

Chapter 5: ‘Proudly South African’: New music and the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra

Introduction

The orchestra’s own changing role in the period under question and in the crisis I have been describing in various ways, has not yet emerged strongly in this dissertation; mainly because in chapter two I focused on Volans’s chamber works and in chapter four on Hofmeyr’s piano music. The role of orchestral institutions in the commissioning of new works is evident in chapter three, however, and now an important question presents itself: how has such an apparently outmoded, Eurocentric, and expensive institution survived political and economic change to be still available as an instrument for sometimes quite large-scale not to say extravagant works such as Hofmeyr’s *Sinfonia Africana*? How did it survive the ‘crisis’? To begin answering these questions I return to some of the historical issues raised in chapter one.

Those cultural institutions that upheld the autonomous paradigm for art music during the 1970s and ‘80s lost substantial material and symbolic support from the state in the post-apartheid era; and although most of the funding available for these institutions had been for the performing arts, composers were equally affected by its demise and reconfiguration, because the sub-field of composition is in a dominated position relative to the sub-field of performance and composers are reliant on performers to get new works heard and validated by audiences and critics.

Without the support of the state and its cultural institutions, commissions for new works on the scale seen during apartheid dried up, and by 2006 orchestras and soloists seldom performed South African works (I give more details below). The rare premieres of new works have also tended to go unnoticed in the press (except in – again – rare exceptions such as the Muller review in *Die Burger* mentioned in chapter 3) and few works were

performed more than once.¹ New music concerts and festivals were relatively scarce and poorly attended and in any case these are not places where orchestral music has featured. New orchestral music has rarely been broadcast and the stigma attached to South African works as ‘second-rate’ is common amongst performers and administrators in the field of live music (as I will show). In short, South African orchestral music has been an almost invisible presence on the post-apartheid cultural landscape – even less so than piano, vocal, or chamber music – due to a lack of exposure both in the media and by the institution of the orchestra itself. This chapter uses the case study of the orchestra and particularly the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra (JPO) to review the question posed in chapter 1 afresh: why is the field of art music not conducive to the production and reception of new music?

Institutional background

The financial and political challenges facing orchestras in the post-Apartheid era are in some respects closely related. The field of art music had to reconstitute itself following the ‘White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage’ of 1996, the most definitive document on the funding of the arts and government policy in that regard to appear in the post-apartheid era (a new White Paper is in process). Its publication can be seen as something of a turning point in the political economy of the larger field, and is the only legislation that has had direct impact on orchestras and their functioning. In this paper the Department of Arts, Culture, and Heritage decided that the arts should be supported by Government in line with the (then) Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), their most important new role being helping to alleviate poverty and contribute to nation building. Up to this point it was the classical arts – opera, ballet, music, and drama – that had been favoured by the department(s) of arts and culture, receiving the most funds through the Performing Arts Councils and after that local municipalities. Following a study made by the new Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST)

¹ I am writing some of this in the past tense because my empirical research has come to an end although much of what I say still pertains. Later I also use present tense.

in 1995/96 it was decided that the Performing Arts Councils should be ‘downsized’ because they did not cater for the diversity of artistic expression of the population and because they were geographically inaccessible to most of the (black) population. “The inescapable conclusion is that Government is subsidizing expensive art forms and infrastructure for a small audience at an unaffordable level” as the authors of the paper put it (1996, 23:19). These art forms did not contribute to the new economic imperatives of the RDP, and, worse still, were seen to have been used previously as tools of cultural oppression: “The advent of formal apartheid, with its overt use of culture as a political strategy, led to further stifling of expression, and indeed, to distortion” (Ibid 14:2). Art music inevitably came to be perceived as a ‘white’, Eurocentric pastime that had little to offer the new South Africa.

It was thus decided that the Performing Arts Councils would receive “declining subsidies from central Government as transfer payments over the next three years [1996-98]. At the end of this period, Government will again [directly] subsidize the core infrastructure, core staff and essential activities of the PACs” (1996, 23:21). This direct attack through economics precipitated a collapse in the old art music world, and a crisis that affected opera, ballet, and orchestral music for some years afterwards, as well as the educational institutions that supported these disciplines by feeding them graduates. Most university music departments experienced declining numbers of (white) applicants as a direct result. As a student interviewed in Angela Mullins’s survey of recently graduated composition students (2007) puts it: “the closure of the N[ational] S[ympphony] O[rchestra] in 1997 scared a lot of students away of [sic] the idea of studying music” (Mullins 2007, 97-98). After two of the countries premier orchestras, the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) folded in the late ‘90s it took until the early 2000s to reconstitute them under new leadership and administrative structures. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine the functioning of these new orchestras and particularly the JPO, which emerged out of the NSO, and particularly in relation to the programming of South African works; and to consider how this has affected the field of composition.

In doing so I draw on Howard Becker's work on 'art worlds' (1982) in which he argues that works of art must be understood as the products of collective activity within art worlds rather than as the products of isolated individual geniuses. For Becker, great art (or any art for that matter) is only made possible through an artist's ability to manipulate the conventions of a particular art world to his or her ends, drawing on the particular resources, expertise and knowledge available to him or her within that art world, and in collaboration with those who distribute his or her work to knowledgeable audiences (a notion that relates to Bourdieu's idea of *habitus*.) The work of aestheticians and critics also plays a role. By justifying the existence of art works, and in validating their artistic merits, critics secure reputations (and careers) for artists. Becker describes an art world as an "established network of cooperative links among participants" (1982: 34-35). His work can be used as a means of analyzing the workings of the *restricted field of production* in Bourdieu's model.

In what follows I critique the nature of these cooperative links between the two sub-fields of composition and performance, and explore how the dynamics of the two and the extent of their interaction is limited by the strategies pursued by orchestras. My case study seeks to uncover the economic and political factors which are at play in this most public and prestigious realm of performance for art music. I take the JPO's marketing motif, "Proudly South African" as a starting point for showing how its primary mode of production is (now, post-financial crisis) oriented toward the heteronomous pole, in a (new) field where political and economic pressures are dominant.

'Proudly South African'

The term 'Proudly South African' is taken from a campaign that aims to "promote South African companies, products and services which are helping to create jobs and economic growth in our country" (www.proudlysa.co.za, accessed 14 September 2006). It thus flows from the ethos of the RDP. In order to use the logo and benefit from membership of the campaign, there are four criteria that must be met:

1. The company's products or services must incur at least fifty percent of their production costs, including labour in South Africa, *and* be substantially transformed.
2. The company and its products or services must meet high quality standards.
3. The company must be committed to fair labour and employment practices.
4. The company must be committed to sound environmental standards (Ibid.).

Transformation is a political buzz word in post-apartheid South Africa. It can mean many things but usually refers to the economic, educational, and social empowerment of those sectors of society who were disadvantaged by apartheid laws and practices. Generally this process has been characterized by racial and gender policies which seek to change the demographics of organizations by making them more representative of the demographics of South African society. Women are favoured in this process over men. More significant, perhaps, is the system of *racial* hierarchy that guides it, which is an inversion of the one used by the apartheid government. In this hierarchy (and using the new Government's continuing use of the terms to monitor change) 'blacks' are favoured over (respectively) 'coloureds', 'Asians', and 'whites' in a scale of preference. Another aspect of this is 'black economic empowerment' (BEE) which is an attempt to provide black businesses and business people with positions and resources that otherwise they would not have access to. Businesses that employ blacks and develop skills amongst the black community are also given certain incentives. Black economic empowerment has resulted in a new black elite in the higher ranks of business and in an emerging black middle-class. Government and the private sector have partnered with higher education to incentivize more young blacks to study by providing funding and job opportunities.

The ideal of transformation is directly related to the Reconstruction and Development Project of the 1990s that sought to develop previously disadvantaged groups through social and economic empowerment and educational projects. Educational 'outreach' projects have thus become important secondary tasks for South African orchestras, including the JPO, and a way of demonstrating transformation, which has become an essential part of orchestras' marketing and public relations because of the nature of the funding upon which they rely. (The funding of institutions such as the JPO is subject to

their BEE compliance and contribution to the transformation of society through development and educational initiatives.)

All three surviving symphony orchestras (CPO, JPO, and KwaZulu Natal Philharmonic) claim to be proudly South African, although only the Cape Philharmonic and Johannesburg Philharmonic are officially registered with the campaign. Theoretically there would seem to be many possibilities for them to reflect their allegiance to it: education programmes, audience development in the townships, bussing in people for symphony concerts, free tickets for (black) workers, more black players in the orchestra and more black soloists or conductors. (The KZNPO has adopted most of these strategies at one time or another since the mid 1990s.) In this chapter I critique the notion of being 'Proudly South African' specifically in relation to the *repertoire* that orchestras programme for their symphony season concerts.

South African Orchestras

South Africa's three major orchestras – those that hold regular concert seasons – are the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra (CPO), the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra (JPO), and the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra (KZNPO). All three now (2008) employ their musicians on a full-time basis. Each of these orchestras had a predecessor in a state funded orchestra run by the Performing Arts Councils, local municipality (CTSO), or the SABC; all of which were either closed down or drastically reconstituted in the wake of the 1996 White Paper and withdrawal of state funding as I noted above. Apart from these three orchestras, however, there are a number of amateur and ad hoc ensembles that draw from the professional groups. These include the Chamber Orchestra of South Africa (formerly the National Chamber Orchestra of the SABC), the Johannesburg Festival Orchestra, the Port Elizabeth Symphony Orchestra, and the Bloemfontein Symphony Orchestra. These ensembles often perform at festivals, competitions, and for opera and ballet productions in the major centres.

The emergence of these new orchestras is set against the backdrop of the economic failure of previous institutions in the late '90s. The National Symphony Orchestra, the National Chamber Orchestra, the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra, and the CAPAB orchestra all folded in the period 1998 to 2000. The Natal Symphony Orchestra became the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra in 1998 but this was the only orchestra to successfully obtain funding from government and maintain its existence as a full-time institution during the 'transitional' years of the period under consideration in this dissertation. The CPO was founded in 2001 after its predecessor – the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra – lost state and municipal funding in 1998. It now relies on a partnership with Artscape (formerly CAPAB), funding from the National Arts Council (NAC) and National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund, and private sponsors. The JPO similarly achieved full-time status but only in 2008, after getting a substantial grant from the National Arts Council and support from local government. My research is however concerned only with the period up to the end of 2006. Individual sponsors and corporations have also been relied upon to supplement box-office takings. The JPO, on the other hand, relied on the private sector and box office takings for its sustainability.

The Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra²

The JPO was founded in June 2000 by a group of twenty musicians who had previously been with the National Symphony Orchestra. The JPO is a Section 21 Company which is managed by a Board and a Management Committee who advise the orchestra in all areas of its financial, legal, and marketing operations. It is a non-profit organization owned (until 2006) by a core of between twenty and thirty musicians, although it retained sixty or so permanent players who had annual contracts, hiring extras for large or specialized works. The orchestra's primary aim is to perform regular symphony seasons, and an Artistic Committee comprising players and management makes decisions on the

² The analysis that follows pertains only to the period 2000 to 2006. Its new full-time status (2008) and possibility of sustainability – at least in the short term – will certainly affect decisions made by its Artistic Committee, and I am aware that one of these is the possibility of their commissioning new works by three or four South African composers in the near future.

programming at these concerts. The JPO also plays at a small number of corporate functions each year (although these are generally taken up by other Gauteng orchestras, especially the Johannesburg Festival Orchestra under Richard Cock).

During the period 2000 to 2006 the orchestral players could not rely on symphony concerts alone to make ends meet since the JPO could only guarantee up to twenty weeks of concerts per year of part-time work. Some musicians took part-time jobs teaching, playing other gigs, or in other non-musical activities such as property development and the catering businesses. The orchestra's players were paid on an hourly basis for rehearsals and performances, and had no financial security in the form of long-term contracts or medical aid.³ According to the Artistic Director (Gary Roberts), musicians were paid a rehearsal rate as well as a more substantial concert rate that was R100 per hour more.⁴ The new state of affairs for the JPO was particularly disheartening for those musicians who had held principal positions in the National Symphony Orchestra. Many of them were foreign nationals recruited specifically for that orchestra.

According to the Acting Managing Director of the JPO in 2006, Sara Gon, the box office accounts for approximately twenty percent of the orchestra's earnings. The Acting Managing Director of the JPO, Shadrack Bokaba, noted that the total cost of running the orchestra during one year is between R15-20 million and this was reflected on their annual report (for example in 2004). A huge amount of corporate sponsorship in addition to government funding is thus required if the orchestra is to remain afloat, and relying on fundraising has meant an unstable working environment for all concerned. The constant state of financial crisis was remarked upon in all the interviews I conducted with JPO players and management. The Artistic Director, for example, admits that the first thing he thinks about when he goes on stage is "who's here?" This has had a direct impact on the programming decisions of the artistic committee, especially with regard to potentially 'risky' works – including both new and old South African works – that tend to be

³ This information and other information which follows, was collected through interviews conducted with performers and management staff of the JPO, to whom I am indebted.

⁴ This is in contrast to the KZNPO and CPO, both of whom were able to employ their players full-time since their (re)inception.

unpopular with concert-goers. Generally it is the Germanic classics from 1800-1900 and the standard repertory of piano, cello, and violin concertos and romantic symphonies, that dominate programming (see Appendix 2, which lists those composers performed to date by the JPO). The economics of the field have thus to a very great extent determined programming policies and the artistic direction of the orchestra – ironically, given the importance of ‘transformation’ for the orchestra’s marketing campaign and hence its sustainability in the longer term. The programming of relatively popular works has been regarded as a financial necessity, however, as explained to me by the Deputy Chairperson of the JPO’s board, Stephen Jurisich.

We set up some principles initially which generally the music critics didn’t understand, much to my annoyance, because they showed a complete lack of appreciation for the bigger picture. We’re of the view that it was more important for the orchestra to play regularly to become part of people’s regular activities, than what we played. So we had to play things that were relatively cheap, relatively accessible. We had to make use of local conductors and local soloists. Essentially we regarded it as more important for two reasons. One, we had to keep the orchestra members employed and keep them in the country. We were already starting to lose rare skills. And secondly, we have to convince the audience and the donors that this was a viable regular proposition, not an ad hoc ensemble like the JFO which isn’t really an orchestra. (It’s Richard Cock who if he gets money will use what musicians he can to put together an orchestra). (author’s interview, 8 September 2006).

These statements reflect the desperate situation in which orchestral musicians found themselves following the disbandment of the NSO. Many of those with “rare skills” left the country whilst others sought employment as chefs and barbers. The orchestra was in survival mode for several years, hoping to achieve some kind of stability by retaining a presence in the cultural life of the city, and thus the programming of “cheap, relatively accessible” works was essential to financial security in the short term. However, these measures have continued to be employed despite the relative stability now achieved by this orchestra over the seven or so years of its existence. New and challenging works continue to be omitted despite a greater economic autonomy for the orchestra. What are the reasons for this, and what have the consequences of these programming policies been for composers?

‘World-class music for a world-class city’

The JPO’s slogan is ‘World-class music for a world-class city’, which in turn is taken from the city metro’s slogan, ‘Johannesburg: a world-class African city’. It is not insignificant that ‘African’ has been dropped from the JPO’s slogan, because the marketing of the orchestra as a ‘proudly South African’ institution has been deeply undermined, I suggest, by the way its ties to South African music and culture have grown more and more tenuous as a result of populist (‘bums-on-seats’) programming policies. Furthermore, the kinds of works that it does perform affirm the dominant political ideologies of the ANC government, and programming decisions do not seem to be made along artistic lines but along personal and political ones. And to return to the slogan, I also question if the inclusion or exclusion of South African works has anything to do with the orchestra’s ‘world-class’ status as a performing group. Just what does ‘world-class’ mean, especially in relation to works performed?

The Artistic Director explained three factors that guided the programming decisions made by his committee: ‘audience taste’ (as he put it), the availability and repertoire of soloists and conductors, and the availability and ‘interests’ (meaning tastes again) of the orchestra’s players. But how are these kinds of tastes quantified? It seems that this is gauged primarily on fairly casual information, superficial perusal of audiences, or number of box office seats sold. The Artistic Director describes two types of audience members: the first are subscribers who ensure a large part of the orchestra’s box-office takings. In 2006 subscriptions reached almost 1000 and this translated to approximately 1500 sold tickets per week (since at least half of the subscriptions are for couples). The Linder Auditorium seats 1100 people, and the JPO holds two concerts per week during symphony seasons. This means that subscribers account for 68 percent of the box-office revenue on a weekly basis, and the Managing Director claimed that this was the highest percentage of any orchestra in the country. According to the Artistic Director, subscribers *are* interested in new works but stay away when anything too ‘unusual’ is played. Apart from subscribers, the second type of audience member is ‘the man in the street’ who only comes for ‘the draw’ as the Artistic Director puts it: ‘something hummable’: unusual

meaning something unfamiliar because it is not tonal or not ‘classical’ or ‘romantic’ sounding, and hummable meaning the opposite. Accessibility here is akin to the notion of ‘acquiescence’ described by Peter Klatzow in chapter three. And in my experience as a regular JPO symphony concert-goer for the two years 2006-7 (and before that for several years the KZNPO) South African and other less well-known ‘contemporary’ works do indeed often have far smaller audiences than the classical favourites regularly served up.

Another important factor that came up during my interviews was that concert programming had to take into account the interests of the musicians themselves since they become bored with playing the same works repeatedly, yet see little reward to be had from practicing unknown works by new composers that do not stimulate public interest. A further consideration is the orchestration of works. When orchestral players are paid on an hourly basis rather than in a full time capacity it is important to them that they play as often as possible. The size of the orchestra and the kinds of instruments employed are thus major considerations for the musicians who run the orchestra. The Artistic Committee can’t programme too much late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century music for example, since the reduction in orchestra size means that some brass and percussion players aren’t required or that the number of string players is reduced. When this happens on a regular basis the players concerned are out of a job for too long.

A more fundamental financial consideration for management is that many works by twentieth-century composers are still under copyright, and it is thus often expensive to acquire the parts and rights for them (this applies to all composers who died less than 70 years ago; it certainly applies to works that might have popular appeal, by Stravinsky, Copland, Pärt, etc.). This is clearly a major factor when it comes to the performance of contemporary works since publishers charge fees for the hire and purchase of scores. Even though it is not so expensive to hire South African compositions, according to the previous MD of the JPO money was still a consideration when it came to programming South African works. “It’s not expensive – we usually pay R1200 or R1600 to hire the work from the composer. However if they asked to be paid more than a hire fee then we don’t pay them [eg. an honorarium or copyright fee].” This policy with regard to South

African works is very different to that of other kinds of hire fees. For example, when the orchestra hired the scores for Mahler's Ninth Symphony in 2005 the fees came to over R10 000. Here we have a clear example of the ways in which the JPO prioritizes the European repertory over the South African one.

Due to financial constraints, and because it was paying musicians by the hour, the orchestra had only limited rehearsal time. This was another problem when it came to new, difficult, or even longer works that required extensive rehearsal with the conductor and as an ensemble (but it's the same world-wide). Musicians had little incentive to practice or rehearse these works over and above the time for which they were paid, and this often resulted in under-rehearsed performances. This in turn affects the reception of these works and leads to a vicious cycle in which financial constraints affect artistic results which then affect finances and other artistic choices. The composers I interviewed during my research all complained about restricted rehearsal time and limited expertise of conductors in performing their works. Critics and the general public alike respond to the enthusiasm and energy of musicians' performances, not only to the aesthetic qualities of a particular work.⁵

The current programming policy for the JPO nevertheless stipulates that one South African work should be performed per five-week season. In those concerts that *do* include a South Africa work the artistic director 'compensates': "if we choose a South African work then the other two [works in the programme] will be well-known." There is no question of having a 'new music' concert – that is, one devoted entirely to contemporary art music – since this is not commercially viable. South African works must always be squashed between more popular works. This 'squashing' of new works has a negative effect in the sense that the 'weight of history' and artistic gravity of the canon tends to crush newer, less accessible works. It is also all too easy to argue that not all South African works chosen stand up to a Beethoven Symphony. For whatever

⁵ This is of course a broader problem with the performance of new music in general. Kevin Volans complained about the first performance of his *Concerto for Double Orchestra* by the BBC Symphony Orchestra in 2001 where the conductor only gave it a cursory look over during rehearsal, despite its complexities (pers comm.).

reasons, the Deputy Chairperson remarked that when South African works are performed “audiences don’t necessarily like it. And we get disgruntled patrons saying ‘why do you play that rubbish?’” So this is not simply a question of box-office takings, but also of negative responses from both patrons and players.

JPO Symphony Season statistics, 2001-2006

What gets produced and performed and received by audiences is often determined by straightforward economic facts. An American study a couple of years ago, for example, demonstrated that the repertoire of opera companies in the United States is very seriously constrained by box office considerations, which in effect limit innovations in the music, and standardize the selection of repertoire (Wolff 1993 46-47).

Symphony Seasons are the core work of any major orchestra and the JPO is no exception. It is an opportunity to showcase the orchestra’s ensemble and soloists, but also those conductors and soloists that they can attract from abroad. These aspects of performance reflect on the prestige of ‘high culture’ and institutions associated with the arts. As Bourdieu notes in *Distinction*, the tastes of those attending such events cannot be assumed as arbitrary or devoid of social (and class) significance. They reflect on the economic and social strata from which these individuals emerge: “taste classifies, and classifies the classifier” (1998). For Bourdieu, those who have access to high art attend galleries and concerts because they have access to both the economic and cultural capital that sets them apart from the lower classes. In this way high art distinguishes those who attend.

The prices for symphony concerts are relatively expensive (even in South African terms) and this makes classical music an elite pursuit. Orchestras are reliant on the wealthy and – just as important – the educated. The audiences for orchestral music in South Africa contribute not only economically – in terms of covering the bottom line – but give their symbolic support to these events as inherently meaningful and important to society. The standard and caliber of soloists and players is thus reliant on a cultural value system that is both financially and educationally exclusive. This is in part the appeal of classical music but also the reason for its uneasy status in post-apartheid South Africa where there

is a tension between access to funding (from developmental bodies) and target market (the elite).

The fact that orchestras have continued to survive is testament to the nature of socio-economic change in post-apartheid South Africa. Despite upholding a Eurocentric outlook and value system, the nature of their art is still assumed to be aesthetically important. This is despite the change in focus towards a more Afrocentric lifestyle and value system both in the media and in politics, manifested most visibly in Thabo Mbeki's notion of the 'African Renaissance' ('I am an African' (1996), www.gov.org.za, accessed 12 February 2007), and re-inscribed by campaigns such as 'Proudly South African'. There is a kind of two-faced logic to classical music in South Africa. On the one hand it promotes a European repertory, yet on the other it is an important marker of distinction for those of the new political and social elite who support it. The status sought by those who perceive themselves as the social and intellectual elite, together with the success of radio stations such as Classic FM and 'pop-classical' artists such as Josh Groban, Sarah Brightman, and (in South Africa) Sibongile Khumalo has contributed to a revival of interest in classical music. Thus, as a marker of refinement and intellectualism it continues largely unchallenged by the imperatives of black economic empowerment. It has met the requirements of economics and taste, but even BEE needs (never mind the needs of new 'proudly SA' composers) are not met in regular performances, only in the educational and transformational nodes in the institution – in terms of outreach and staffing.⁶ This reflects the nature of the capitalist enterprise in which concessions are made to political forces so as to retain the status quo economically. This also means retaining a Western hegemony of culture.

Most symphony season concerts consist of three works, two performed during the first half and one in the second with an interval between. Programmes are usually structured in the overture-concerto-symphony formula common to orchestras the world over. This

⁶ Gary Roberts remarked that the JPO had a "partial merger with the South African Music Education Trust" and noted that the orchestra also "do various outreach concerts" (Author's interview, 4 September 2006). In these ways they try to fulfill their transformation goals. Also see Shadrack Bokaba's statement below as regards the inclusion of more black players.

structure varies depending on the lengths and demands of the works, and on the works offered by the soloists and conductors.⁷ When the concerto is a large one – such as the Brahms *Piano Concerto No. 1* – then the overture is dropped. The JPO has performed a total of twenty-three Symphony Seasons since its inception. In 2000 there were a few concerts but no seasons as such. It was only in 2001 that the JPO planned its first three symphony seasons.

2001: 2 Symphony Seasons of 5 programmes (10 programmes)
2002: 4 Symphony seasons of 3 programmes (12 programmes)
2003: 4 Symphony Seasons of 5 programmes (20 programmes)
2004: 4 Symphony Seasons of 5 programmes (20 programmes)
2005: 4 Symphony Seasons of 5 programmes (20 programmes)
2006: 4 Symphony Seasons of 5 programmes (20 programmes)

During the period 2001-2006 the JPO performed 102 symphony season programmes. The total number of works performed during this period was 326, and this averages out at approximately three works per programme. Yet only eleven South African were performed, approximately 3 percent of the total. Two were performed in 2003, two in 2004, four in 2005 (one per season), and three in 2006. Ten of the 87 composers performed were South Africans.

Hendrik Hofmeyr is the only South African composer to have had two performances of his music. The other South African composers are Michael Hankinson (conductor-laureate and composer-in-residence), Mzilikazi Khumalo, Peter Klatzow, Michael Moerane, Hans Roosenschoon, John Simon, Allan Stephenson, Roelof Temmingh, and Pieter Louis van Dijk. With regard to questions of transformation here, no works by female composers have been performed and the two by black South Africans are just about the only two orchestral works written by black South Africans anyway (and the Khumalo is not orchestrated by him) so there is little to choose for future seasons. The JPO has performed just one World Premiere of a South African work, and this was Michael Hankinson's *A Mandela Portrait* (2004), specially commissioned by the

⁷ Soloists and conductors submit a list of works from which the artistic committee must choose.

orchestra for the 10th anniversary of democracy celebrations. Only three works have been featured as the ‘main event’: Hendrik Hofmeyr’s *Raptus* (1996) for violin and orchestra and *Concerto per flauto e orchestra* (1999), and Mzilikazi Khumalo’s *Haya, Mntwan’Omkhulu* (2000, orchestrated 2001 by Peter Klatzow) where the accompaniment and orchestration are by Klatzow. In terms of percentages, South African works account for approximately 3 percent of the total number of works and for less than 1 percent of the total ‘music minutes’.

This raises a number of questions: just how ‘Proudly’ does the JPO treat its South African composers and their music? Why is it that the works of dead, white, mostly European males are being played by an orchestra committed to transformation and the establishment of a unique South African identity for itself and its city? The orchestra management and artistic committee defend their position on South African music by pointing to a perceived lack of quality in the field. A number of the board members and players stated that South African composers are “too academic”, are “inaccessible to the public”, and more critically, “do not have distinctive voices”.⁸

Works that have ‘met the standard’ have not necessarily been well received by audiences. I attended all four 2006 seasons during which three South African works were performed, including Hans Roosenschoon’s *Menorah*, Pieter Louis Van Dijk’s *San Chronicle*, and Peter Klatzow’s *Three Paintings by Irma Stern*. All three works were poorly performed and the reception (in terms of applause) unenthusiastic. The performance of Klatzow’s *Three Paintings* was under-rehearsed, intonation was weak in all sections but especially the strings, and the conductor had to slow down to accommodate those who could not play the faster passages. Some entries were late, and the demeanour of the players was visibly negative and careless. The restlessness of audience members and their lukewarm response at the end of the work was disappointing. (This is in contrast to the work’s reception in Cape Town as mentioned in chapter 3, perhaps because that is where Klatzow is based – a case of being supported in one’s own immediate sphere of

⁸ It is interesting that the academicism and lack of ‘voice’ that I critiqued in relation to Hofmeyr does not seem to be an issue here.

influence). I interviewed a number of string players afterwards and representative responses were that the work was uninteresting, “just another South African work”, in the words of one of the cellists.

The JPO in context

Samuel Gilmore did extensive research on orchestras in New York in the 1990s. Recognising the dominance of the nineteenth-century repertory he acknowledged two ‘standard explanations’ which resonate with my JPO case study. The first supports the economic reasoning given by JPO board members: consumers favour a certain repertoire and orchestras are not in a financial position to ignore this. Second, restraints on rehearsal time mean that new works are avoided. Although acknowledging the importance of these factors Gilmore argues that what is neglected is “the influence of the artists themselves and the artistic communities in which they operate” (1992:3) on the programming process. “[I]t is the alignment of performers’ programming with the organizational interests in the art world that has the most telling effect on the dominance of this repertory” (Ibid 15). There is an opposition in other words, between performers and conductors in whose interests it is to perform standard repertory which displays their virtuosity and artistry, and, on the other hand composers who desire premieres for works that would draw attention away from conductors and performers.

The conventions of the South African art music world are similarly constrained. Performers tend to dictate programming, thus leaving composers in a somewhat inferior position in which they are beholden to performers’ and Artistic Directors’ good will. The interest-orientation of performers predisposes them to pursue strategies that benefit them most, because they rely primarily on ‘popular’ reception in order to advance their careers. Reviews, public response, and sales of recordings contribute to their accrual of the symbolic capital required for a successful career. When audiences (and critics) do not enjoy performances of works this reflects badly on the popularity of the *performers* concerned. When performers give premieres of works that are regarded as artistically

important within the field or art music as a whole – such as a premiere of a work by Steve Reich or Pierre Boulez might be – then the situation *is* very clearly in their interests. So there is a direct correlation between the prestige of any new work – the degree of symbolic capital that that work and that composer have – and what gets performed.

The impact of performances and recordings of composers' works with orchestras are not only an important source of income, but also accumulate prestige and recognition by the community; all of which is vital for their success in the field. Some composers have suggested that far fewer orchestral works have been written in the past decade or so than in the 1980s, when orchestras were more supportive of their music (Klatzow in author's interview, January 2007). This is certainly the case with Peter Klatzow, who has only produced two new orchestral works since 1994 (*Passacaglia on SACM* and *Three Paintings by Irma Stern*).

I asked the Acting MD what the criteria were for the selection of South African works. His reply was: "They must be up to standard. We invite lots of people to write for us. But some already write because they just enjoy writing, they just write. And they ask us to have a look at it, and if we like it we can use it". This seems a bit hit-and-miss; and there are two other problems with it. First, it shows a complete ignorance of the plight of art music composers in South Africa. Second, the statement that "we invite lots of people to write for us" is obviously untrue given that only one commissioned work has been performed by the JPO thus far (*A Mandela Portrait*). The tone of the response is also indicative of a certain aloofness and lack of respect for composers and their music.

Discussing the number of South African works played over the last two years the previous MD made the following comments:

We missed one season but that was a technical cock-up, it wasn't intentional... Well, I suppose we can be quite proud that we started playing South African works on that basis [one per season], and only a year later were told that we could get money from SAMRO for doing it. So we had the highest motives in mind, and then our motives became base. I haven't applied [to SAMRO] this year...It depends on how many music minutes we play. And we played enough to get R50 000 a

year for a couple of years, and they'll get it this year if they apply for it (Sarah Gon, author's interview 5 September 2006).

According to Michael Levy the orchestra is required to play 25% South African music of the total played in any one season in order to receive this money (pers comm.). Clearly this is not the case with regards to the JPO, who, as was mentioned above, play approximately 3%. There is a perception amongst members of the artistic committee and board of the JPO that they are fulfilling some kind of duty in performing just one South African work per season (even though this does not always happen). It is strange that orchestras are (or could be) paid as much as R50 000 per annum from SAMRO for performances of South African works when they spend almost no money themselves on commissioning works from SAMRO.

For the JPO, I argue, transformation has really only taken place in racial terms. And as the acting MD puts it, they are “transforming at a very fast rate, an alarming rate. When we started it was an all white orchestra with five black players. And now we have 25% of our players are black. And this happened in the past three years or so. So it's changing fast. And even next year, this time next year, probably it will be more than 35%. We have lots of black students coming from all over South Africa wanting to play for us” (author's interview, 13 September 2006). But this kind of transformation, although laudable, is only partial, and perhaps a more comprehensive approach is needed: a rethinking of what the orchestral institution in South Africa stands for and how it can benefit all sectors of the artistic community, including composers. After all, South Africa's orchestras are non-profit organizations that seek to develop and uplift the community. If orchestras really want to become culturally relevant and nationally ‘proud’ they need to move towards greater artistic diversity. Much of the resistance to change is also found in the broader art music world, which I shall now critique in more detail.

Deconstructing the art music world

According to Becker, art worlds “decline when some groups that knew and used the conventions which inform their characteristic works lose that knowledge, or when new personnel cannot be recruited to maintain the world’s activities” (1982:349). Such is the present case in which symphony concerts are attended primarily by a (predominantly) ageing, white, middle class audience. Popular culture is certainly one factor in this regard, but so is education. As I noted above, the experience of classical music as an art form requires an understanding of cultural codes that are not self-evident. They require, in Bourdieu’s terms, a certain degree of cultural capital. This cultural capital is obtained through exposure to art music within the home environment or through schools and universities. Most South African university music departments are (now in 2008) no longer centered on the Western art music tradition anyway, and this has impacted on the training of new teachers as well as new audience members and performers. Due to changes in the curriculum since the 1990s, far fewer students are being educated to an advanced level in art music than was previously the case. Courses in popular and traditional music, jazz, opera and choral studies, and ethnomusicology have enjoyed significant popularity amongst students since the democratization of the system.

This is both an advantage and a problem for the art music world, because it is students or past students that are the backbone of the audiences for new art (Becker 1982). Educated audiences may be both more accepting and more critical of new work, but at least they ensure that good work gets supported and encouraged. When audiences are less demanding or (as often happens in South Africa) uncritical then performance standards also start to drop (why practice harder if no-one cares?). South African orchestras are not of a world-class standard – especially when it comes to the performance of new music (as we have seen) – and therefore cannot compete for the best soloists and conductors. There are economic and geographical reasons for this, true, but the role of critics (and critical audiences) should not be ignored in maintaining artistic standards.

Critics play an important role in ascribing value to performances, and an equally crucial role in ascribing value to works; and at least part of the crisis around programming new music, not to mention around how to conceive new works, is the patent lack of good country-wide critique. In effect it is the critics that help to establish the conventions of the art world. When critics are mostly absent – as in the present case in South Africa – these systems of valuation are almost absent or lack influence and credibility. This means that it is almost always a case of self-regulation on the part of performers and institutions and this can hardly benefit composers given the perpetuation of self-interest that is the inevitable result.

There are currently very few reviews of JPO concerts. A handful have appeared in the *Business Day*, *Die Beeld*, www.artslink.co.za, or in the *South African Jewish Report*. These are not regular, however, and I have only been able to find one review of a South African-composed work during 2006, from *The Citizen* dated 28 March 2006, which is however disappointingly short and dismissive: “The opening work on the programme was a nearly-new work by Hans Roosenschoon, entitled *Menorah*. Mainly tonal as to its harmonies, the piece was little more than a series of unrelated episodes which give rise to ‘effects’. Not one of the composer’s better inspirations” (Traub 2006).

This is *all* that Traub had to say about Roosenschoon and *Menorah*. Traub’s comments have no context and are therefore virtually meaningless to the reader. What ‘effects’ is he writing about? (There is no description of the piece and its structure). Episodic writing is not unusual or inherently problematic from an aesthetic point of view. Is he dismissing this *kind* of writing, and if so, why? Traub has nothing to say about the performance of the work. This is unfortunate because it directly impacts on its reception. Yet a bad performance does not equal bad music! Perhaps Traub’s opinion of the work can be explained by Becker’s comment that “if we know that a person of superior ability made a work [Beethoven for example], we pay more careful attention to it, and thus can see what might escape the more casual inspection we give a work from which we expect nothing special” (1982:357). Traub’s review certainly falls into the category ‘casual inspection’.

Not insignificantly, he spent half of this review discussing the problems of audience etiquette around cell phones.⁹

The symbolic value of new works (power and capital)

South African orchestral music seems to accrue little or no economic value for its composers or to most of those who publish, perform, or even critique it. The relations of power in the field are usefully understood through Bourdieu's political economy of capital, a notion applied to various forms of symbolic and material resources used by actors to strategically further their positions in the field. For Bourdieu capital refers to cultural, social and symbolic resources actors draw on "in order to maintain and enhance their positions in the social order" (Swartz 1997:66). Bourdieu conceptualizes such resources as capital when they function as a "social relation of power", that is, when they become objects of struggle as valued resources (Ibid). Thus, even though compositions may not accrue economic capital for their producers, they still earn cultural capital for them within an art world that regards public performances as emblematic of success. The reputations and artistic worth of composers within an art world are validated and enhanced by the performance and critical reception of their works in the public sphere (rather than just within the limited sphere of the academe).

The most important form of cultural capital in the art music world is reputation. A composer achieves a reputation when his or her works are regularly performed and critiqued. As Becker notes, "distribution has a crucial effect on reputations. What is not distributed is not known and thus cannot be well thought of or have historical importance. The process is circular: what does not have a good reputation will not be distributed" (1982:95).¹⁰ This is important to the present case-study because it counteracts the

⁹ At JPO concerts the only words spoken on stage are by the Deputy Chairperson who thanks the sponsors and asks audience members to switch off their cell-phones and refrain from coughing during the concert. This request was ignored during the concert in question and disrupted the conventions of appropriate audience behaviour. This 'problem' has become more and more evident in recent years as audiences have changed.

¹⁰ "Distribution" can here and elsewhere in this essay be read as "performance".

supposition made by members of the JPO that because most South African composers lack reputations they are not worth supporting (and this is not true in any case as some do). It is precisely because they do *not* have this support that they cannot achieve or further a reputation.

Music can only be experienced in a medium for consumption in performance. Works are thus highly dependent on those who perform and champion them for their success and the success of their composers. The problem with the conventions of the contemporary art music world is that these new works are *not* valuable to performers. South African art music has little or no value as economic capital in terms of bringing in box office revenue, *nor* as symbolic capital in terms of developing the reputation or prestige of the orchestra or musicians who perform it. This is what decisively inhibits its growth and success in the art world, and the aesthetic consequences are significant. “[It] is not that work cannot be distributed, but that contemporary institutions cannot or will not distribute it, and that they thus exert, like every other established part of an art world, a conservative effect, leading artists to produce what they handle and thus get the associated rewards” (Becker 1982:129).¹¹

Aesthetic conventions

To be part of the musical art world South African composers have to produce works that are ‘in demand’ (what the art world handles). In the contemporary era (post 1994) these are works which have African elements or bear ideological narratives of the new South Africa (‘nation building’, the ‘African Renaissance’ or the celebration of heroes such as Mandela). These kinds of demands are sometimes made directly by important commissioning bodies such as SAMRO but also exist as felt pressures within the field of power (the dominant race, class, and economic factors). As Stephanus Muller has pointed out with regard to the role played by musicologists in what he describes as a

¹¹ Although I have concentrated in this chapter on the orchestra as a ‘contemporary’ institution’, it is arguably the major one for South African composers. It would however be interesting to see (in future research) if my analysis applies more widely.

‘perceived crisis for art music’: “As the political credibility and survival of its white constituent base has crumbled, aesthetic value and commercial survival of art music has increasingly depended on the political credibility that could be gained by turning from elitist ‘Western’ or ‘European’ music to a more ‘African’ style” (Muller 2000b:29). In order to achieve success within the politically acquiescent post-apartheid art music world, many composers have adopted new aesthetic strategies that are more Afric-exotic, yet as I have shown in the previous chapters not always Afric-an, in nature.

In this respect it is significant that the only commissioned work by the JPO so far has been *A Mandela Portrait* (2004) by Michael Hankinson. This work superimposes various speeches made by Nelson Mandela over a canvas of ‘African-inspired’ music. The music shows no originality of conception, drawing on stereotyped notions of what constitutes African music (pentatonic melodies which, as we have seen in the case of Hofmeyr could signify any number of world folk music, and are in fact *untypical* of southern African traditional music). This work was a great success with audiences and musicians alike, but this no doubt had more to do with the political and ideological kudos it earned the orchestra (and recall that Hankinson was resident composer and conductor-laureate at the time) and the general post-1994 euphoria with which so-called African orchestral works are greeted by white audiences, than it had to do with its value as aesthetic capital. It exudes accessibility of an even more popular kind than Klatzow’s *Three Paintings*; a kind of kitsch, even, a unifying ‘soothing over’ of the fractured relations between races and cultures that nevertheless still underlie our new democracy.

Conclusion: The prolonged crisis: Artistic value and cultural conformism

It is expedient for composers to be seen to be doing the politically correct thing and therefore they do it. The rewards in this country especially are incredibly high for doing the politically correct thing. That is the way you get commissions, that is the way you get funding, that is the way you get performed, and that is the way you get accolades from all the other politically correct people in the industry. And at the moment they tend to be the dominating or dominant party (Hendrik Hofmeyr, author's interview 25 January 2007).

Hofmeyr's statement epitomizes what I have been talking about: the extent to which the field has shifted away from the 'autonomous paradigm' it held during apartheid to the more heteronomous mode of production post-1994; and both its content and tone speak to the aesthetic crisis many post-apartheid composers find themselves in, which is directly related to economics, and to their need for 'expediency' in the field. Throughout the dissertation I have explored what is not a short and sudden critical period but a *prolonged* state of crisis in the field that resulted from a radical and rapid series of changes in South African society at large and the field of composition in particular. I used case studies of three composers and the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra to show the extent and depth of this crisis, arguing that it was (and is) not just 'political', not just 'aesthetic', and not just 'economic' but all of these things to varying degrees and in relation to one another.

The post-apartheid era has been characterized by the politicization of the field in a more overt way, such that composers' autonomy is now further restricted. Today we see a field that is self-conscious and defensive. Where popular music is flourishing under a new found freedom, art music seems unable to distance itself entirely from some of its political and aesthetic affiliations during apartheid. This may be partly because those who were in power have remained in power, Peter Klatzow being the most obvious example. Although there has been a resurgence of interest in the study of local composers and their music – partly as a result of new research imperatives in the academy – this new institutional interest does not extend to the general public. Festivals such as Miagi and the

New Music Indaba do promote the performance of South African art music, but only to fairly small audiences. Orchestras, as the most public institutions of art music, programme very few South African works due to the difficulty of marketing anything local and fall back even more on the Western canon of ‘masterworks’. A handful of music societies still holds concerts of chamber music, but generally they feature visiting international artists with little or no interest in South African music. Many of the country’s most talented composers (still) live and work in Europe and the United States, and as such are part of very different art worlds, relating only tangentially to the South African field.

The composer case studies on Kevin Volans, Peter Klatzow, and Hendrik Hofmeyr were all quite specific in focus. I chose to accentuate particular issues with regard to each composer and to focus on only some aspects of their work, choosing chamber (Volans), orchestral (Klatzow), and solo piano music (Hofmeyr) in their respective cases. In choosing this approach I did not attempt to survey *all* South African composition during the period 1980 to 2006. Neither did I attempt to highlight *all* the issues, debates, and events. That would have required an undertaking far too large for this Masters dissertation. Instead I chose to critique particular issues in the case studies that for me exemplified important aspects of practice during this period. No aesthetic orthodoxy exists in South African composition today and neither is it likely to. The field is very small, fragmented and geographically dispersed, beset by political tensions and professional rivalries. Indeed composers have felt the need to distinguish themselves from their contemporaries through very different kinds of engagement. This is reflected in the wide-ranging approaches to cross-culturalism that in its manifestations incorporates all kinds of African elements, real or imagined. What is consistent in these practices is not the material or even the particular approach to Africa – at a surface level – but rather the impetus behind such practices which, I have argued, stems from a greater awareness of the political economy of the field.

In chapter one I put forward the argument that the shift in the field could be regarded as a change in paradigm. I re-articulated Kuhn's work on *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970) to argue that there was a shift in aesthetic paradigm for composers, away from a predominantly autonomous one (invested in modernist practices) to one that has increasingly employed African elements. The paradigm change – which in turn led me to see the period 1980-2006 in two parts, pre-1994 and post-1994 – did not only constitute new aesthetic practices, however, but also a new way of seeing the world of compositional practice.

In this way I theorized a paradigm as a discourse of power that constrained and maintained practice by limiting the creative choices of actors in the field. In support of this theory, I showed how the state upheld an autonomous paradigm for the 'high arts' because of its support for white culture as 'superior' to that of blacks. I suggested that composition during apartheid was inherently aligned with these imperatives through its lack of critique and cultural awareness and its Eurocentric focus, and corroborated this statement with evidence from interviews, music analysis, and a literature review.

In chapter two I characterized Kevin Volans as a 'revolutionary', in the sense that his 'African Paraphrases' were an attempt to revolutionize the field both aesthetically and politically during the early 1980s. I showed how these works were the result of ideas learnt in Europe and experiences in South Africa. I argued that Volans's intervention was relevant to both these spheres, and suggested that the African 'computer virus' that he inserted in Western art music did not entirely succeed in South Africa in ways he had hoped for. Although his 'anomalous' efforts did not bring about paradigm change in South Africa at *that* time and in *the way* he envisaged – as a productive engagement with 'real' African musical aesthetics rather than 'constructed' African musical characteristics – Volans's 'virus' permeated his own subsequent work as well as that of some of his contemporaries abroad. However, and despite his good intentions, I argued that Volans's attempt to reconcile African and Western aesthetics by drawing exclusively on 'African traditional' and 'Western art' music in an oppositional model was problematic for the way that it re-inscribed notions of difference.

In chapter three I showed how Peter Klatzow's 'reversion' to tonality, as he put it, was indicative of a dramatic change in his work, away from an 'avant-garde' position in the 1980s to a more accessible tonal world that included African elements for the first time. I argued that Klatzow's *Three Paintings by Irma Stern* is a work that exemplifies an outmoded Orientalist musical discourse that is problematically unrepresentative of the cultures it 'evokes' (in the Western imagination). Unlike Volans and Hofmeyr, Klatzow does not use African elements in this work at all. Instead he draws on a musical discourse that is rooted in a colonial moment of encounter and which constructs Africa as 'other'. I argued that this kind of engagement was symbolic of a dramatic change in Klatzow's music from a position of complete autonomy from political and social issues in his music, to accessible acquiescence in his post-1994 works. In this way I showed how Klatzow was responding to forces in the field of power rather than avant-garde aesthetics he pursued earlier on in his career (especially in the 1970s and '80s).

Some of the same issues emerged in my discussion of Hendrik Hofmeyr's solo piano music in chapter four. I showed how various formal and procedural elements in his music contributed to a sense of 'organic unity' and how this notion belonged to an aesthetic discourse challenged by post-structuralist thought. I argued that the retention of 'organic unity' as a structural principle in works from the *Partita Africana* was problematic because of the ways in which African music was reduced to a set of characteristic 'elements'. I argued that Hofmeyr's approach was open to the same criticism leveled at Klatzow's Orientalist work in chapter three, in the sense that an unrepresentative Western notion of 'Africa' was being claimed as authentic, thus continuing to deny Africa a place in the global conversation (to return to an argument made in chapter two). The subsumption of these African elements in both Hofmeyr and Klatzow, I argued, was indicative of their sensitivity to the new paradigm but it is also symptomatic of new ways of 'misreading' Africa that sustains the crisis in composition.

In chapter five on the institution of the orchestra, I critiqued the notion of being 'Proudly South African' as a post-apartheid political strategy (an idea I had already hinted at in the chapters on Klatzow and Hofmeyr). I pursued my argument around the crisis this time in

relation to the changing role of the orchestra with regard to new music. I suggested that the production of new works by South African composers exceeded consumption because the primary repertoire of the JPO (and all South African orchestras) was composed over a century ago and did not consist of much new music (less than 1 percent of the music minutes in the case of the JPO). This repertoire comprises the canon of Western “masterworks” and is a safe bet for performers due to the conservative nature of the field, thus embodying the ‘expediency’ of the post-apartheid field noted by Hofmyer above.

Drawing again on Bourdieu, I argued that composition was in a subordinate position to the sub-field of performance and that this was problematic for composers who were reliant on performers to get works aired. I argued that it is only through performances that works accrued the symbolic *and* economic capital required by composers to establish reputations and careers in the restricted field, and further that performances that did not conform to audience expectations of accessibility and ‘Africanism’ were unsuccessful. I suggested that this had a decisive impact on what was performed (and composed). Within the context of the post-apartheid field, I argued that composers found it difficult to get their works performed and validated by performers and critics, and that this decisively inhibited their creative choices and had a conservative effect on production. In order to satisfy what little demand there has been it was necessary to compose works that were amenable to performers and performing institutions such as orchestras.

Each of the case studies in this dissertation helped me to do two things: firstly it helped me as a scholar to define the changes that were happening in the field and, relatedly, in compositional aesthetics. Secondly, it helped me to show how composers responded in their own particular ways, as actors pursuing their own strategies of interest accrual, to broader social and institutional forces in the field of power. Through this kind of socio-historical analysis I have attempted to show how the field – now in a heteronomous mode of production – prevents composers from producing (more or less) what they like (as opposed to what the field likes), as they were able to do in the past due to the support of the state and institutions linked to it, as I say in chapter one. It is no longer a field of

‘production for producers’, but more of production to please others. This in itself is another aspect of the crisis for composition.

It has been the central thesis of this work that the position of South African composition relative to political and economic interests in the field of power has resulted in a greater politicization of art music in the post-apartheid era. Reflecting on these developments it was therefore interesting to me that both Klatzow and Hofmeyr expressed in my interviews with them how conscious they are of the more heteronomous position of the field now and at the same time how they oppose themselves to ‘politically acquiescent’ and expedient strategies of capital accumulation in the field.

Yet as I have shown, the inclusion of African elements in Klatzow and Hofmeyr’s music and their reversion to an aesthetic of ‘accessibility’ in the post-apartheid era, seems to contradict these statements. There is a sense in which the composers themselves seem uncomfortable with composing music that is accessible to a wider public and that includes ‘African elements’, yet they do it nonetheless. This reflects on how strong the pull of the larger field has become, and how it continues to reinforce the perceived need for ‘the African’ in music that is nevertheless ‘Western’.

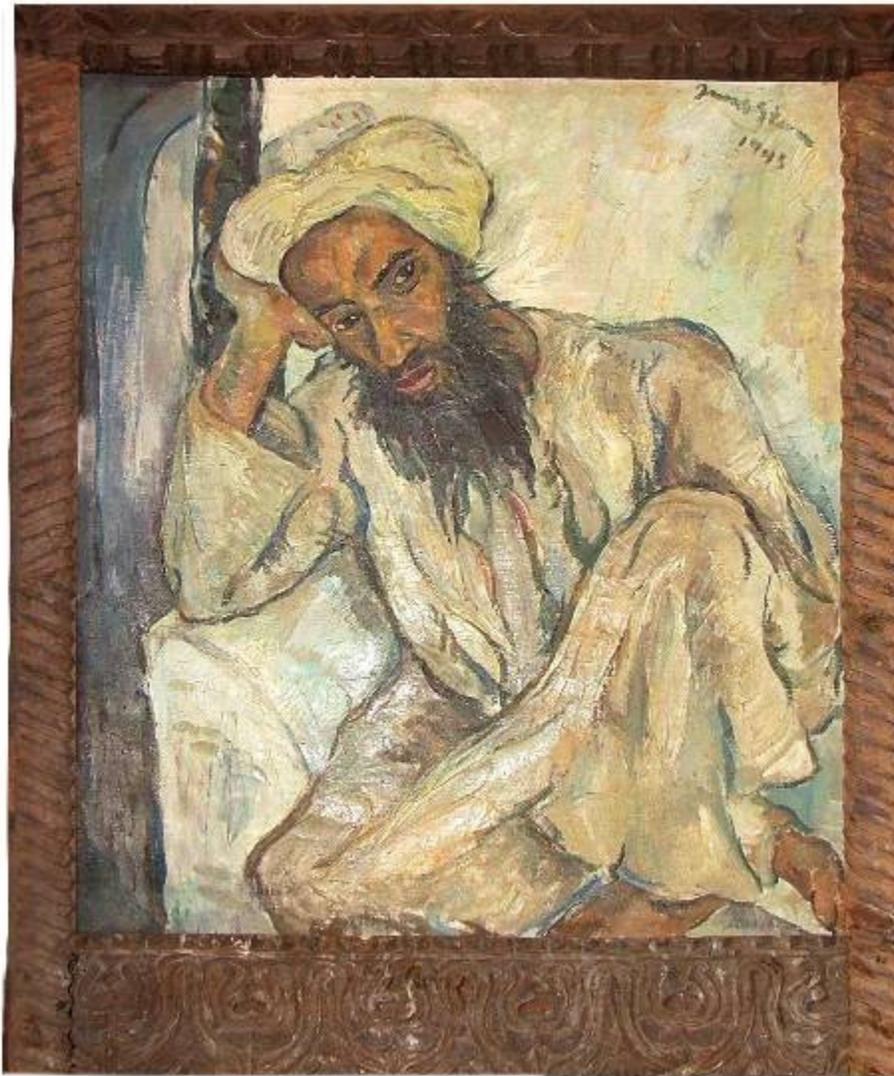
Kevin Volans is a different case: although still an influential figure in the field to some extent (and visiting South Africa more often now), he is not in any way governed by its political economy. This is because of his position within a completely different, far more international field of composition. For Volans, the issue of cross-culturalism in music faded once his African project was complete in the late 1980s; and the issue of accessibility and expediency has not applied here because he writes for performers, audiences, sponsors, and critics outside the limited field of South African art music. “[S]ince 1988 (with the exception of re-workings of older pieces and my opera, which is partly set in Ethiopia) I have avoided any direct reference to African music in my composition. For me, the moment for this kind of work has passed, along with the apartheid State” (‘Composer’s Statement’, www.kevinvolans.com, accessed 1 February 2008).

In part the discomfort of Klatzow and Hofmeyr results from certain post-apartheid identity crises that are a feature of white South Africa. Stephanus Muller's *Sounding margins: Musical representations of white South Africa*, 2000b discusses this point at some length. "Post-Apartheid South Africa presents a time and place", Muller suggests, "where Western musical culture is an uncomfortable, disturbing practice of survival and supplementarity – between art and politics, past and present, the public and the private" (Muller 2000b:Abstract [n.p.]). This 'supplementarity' as Muller puts it, relates to aesthetic rather than symbolic or economic capital. Hofmeyr seems concerned by this new orientation in the field, yet Klatzow sees it simply as a new wave. Although Klatzow now has the freedom to compose for whom he chooses and when he chooses, he says, he still selects subjects and styles that are accessible and (South) African. He wants *Three Paintings by Irma Stern* (2005) to be his most South African work yet, he says (author's interview 25 January 2007).

By denying the social meanings inherent in their music, however, Klatzow and Hofmeyr are in many ways, and paradoxically, continuing to hold to the remnants of the autonomous paradigm in which aesthetic production was 'disinterested'. Yet the field of art music can no longer be conceived of as an economic world reversed (in Bourdieu's terms, 1993) in which disinterestedness was the primary strategy of capital accumulation. On the contrary, politics and economics are now important strategies in both artistic production and capital accrual. This shift poses a major challenge to the way in which works are traditionally accorded value: whereas in the 1980s compositions accrued capital for their producers on a purely 'aesthetic' level, *now* (in the post-apartheid era) it is the extent to which these works – and their authors – comply with non-musical political discourses, that is the measure of their success. More importantly, the persistent use of anachronistic, accessible, and Africanist strategies by South African composers is symptomatic of a continuing state of crisis in which South African art music (still) does not speak critically to its audience or of its society, but presents itself, rather, as an affirmation of the *status quo*.

Appendix 1 Reproductions of Irma Stern's *Arab Priest* (1943), *Congo River* (1948), and *Peach Blossoms* (1937)

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Arab Priest (1943)



Congo River (1948)



Peach Blossoms (1937)

Appendix 2: List of 90 composers programmed in JPO Symphony Seasons (2001-2006) showing South African composers in bold

Arutyunyan	Hendrik Hofmeyr	Rossini
Bach, JS	(3rd season 2003 and	Hans Roosenschoon
Barber	4th season 2005)	(1st season 2006)
Bartók	Holst	Rossini
Bax	Hovhaness	Saint-Saëns
Beethoven	Hummel	Schubert
Berlioz	Humperdinck	Schumann
Brahms	Igarza	Scriabin
Bernstein	Ives	Shostakovich
Bizet	Jánaček	Sibelius
Borodin	Khachaturian	John Simon
Britten	Mzilikazi Khumalo /	(3rd season 2005)
Bruch	Peter Klatzow	Smetana
Bruckner	(3rd season 2003)	Alan Stephenson
Cassidy	Korngold	1st season 2004)
Chabrier	Koussevitsky	Stravinsky
Chausson	Liszt	Strauss, R.
Chopin	Mahler	Taylor-Coleridge
Copland	Mendelssohn	Tchaikovsky
Debussy	Michael Moerane	Roelof Temmingh
de Falla	(2nd season 2005)	(1st season 2005)
Delius	Mohammed	Pieter Louis van Dijk
Dukas	Mozart	(3rd season 2006)
Einhorn	Mussorgsky	Vaughan Williams
Elgar	Nielsen	Verdi
Fauré	Piazzola	Vivaldi
Franck	Pipa	von Suppé
Gershwin	Poulenc	Walton
Glinka	Prokofiev	Wagner
Grieg	Rachmaninov	Weber
Handel	Ravel	Webern
Michael Hankinson (1st	Rautavaara	Weill
season 2004)	Rimsky-Korsakov	Williams, J.
Haydn	Rodrigo	

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