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Post-Apartheid Jazz Pianism: A Biographic Profile of Matshawandile Yenana

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Abstract

Jazz studies in South Africa is a growing field. Its main areas of focus have included outlining the history of South African jazz stylistically and politically. The field is rich in its theoretical nuances, following and adding to the 'new jazz studies' that gained prominence in the early 1990s in the United States of America. South African jazz studies does not have a similar body of literature and academic work that could form a common foundation for future critique and theorisation. This is the case particularly for musicians' biographies or, as I call it here, biographic profile. Our musicians' biographic details remain diffuse and scattered across various media. This contributes to their marginalization, particularly for the purposes of teaching in undergraduate courses and for emerging researchers. This thesis aims to contribute to the need for consolidated profiles of South Africa's jazz musicians by sketching such a profile of the pianist Matshawandile 'Andile' Yenana. It highlights glimpses of the South African jazz genre through Yenana, exploring his artistic capacity and multifaceted specialities which include music production, lecturing, mentorship, talent scouting, film-scoring, ensemble performance and solo album recording. Lastly, the research includes an appendix that displays a chronologically quantitative discographic database which lists the finer detail of his role in contributing intellectual property to South African jazz pianism through recorded material. Rather than aim to completeness of a life that is still being lived and that is still creating, the thesis aims to contribute one layer to the foundation, to encourage and speed up future research, analysis and critique.