratch, 50, 53, 137
"Sky People, the", 161
Skylarks, 25, 37
Sledge, Percy, 122
Slinger, Dugmore, 25
Small, Adam, 103, 105
Smith, Audrey, 81
Smith, John Oakley, 108, 116-7
Smith, Richard Jon, 74, 93, 95, 120, 150, 167,
172, 178
Smith, William (Falconetti), 133
Sneddon, Elizabeth, 99
Snow, Phoebe, 122
Snyman, Justice JH, 169
Sobhuza, King, 126
Solomon, Eric, 112
Solomon, Karyn, 169
"Sonja", 149
Sonnenberg, Mike, 112
"Sons and Daughters of Africa", 157
Sontonga, Enoch, 31
Sonny and Cher, 121
"Sonny Boy", 38
Sophiatown Modern Jazz Club, 111
Sotho Services, 85-96
Soul Brothers, 128-131, 156
"South African in Paris, a", 139
South African Music Rights Organisation
(SAMRO), 37
South African Press Association (SAPA), 95
Southern African Recording Tape Distributors
Association, 56, 91
Southern Suns, 96
Soweto, 72, 134, 154
Soweto Jazz Appreciation Society, 140
Spaced Out Sound Studios, 140
Special Five, the, 128
Spyder, 119
"Spies Eyes", 144

Spirits Rejoice, 80-1, 96, 102, 161, 166-7, 171, 178
 "Spoono", 35, 164
 "Springbok Four Thirty Special"-93
 Springbok Radio, 48-9, 59, 73-4, 80, 85-96
 Springfield, Dusty, 69
 Square Set, the, 109
 Squires, Hank, 80
 Stables, the, 140
 Staccatoes, the, 71, 109
 "Star is Born, A", 122
 Starr, Stella, 122
 "Stars of Africa", 167
 Stein, Jules, 34
 "Ster van Bethlehem", 180,
 Stevens, Mojo Gavin, 134
 Stiff Records, 119, 139
 Stigwood, Robert, 83
 Stingray, 66, 75-6, 110
 Stramrood, Clive, 112
 Stramrood, Martin, 112
 Street Music, 119
 Streisand, Barbra, 122
 "Strijdom you have struck a Rock", 32
 Stringalong Folk, 114
 "Struggle Goes On, the", 145
 Strydom, Hans and Wilkins, Ivor, 85-6
 "Substitute", 67, 109
 Suck, 109, 134
 "Suikerbossie", 147
 Summer, Donna, 56, 74
 Sun, Water and Bread Report, songs from, 175
 Sunshine Records, 63-8, 140
 "Sunday, Monday, Tuesday", 120
 "Sweet Soweto", 87
 Sweet Chocolate, 87, 172
 Swinging City Six, 111
 "Swinging Safari", 41

T

Tabane, Philip, 157-9
 Tafu, Buggs, 156
 "Ta Mossie se Sakkie-Sakkie Boeredans", 150
 Tapedi, Sophie, 73
 Tarr, Dave, 116
 Tayler, James, 122
 Taylor, Jeremy, 20, 39-40, 112, 115, 133, 151
 Taylor, Nick, 87, 112
 Taylor, Robin, 67, 72, 76
 Teal, 39, 45, 51, 80, 156
 Tela Records, 57
 Telelak, John Michael, 169
 Tembisa Queens, the, 128
 Temptations, the, 49
 10 CC, 120
 Thabethe, Willie, 13
 Thapedi, Sophie, 128
 Thekwane, David, 57
 Themba, Can, 34
 Theron, Archie, 112
 "Thina Sizwe", 31
 3rd Ear Music, 79-83, 145
 Thlothalemaje, Cocky "Two Bull", 84, 96, 169-70
 Thobejane, Gabriel, 158-9, 166
 Tholet, Clem, 112
 Thomas, Stella, 122
 Thopson, Barbara, 112

Thompson, Chris, 120
 Thornhall, Claude, 38
 Thorp, Paddy Lee, 52
 Three Ravens, the, 112
 "Thula M'ntanami", 161
 "Thursday Night", 112
 Tidal Wave, the, 71
 "Times they are a-changing", 114
 Timothy", 147
 Tiyo, Doty, 27
 Tladi, Lefife, 122
 "To the Watertower", 139
 "Tom Hark", 27-8
 "Tomatiesous", 39
 Tomlinson, Lee, 67
 "Too Late (To Be Saved)", 90
Top Twenty, 53
 "Tot Siens Auf Wiederschen", 134
 Tou, 81, 154, 157
 "Township Jazz", 27
 Tracey, Andrew, 13-23, 99
 Tracey, Hugh, 16, 19-22, 63
 Tracey, Paul, 19
 Transistor label, 139
 Tremeloes, the, 90
 Treurnicht, Andries, 172
 Trehela, Ralph, 37
 "Tribal Fence", 164
 Truman, Andy, 51
 Trutone, 28-30, 37-9, 45, 64
 Tshungu, Justus, 86
 "Tsotsi Style", 39
 "Turned on my Radio", 135
 Turner, Tina, 49
 Tusk, 109
 Tyefumani, George, 166

U

"Ugogo", 127
 "Ukusindiswa", 125
 UmaBatha, 99, 102
 "Unicorns, Spiders and Things", 114
 Union of South African Artists, 28-32, 41
 Universal Men", 160
 University of Zululand, School of Music, 19

V

Vaal Express, the, 128
 Valli, Frankie, 121
 Valli, Una, 64
 Van Blerk, Patric, 53, 61, 69-76, 80, 82, 99, 127
 Van Deventer, Jack, 137-8
 Vanelli, Gino, 119
 Vanguard, Valiant V, 72
 Van Kierken, Stevie, 112, 120
 Van Niekerk, Clarabelle, 149
 Van Tonder, Gert, 147
 Van Wyk Louw, NP, 92
 Van Wyk, Paul, 143
 Van Zyl, Jan, 38
 Van Zyl, Marie, 147, 149
 Vee, Peter, 48
 Veenemans, Barbara, 92
 Verner, 171
 Verwoerd, Hendrik, 79, 85
 "Very Strange Society", 172
 Vickers, Rob, 96

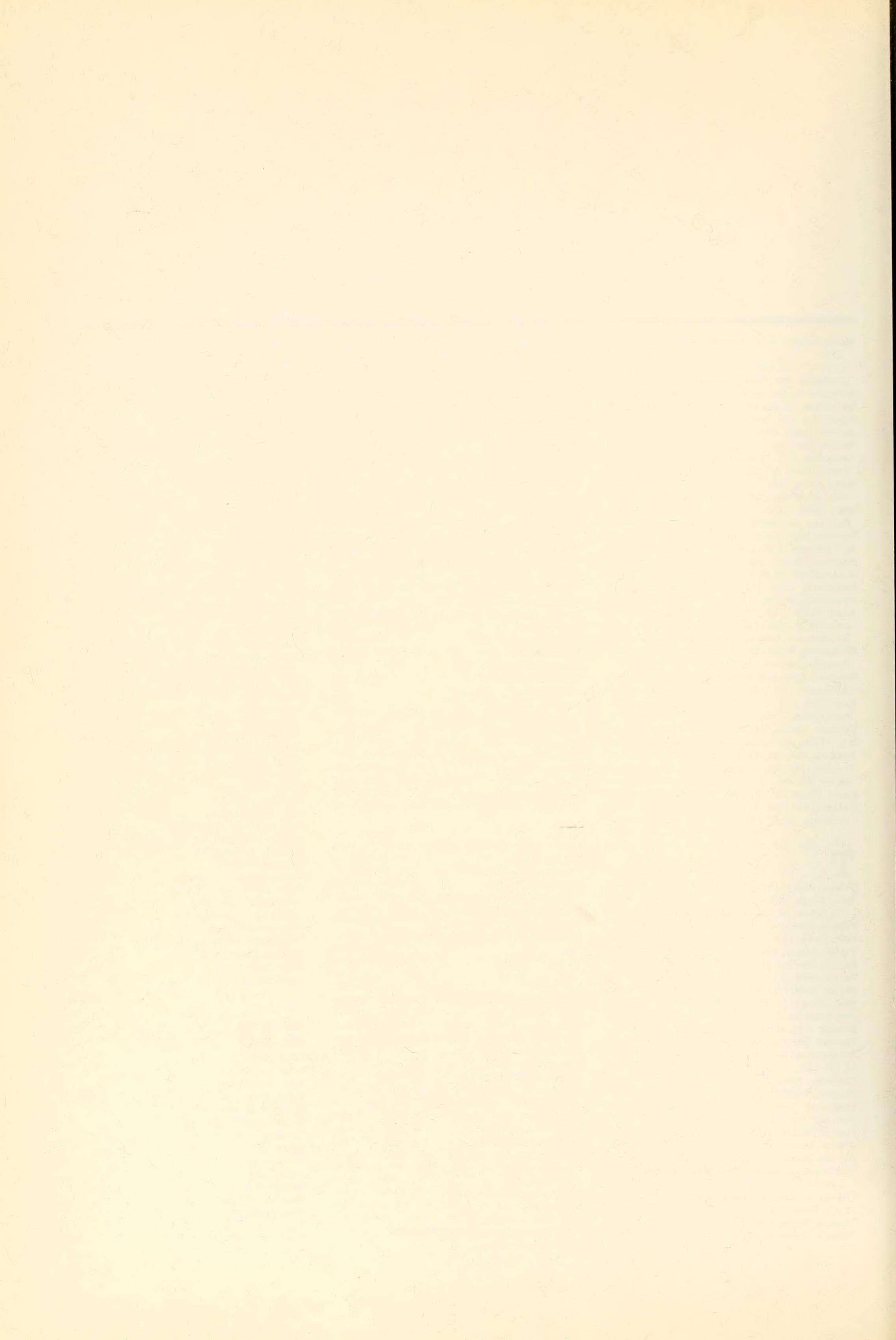
Video 2, 137
 Vilakazi, Strike, 37, 171
 Vigirn Records, 82, 119
 "Visionary Vagabond", 143
 Volkspede, 56
 Vorster, John, 80, 170
 Vrouefederasie, 116
 Vuma, Tom, 130

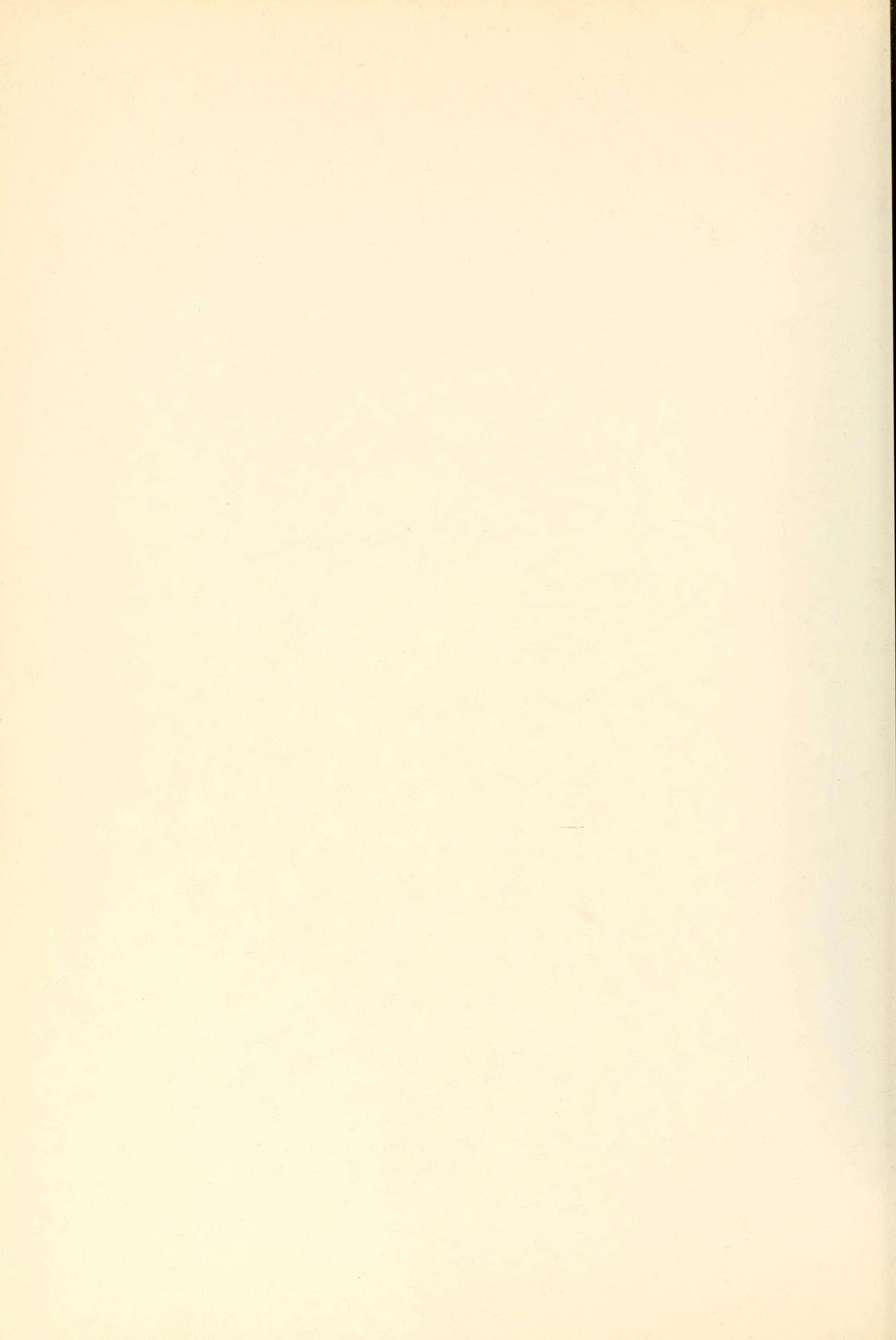
W

"Wait a Minute", 19-21, 34
 Wakeford Hart, 88, 109
 Wakeman, Rick, 122
 "Walk Tall", 117
 Walker, Joe and Doty, 102-3
 Walker, Johnny, 93
 Walker, Oliver, 112, 115, 117
 Walter and the Beggars, 128
 Warren, Ian, 96, 138
 Warrior, the, 164
 "Waterblommetjies", 109, 147, 149
 Watson, Mally, 128
 "We Shall Overcome", 112, 114, 115
 WEA, 45-59, 80, 82, 139-40, 145
 Weller, Sam, 169
 Wemyss, 169
 "Westwinds", 120
 "West Side Story", 32
 "What's Folk Pussycat?" 114
 "When Jeppe was a One-Way Street", 79
 "Where I'm At", 92
 White, Barry, 72
 Whitman, Slim, 133
 Who, the, 134
 Wild Youth, 52, 109, 134-5, 137, 139
 Wilkins, Ivor and Strydom, Hans, 85-6
 Williams, Danny, 122
 Williams, Pat, 32
 Williamson, Craig, 144
 Willis, Larry, 120
 "Wimoweh", 26, 30
 "Women's Day Song", 32
 "Woodpeckers Ball", 24
 "Woody Woody Peckers", 25
 "Working Man", 128, 130
 Wray, Link, 119
 Wreckless Eric, 119

XYZ

Xaba, Mike, 13
 Xaba, Xuba, 164
 Xezu, Roger, 124
 Young, Dumb and Violent, 134, 137-8, 140
 Young, John Paul, 50
 Young Lovers, 154
 "Zambezi", 41
 Zamek, Paul, 46-7, 49, 56, 133
 Zombies, the, 57, 128
 "Zonk", 27
 Zonophone, 38
 Zub Zub Marauders, 109, 145
 Zulu, American, 131
 Zulu Double Quartet, 38
 Zuma, Potatoes, 127
 Zwane, Theophilus, 127-8





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