

**COMPOSITION IN CRISIS:  
CASE STUDIES IN SOUTH AFRICAN ART  
MUSIC  
1980-2006**

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation explores a crisis in South African composition through an analysis of the field of art music in the period 1980-2006. Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1993) and Thomas Kuhn (1970), I argue that the field of composition shifted from an autonomous to a more heteronomous mode of production during this period, and that this shift was embodied in a change of artistic paradigm. In chapter one I show how an ‘autonomous’ paradigm during the 1980s upheld the Eurocentric outlook and value system of apartheid, and how it was replaced in the early 1990s by a more ‘heteronomous’ or ‘cross-cultural’ paradigm. The composer case studies (chapters two to four) show how Kevin Volans, Peter Klatzow, and Hendrik Hofmeyr contributed to aesthetic and social change in the field, especially with regard to the inclusion of African elements. Chapter five is a critique of the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra as a ‘Proudly South African’ post-apartheid institution, showing how its programming policy is detrimental to the interests of composers. The Conclusion reflects on the dominated position of the field of composition relative to economic and political imperatives in the field of power, and considers how a prolonged and continued crisis has challenged the very notions of what constitutes artistic value in the field.

## **Declaration**

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

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Thomas Mathew Pooley

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This way of seeing was complemented by a perspective from those who had first hand experience in the field during the past three decades. I undertook numerous interviews, both formal and informal during the past two or so years. Most of those interviewed were composers or arts administrators and their comments punctuate this work with invaluable insider insights. Despite the crisis in the field, all interviewees were generous with their time and resources and provided me with scores, recordings, publications, and other information that was invaluable. I am very grateful for this assistance and would like to thank the following in particular: Kevin Volans, Peter Klatzow, Hendrik Hofmeyr, Hans Roosenschoon, Roelof Temmingh, Mokale Koapeng, Sara Gon, Shadrack Bokaba, Gary Roberts, Stephen Jurisich, Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph and Michael Blake. The latter deserves special mention for lending me rare scores, recordings, and books on contemporary art. The Irma Stern Museum has kindly given me permission to reproduce the paintings *Arab Priest*, *Congo River*, and *Peach Blossoms*, and for this my thanks.

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Thomas Mathew Pooley

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## List of musical examples

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